

# S O P D



Senior Officer Professional Digest

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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 information operations, operational culture, counterinsurgency (COIN), doctrine, Afghanistan, the whole-of-government approach, suicide terrorism and piracy.

The information revolution has made possible extraordinary improvements in the way forces conduct kinetic operations. However, Huba Wass de Czege argues that the information revolution has also made these same kinetic operations less useful to the counterinsurgent because of the adverse reaction they cause in critical populations. This somewhat paradoxical argument presents some intriguing conundrums for senior officers, and the articles focusing on various aspects of the 'influence battle' of COIN by Christopher Roosa, Jonathan P Dunne and Dave Kuehl will provide officers 'food for thought' as they grapple with Wass de Czege's conclusions.

These practical considerations of battle aside, the distinguished academic Paul Cornish offers his perspectives on the strategic level of counterinsurgency, arguing for greater political latitude for military commanders. Adam Roberts's examination of the realities of the Afghanistan campaign versus the action called for in the new US COIN doctrine covers some similar ground, while Barnett R Rubin, Amin Saikal and Julian Lindley-French all suggest that purely political action is now critical for success in Afghanistan. For such political action to be taken, whole-of-government responses are necessary. However, Andrea Barbara Baumann's article suggests otherwise, arguing that improving inter-governmental links may actually result in unintended negative consequences if pursued too vigorously.

While counterinsurgency is the central focus of the Army today, terrorism and transnational crime remain important considerations, and the articles by Assaf Moghadam and James Kraska & Brian Wilson cover these two issues very well.

Enjoy  
The Editors

Huba Wass de Czege, 'Unifying Physical and Psychological Impact During Operations', *Military Review*, Vol. XXXIX, No. 2, March–April 2009, pp. 13–22, <[http://usacac.army.mil/CAC2/MilitaryReview/Archives/English/MilitaryReview\\_2009\\_0430\\_art005.pdf](http://usacac.army.mil/CAC2/MilitaryReview/Archives/English/MilitaryReview_2009_0430_art005.pdf)>.

The psychological effects of physical actions have long been recognised by Australian officers as critical to the success of manoeuvre operations. However, the obvious difficulty of successfully prosecuting critical physical actions on the battlefield has meant that, understandably, some officers have become almost exclusively concerned with the tactical employment of their forces. Consequently, some Australian officers may have forgotten an important purpose of military engagements: achieving a psychological effect on the enemy. Huba Wass de Czege argues that this shortcoming certainly afflicts the United States' military forces, and so he calls for commanders to once more unify physical and psychological considerations to achieve the most from their forces.

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**'Excellence in the use of firepower, armor, speed, precision and armed physical presence to "create new facts on the ground" is less than half of the whole without excellence in intimidating, mystifying, misleading, and surprising at the same time ... The holistic approach of a Caesar, for example, not only remains valid, but has also become essential to success in the information age.'**

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Wass de Czege makes many interesting points, and senior officers will no doubt find the many reflections of this respected military thinker of considerable interest. However, of most importance to Australia's senior military leadership is Wass de Czege's argument that shaping an enemy's perceptions of the battlefield and one's own forces is now more important than actually defeating them in combat. This situation, he argues, has arisen as a result of the dawn of the information age, which—because of the attendant pervasive battlefield media presence—means that the employment of military force is so severely limited that commanders no longer enjoy the freedom of action necessary to conduct truly

decisive kinetic operations. The author is careful to point out that kinetic operations will always remain critical, but that exploiting them to the utmost for their psychological effect will become essential to success in the complex battlespaces of tomorrow. Senior officers concerned with the realisation of the Adaptive Army and Adaptive Campaigning concepts are strongly advised to read this excellent article from one of the United States' leading military intellectuals.

*Brigadier General Huba Wass de Czege, US Army (Retd) was one of the principal developers of the US Army's famous AirLand Battle concept. He was also the founder and first Director of the School of Advanced Military Studies at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. His diverse operational experience includes company command and combat-advisor duties during the Vietnam War. He holds Bachelor of Arts and Master of Arts degrees from the US Military Academy and Harvard University respectively.*

**Christopher Roosa, 'Information Operations ≠ Tactical Messaging', *Marine Corps Gazette*, Vol. 93, Iss. 2, February 2009, pp. 36–39.**

Information operations (IO) continue to grow in importance as counterinsurgents come to realise that earning the support of the people requires not only actions to provide for their security, but an ongoing dialogue to frame those actions in a positive light. Just like traditional 'kinetic' operations, speed is critical in the battle of perception, and Christopher Roosa's article outlines his vision for an appropriately rapid and direct form of IO—what he calls 'tactical messaging'.

Essentially, Roosa's argument revolves around what he has identified as a critical weakness in Coalition approaches to IO—the overriding desire to determine the truth. This obsession almost guarantees lengthy delays in Coalition communications as investigative and liaison personnel strive to collect every fact before releasing any. During the resulting delay, insurgents spread disinformation and lies in the media and on the streets, unopposed. This is highly damaging, Roosa argues, reminding his readers of Lenin's observation: 'repeat a lie often enough and it becomes true'. The author points out that insurgents have all the time they need to repeat their lie while the Coalition seeks to establish the whole truth. To contest the insurgents' frequent lies, and ensure the Coalition's version of events is heard, Roosa maintains that speed is the key. To this end, he argues for the practice of 'tactical messaging'—the quick, local release of whatever factual information is at hand by relatively junior officers. The more considered approach of IO practitioners, Roosa argues, is not conducive to the speed necessary for tactical messaging, and consequently he maintains that IO should operate exclusively in the operational and strategic domains.

To achieve the speed and reach necessary for effective 'tactical messaging', Roosa calls on fellow commanders to imagine it as a kind of artillery fire, pre-planned to some degree at higher levels to ensure resources are broadly aligned with the commander's intent, while still being flexible enough to be re-targeted in the heat of battle to ensure dominance at point of contact. While Roosa's ideas are contentious, they merit the attention of Australia's senior officers as they offer unique insights. Most importantly, it may be able to offer them a view on how to reconcile the seemingly contradictory imperatives of achieving the timely release of a coordinated message and the necessity of ensuring that the message be tailored to each individual issue and target audience.

*Colonel Christopher Roosa, US Marine Corps, is currently assigned to the US Marine Corps Center for Lessons Learned. He has served a total of seven operational deployments in Afghanistan and Iraq in support of liaison team operations.*

**Jonathan P Dunne, 'Cultures are Different', *Marine Corps Gazette*, Vol. 93, Iss. 2, February 2009, pp. 8–15.**

Maslow's 'hierarchy of needs' is a useful tool that can help counterinsurgents quickly prioritise the different kinds of assistance they can render to the host populace. This helps ensure that scarce resources are applied most effectively. However, as Jonathan P Dunne argues, this widely used tool is 'non-deployable' as it is based on assumptions relevant only to Western cultures. Accordingly, it does not really provide the benefits advertised.

Dunne argues that Maslow's hierarchy can be modified, however, to accommodate the more group-oriented Iraqi and Afghan cultures that Coalition forces face. This will overcome the greatest problem with the current hierarchy—its

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**'Maslow's construct ... is "non-deployable."'**

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Western, liberal and individualist basis. This fundamental difference strikes to the heart of many of the causes of friction between Western societies based on Enlightenment ideals and Middle Eastern societies based on more traditional social philosophies. Accordingly, it is an important issue for senior officers to comprehend fully.

Simple yet insightful tools such as Maslow's hierarchy represent critical elements of the 'strategic corporal's' toolkit. Ensuring these tools are as effective as possible is critical to the decentralised, mission-command philosophy of the Australian Army. Accordingly, senior officers should read Dunne's brief article in order to better help them to help their soldiers.

*Major Jonathan P Dunne, US Marine Corps, is an artillery officer currently attending the School of Advanced Warfighting.*

**Dave Kuehl, 'Testing Galula in Ameriyah: The People Are the Key', *Military Review*, Vol. XXXIX, No. 2, March–April 2009, pp. 72–80, <[http://usacac.army.mil/CAC2/MilitaryReview/Archives/English/MilitaryReview\\_2009\\_0430\\_art012.pdf](http://usacac.army.mil/CAC2/MilitaryReview/Archives/English/MilitaryReview_2009_0430_art012.pdf)>.**

Dave Kuehl, a lieutenant colonel in the US Army, was tasked with stabilising the restless Baghdad neighbourhood of Ameriyah with only two companies of mechanised infantry. Kuehl's fourteen months of experience taught him many lessons, all of which are encapsulated in this brief article.

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**'To gain support for your side of the cause, you must rely on the favourable minority in order to rally the neutral majority and to neutralize or eliminate the hostile minority.'**

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Most of what Kuehl writes is also found within the latest draft of *Adaptive Campaigning*: influencing the population is critical to success; indigenous capacity-building remains essential for long-term stability; and communicating with the populace is a crucial aspect of today's complex counterinsurgencies. However, Kuehl does raise some interesting points that are not

widely understood—for example, he rejects the notion that all indigenous people need to trust Coalition forces. Rather, just as Galula wrote in his landmark work, *Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice*, the support of an active minority that proselytises on behalf of the counterinsurgent is what should be sought. This indigenous group will always hold far more credibility and 'weight' with the uncommitted majority than the counterinsurgent can ever hope to have.

Kuehl's article supports the underlying judgments contained within *Adaptive Campaigning*, but highlights that there is still some important work to be done in fleshing out the many

new roles envisaged for Army. Not least of these is the need for a large increase in focus on communication with 'the people'. This unfamiliar mission will necessarily occupy a large part of Army's time in future, and will require some important cultural and organisational changes. Senior officers who read Kuehl's article will see how a commander, forced to make such complex and sometimes difficult changes on the battlefield, found the rewards far outweighed the costs.

*Lieutenant Colonel Dave Kuehl, US Army, is currently assigned to Operations Group, National Training Center. He previously served as CO of 1 Battalion, 5 Cavalry, leading his unit through deployments to South Carolina to assist hurricane victims and to Iraq where he oversaw Coalition security efforts in northwestern Baghdad.*

**Paul Cornish, 'The United States and counterinsurgency', *International Affairs*, Vol. 85, Iss. 1, 2009, pp. 61–79.**

Paul Cornish's article is an excellent survey of the major debates within counterinsurgency circles. While undertaking this broad look, Cornish makes many insightful suggestions of his own, presenting senior officers with a collection of considered arguments from one of the leading figures in strategic studies and international relations.

Cornish characterises the debates as those concerning COIN doctrine and those concerning its politics. Senior officers will no doubt be familiar with many of the doctrinal arguments concerning COIN, especially those surrounding the use of force. Cornish comes down firmly in support of kinetic operations, arguing that to eschew any technological, tactical or firepower advantage to the insurgent in an attempt to present a 'softer' image is dangerous and ultimately counterproductive. Such actions will

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**'The ... requirement for a 'more political' counterinsurgency is that the armed forces should be given, as far as possible, the devolved organization and the delegated authority necessary for them to confront their adversary on more equal terms.'**

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present further opportunities for the insurgent to conduct spectacular attacks that sap home-front will, attrit forces and provide further opportunities for propaganda. While great restraint must be exercised to ensure no use of force alienates the indigenous population, Cornish accepts 'killing and capturing' will always be necessary in irregular wars. To gloss over this aspect of COIN, he argues, is foolish.

However, the richest vein in Cornish's article appears when he turns his attention to political matters, and senior officers will note that his arguments regarding the civil-military interface in COIN depart from accepted wisdom quite significantly. Essentially, Cornish suggests that governments must grant exponentially greater political latitude to armed forces engaged with COIN operations. He envisions a political 'mission command' environment where military leaders are empowered by their political masters to conduct politics, warfare and 'political warfare' on behalf of their national government. Whatever opinion senior officers hold of this

debate, it is essential that they be abreast of it, and Cornish's article represents one of the more considered—and interesting—on the matter. It is, therefore, well worth any senior officer's time.

*Paul Cornish is a former British Army officer and a graduate of St. Andrew's University and the London School of Economics. Today, he holds the Carrington Chair in International Security at Chatham House where he is also Head of the International Security Programme. He is the author of numerous books, reports and articles, the most noteworthy of late being U.S.–U.K. Nuclear Cooperation: An Assessment and Future Prospects.*

**Adam Roberts, 'Doctrine and Reality in Afghanistan', *Survival*, Vol. 51, Iss. 1, pp. 29–60.**

The Australian Army has long maintained an extensive collection of doctrine, covering everything from mechanised battlegroup tactics to personal weapon handling procedures. However, the demands of contemporary operations and the complex environment in which they are conducted have necessitated new doctrines to guide officers in dealing with new problems. Adam Roberts's article seeks to examine the utility of the most famous of these new publications: the US Army and US Marine Corps' recently issued *Counterinsurgency Field Manual*. While still 'new', enough time has now passed that some reflection on this doctrine's success can be made, and it is to this task that Roberts directs his article.

Roberts's examination is thorough and covers many problematic areas of the doctrine ranging from its handling of air power to the difficulties associated with identifying and monitoring suitable metrics for success. At all times Roberts is careful to ensure that his analysis aligns closely with the realities of the situation in Afghanistan, reminding his readers of Sir John Kiszely's wise observation that 'every insurgency is *sui generis*, making generalizations problematic'.

The conclusions Roberts reaches are somewhat pessimistic, and he believes that, despite the general soundness of the COIN doctrine, it calls for commitment of too great a magnitude to the problems of a people too resistant to outside intervention. He argues that ISAF's 'way forward' in Afghanistan will most likely build on regional warlordism rather than supplant it. For senior officers actively engaged day-to-day in this struggle, this article offers interesting observations and highlights potential flaws that must be rectified if success, on Coalition terms, is to be fully achieved.

*From 1986 to 2007, Adam Roberts was Montague Baron Professor of International Relations at Oxford University. Today, he is President-elect of the British Academy and a Senior Research Fellow at the Centre for International Studies in Oxford University's Department of Politics and International Relations. This article was written as part of research that Roberts conducted at the University of Oxford's Leverhulme Programme on the Changing Character of War.*

**Barnett R Rubin, Amin Saikal and Julian Lindley-French, 'The Way Forward in Afghanistan: Three Views', *Survival*, Vol. 51, Iss. 1, pp. 83–96.**

Afghanistan, perhaps even more so than Iraq, will prove a challenging environment in which to achieve success however it is defined. While the outcome of the ongoing conflict in that country remains uncertain, what is clear is that Coalition forces, hampered by only a modest allowance of resources and a constantly shifting political environment, have been hard-pressed to do much more than 'tread water'. Now that the United States has signalled a shift in focus from Iraq to Afghanistan, it is obvious that a new approach is necessary—even if only to employ more efficiently the increased military resources that will soon become available.

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**'All strategies evolve on contact with reality. The refusal by political leaders of all persuasions to face that reality has given ample rounds for journalists and academics of a more excitable persuasion to paint the picture as unremittingly black.'**

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Barnett R Rubin, Amin Saikal and Julian Lindley-French offer interesting approaches to how such resources can best be employed, and provide well-crafted arguments in support of their judgments. While the authors differ in their arguments, all are convinced that significant political reform within Afghanistan, coupled with a 'recalibration' of expectations for the Coalition mission, is necessary.

The many strategies that are often suggested for progress in Afghanistan usually reflect variations on a theme. What sets Rubin, Saikal and Lindley-French's article apart is their quite unique thinking on the war in Afghanistan. Senior officers would therefore do well to evaluate the applicability of some or all of the perspectives these three authors offer at this critical time in the Coalition's operations.

*Barnett R Rubin is Director of Studies and a Senior Fellow at New York University's Center on International Cooperation. Amin Saikal is Professor of Political Science and Director of the Centre for Arab and Islamic Studies at the Australian National University. Julian Lindley-French is Professor of Military Operational Science at the Netherlands Defence Academy and a Senior Associate Fellow of the United Kingdom Defence Academy.*

**Andrea Barbara Baumann, 'Clash of Organisational Cultures? The Challenge of Integrating Civilian and Military Efforts in Stabilisation Operations', *The RUSI Journal*, Vol. 153, No. 6, pp. 70–73.**

The whole-of-government approach is one which many have now accepted as being critical to success in any foreign policy endeavour, be it diplomatic posturing, total war or—as is more frequently the case—something in between. However, while many argue that most government agencies will need to make significant cultural and attitudinal adjustments to properly contribute to whole-of-government operations, Andrea Barbara Baumann argues that such changes could in fact be counterproductive.

Baumann presents an intriguing argument on inter-governmental cooperation, positing that it is the very differences that hamper closer cooperation that, in many cases, make each department so effective at what it does. Baumann offers some suggestions for how to work around these differences and highlights where it may not be possible. Senior officers will find this article offers them a rare look at the sceptical view of whole of government operations: a vital view if officers are to remain fully cognisant of the challenges of the whole of government approach.

*Andrea Barbara Baumann is a PhD candidate at the Department of Politics and International Relations, Lincoln College, Oxford University. This article won first prize in the 2008 Trench Gascoigne Essay Competition.*

**Assaf Moghadam, 'Motives for Martyrdom', *International Security*, Vol. 33, No. 3, Winter 2008–09, pp. 46–78.**

The comparatively recent surge in the number of suicide terrorist attacks worldwide has often been attributed to the growing international presence of al-Qaeda and a commensurate swelling of its ranks. While broadly correct, Assaf Moghadam's excellent quantitative study for *International Security* shows that the cause for this surge is somewhat more complex.

Essentially, it is the growing popularity of radical Salafi Jihadist doctrines that have more directly contributed to the marked rise of suicide attacks since 2000. While this doctrine has been given great exposure by al-Qaeda, it is not al-Qaeda itself that drives the doctrine nor motivates or controls these attacks. These conclusions may not be amazing in themselves to senior officers, but what will be of interest to them is the valuable data that Moghadam has meticulously compiled and presented in his article. His findings have many tactical and operational implications—for example, he presents data indicating a sharp rise in the lethality of attacks since 2005, suggesting that force protection will need to become an even more important consideration for future commanders than it is today. If so, this would incur a whole series of second and third order effects for counterinsurgency forces especially—for example, how will engaging the population be possible when forces are confined to buttoned-down, heavily armoured vehicles for most or all of their patrols?

Moghadam's thorough research is complemented with some sound recommendations for improving efforts to counter suicide attacks. Senior officers will likely find these of interest, but the article's greatest value lies in the wealth of quantitative data it contains. This article will bring a degree of certainty to their own thinking on suicide attacks in the broader context of Australian operational and strategic experience.

*Assaf Moghadam is Assistant Professor and Senior Associate at the West Point Combating Terrorism Center. He is also a Research Fellow at the Initiative on Religion at Harvard University's Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs. His latest book, on which this article is based, is The Globalization of Martyrdom: Al Qaeda, Slafi Jihad and the Diffusion of Suicide Attacks.*

James Kraska and Brian Wilson, 'Fighting Piracy', *Armed Forces Journal*, February 2009, <<http://www.armedforcesjournal.com/2009/02/3928962/>>.

Piracy is an important security issue facing many nations today and is a classic example of transnational criminal activity that can only be effectively curtailed through a joint and inter-agency response. In such operations, legal considerations are central to coordinating the many different organisations that must become involved. Fortunately, James Kraska and Brian Wilson's article provides a thorough exposition of the varying legal avenues open to agencies fighting piracy in the Gulf of Aden.

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**'Naval air and sea operational missions conducted by the world's most capable maritime powers have been unable to arrest Somali piracy because they cannot prosecute the endgame.'**

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Kraska and Wilson begin their article with a clear demonstration that armed response and physical protective measures are only partially effective in combating pirates, with more than a third of attempted pirate attacks being successful. While naval patrols are vital, they are only a short-term solution, and the authors conclude that regional and international cooperation is crucial to ensuring that all

involved maritime forces—coast-guards, navies and army/marine forces—can successfully prosecute the 'end game': criminal prosecution of captured pirates. Much has already been done to establish international legal frameworks to combat piracy in hotspots such as the Gulf of Aden and the Strait of Malacca, and Kraska and Wilson detail these measures. However, they see significant room for improvement, and offer some local capacity-building measures that they argue will markedly improve the situation.

Army officers may be forgiven for thinking that piracy is a 'Navy issue' given that it largely occurs at sea. However, as Kraska and Wilson make clear, a long-term response to piracy will require 'collaboration, not kinetics'. Issues such as security sector reform, negotiation and cooperation with locals and, where necessary, amphibious operations against pirate bases inland or in the littoral, will require many of the skills that the Army has developed in current operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. For the Army, therefore, ignoring this vital issue is tantamount to ignoring the Army's long and proud history of counterinsurgency and amphibious operations. For senior officers who are cognisant of the need to adapt not only to today's foe but also to tomorrow's, this article will help frame their thinking on what preparations can be made for combating pirates and other criminals in one of the most complex environments imaginable: the littoral.

*Commander James Kraska, USN, is a member of the faculty of the International Law Department at the US Naval War College. Captain Brian Wilson, USN, is the Commanding Officer, Region Legal Service Office, Naval District Washington.*