

S O P D



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Land Warfare Studies Centre

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

lwsc.publications@defence.gov.au

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 the future security environment, 'narcoinsurgency', light infantry, 'cultural intelligence', psychological operations, information operations, non-lethal weapons, China and the Indian Ocean.

Colin S Gray has long been recognised for his wisdom and insight and so the Editors this month would like to draw attention to his latest article. Gray cautions senior officers against 'predicting the future' and instead advocates theories based on history as 'guides to the future'. Making a similar nod to the utility of history, Patrick Porter suggests that George Kennan's Cold War strategy of containment may hold the key to defeating al-Qaeda.

The elements that Porter highlights as being critical to containing al-Qaeda are well known to senior officers from Australia's operational experiences in Iraq and Afghanistan—law enforcement personnel, light and mobile forces, cultural intelligence, 'psyops', information operations, and non-lethal weapons to name but a few. These topics form the respective subjects of articles by Sam Quinones, G Gabriel Serbu, Emily Spencer & Tony Balasevicius, Ron Schleifer, Jim Molan and David C Gompert.

While these things equate to operational effectiveness in irregular wars, distinctly different matters dictate defeat and victory in conventional wars. The highly demanding nature of this type of warfare means that, to be effective in its prosecution, senior officers must continue to reflect on state-based threats, despite today's focus on irregular operations. Accordingly, the Editors this month recommend Jonathan Anderson & Minxin Pei's article on the economic health of China and Robert D Kaplan's excellent analysis of the geopolitical 'centre stage' of the future—the Indian Ocean.

Enjoy
The Editors

Colin S Gray, 'The 21st Century Security Environment and the Future of War',
Parameters, Vol. XXXVIII, No. 4, Winter 2008–09, pp. 14–26,
<<http://www.carlisle.army.mil/usawc/parameters/08winter/gray.pdf>>.

Colin S Gray is one of this period's greatest strategic thinkers and his many books stand as landmarks on the strategic studies landscape. Gray advocates caution in accepting at face value the many ideas that are currently the vogue of the strategic studies commentariat—most notably General Sir Rupert Smith's 'war amongst the people'. While Gray is quick to note the wisdom behind much of what Smith argues in *The Utility of Force*, he sees it being of worth only insofar as it is a confirmation of much of the enduring nature of warfare, which was first summed up by Thucydides's 'fear, honor and interest' argument.

Gray's advice to senior officers is never to trust predictions of the future, and to plan instead for uncertainty by ensuring that a mix of capabilities are at hand and that, above all, personnel remain ready to adapt. This article is a concise and easy reading review of what a great strategic theorist sees as the salient features of the future security environment. This represents, therefore, an invaluable resource for senior officers who are called on to raise, train, sustain and adapt military forces for this complex and uncertain future.

Colin S Gray is Professor of International Relations at the University of Reading in the United Kingdom. His latest book of note is Another Bloody Century: Future Warfare.

Patrick Porter, 'Long wars and long telegrams: containing Al-Qaeda', *International Affairs*, Vol. 85, No. 2, pp. 285–305.

Patrick Porter opens this interesting article with some of Napoleon's most famous words: 'when your enemy is making a very serious mistake, don't be impolite and disturb him'. Drawing on this sentiment, Porter makes a convincing case that al-Qaeda should not be disturbed while it continues to destroy the popular appeal that it relies upon for its effectiveness and survival.

Porter goes on to argue—again convincingly—that while al-Qaeda is becoming a 'mission enabler' by defeating itself through violent excess, the Western world should adopt a posture of containment similar to Kennan's strategy for confronting the Soviet Union. However, while Kennan advocated territorial and political containment, Porter rightly points out that such containment in al-Qaeda's case is impossible—rather, al-Qaeda's capabilities should be contained through a program of strengthened global regulation. This regulatory campaign would encompass matters like border protection, items like fissile material, and technologies like ballistic missiles. Such measures will not destroy al-Qaeda or prevent it from attacking, but it will seriously hamper its ability to operate, and, in the event of an attack, tighter regulation will mean that the result will be far less lethal than that on the World Trade Center in 2001.

Porter's strategy is well thought through and demonstrates impeccable logic and argumentation. This essay is a departure from the majority of those appearing in the academic and professional

literature as it represents a strategy to defeat al-Qaeda rather than an argument for how to improve an aspect of operational effectiveness against irregular enemies. Senior officers reading this article will find that this broader vision will inspire them to grapple with the ends *to* which they are fighting, rather than the means *with* which they are fighting in Afghanistan today. This strategic focus has arguably been lacking to date—certainly both the Australian and United States’ governments clearly believe this is the case, and are taking corrective action. This article, then, is particularly timely and makes for excellent reading.

Dr Patrick Porter holds Bachelor degrees in Law and Arts from the University of Melbourne and a PhD from Magdalen College, Oxford. He is currently a lecturer at the Defence Studies Department of Kings College, London.

Sam Quinones, ‘State of War’, *Foreign Policy*, Iss. 171, March–April 2009, pp. 76–80.

Conventional wisdom holds that law enforcement officers are better suited to policing the streets in an insurgency than soldiers. However, as Sam Quinones demonstrates in his article on the Mexican ‘drug gang insurgency’, police may be too fragile when facing heavily armed criminals intent on carving out their own ‘jurisdiction’.

‘Hicks ... have grown into a national security threat.’

Many would assume, because the various Mexican police forces fighting drug gangs have long been hampered by low pay, poor resourcing and corrupt officers, that their experiences of failure do not represent what can be expected of Western

law-enforcement. However, this is not the case; Quinones correctly maintains that few law enforcement groups—Western ones included—could long stand up to ‘platoon-sized units employing night vision goggles ... helicopters ... automatic weapons, RPGs ... mines and booby traps, heavy machine guns, 50 [caliber] sniper rifles ... military hand grenades, and the most modern models of 40mm grenade machine guns’. Indeed, the Mexican drug gangs have spread their operations across the border into the United States, and many US police officers fear that they have ‘met their match’. As Quinones points out, it ‘would be foolhardy to imagine capable police departments ... going for long without cracking under the pressure’. In these circumstances, rapid military intervention becomes necessary until criminal capabilities can be reduced to the point where police forces can once more hold their own.

This well-written and engaging article demonstrates the surprising speed with which a criminal insurgency can rise up in a country that was, while poor, once thought to be largely stable. Senior officers will find this article of considerable interest therefore, especially when they consider the many similarities between Mexico’s situation and that of a number of countries in South-East Asia.

Sam Quinones is a reporter for the Los Angeles Times.

G Gabriel Serbu, 'Goliath's Transfiguration: Preparing the Infantry for Netwars', *Infantry*, Vol. 97, No. 6, November–December 2008, pp. 32–37.

'Goliath's Transfiguration' critically examines from varying aspects the current conflict in Afghanistan, predominantly the implications for Western armed forces being organised around conventional, high intensity conflicts and the use of information technology by insurgents to erode political will for war.

G Gabriel Serbu argues that a reliance on advanced technology and complicated lines of communication has hindered the ability of Western forces to engage and defeat Taliban and al-Qaeda forces in Afghanistan. Serbu presents the French campaign in Algeria in the 1830s as an example of how a well-equipped, technologically advanced force designed for conventional high intensity warfare can be ineffective against a lighter armed, highly mobile force. The French only achieved success once they transformed their forces into light, mobile infantry units that relied less on heavy artillery. By linking the French experience in Algeria to the current conflict in Afghanistan, Serbu is able to identify weaknesses in Western counterinsurgency operations in Afghanistan. In concluding the piece he outlines a modern adaptation of the French strategy for Western forces in Afghanistan.

'Insurgents are living proof of why man is at the top of the food chain. We are the most creative, treacherous, loyal, aggressive and determined life form to yet evolve.'

This article contains a number of thought provoking and adaptive ideas for improvements in the way Western forces conduct counterinsurgency operations in Afghanistan. Serbu sees the fight to regain the initiative from the Taliban as vital to military success in Afghanistan, insisting that Western forces must move away from their current warfighting doctrine which the insurgency has learnt to exploit.

Lieutenant G Gabriel Serbu holds a Master's degree in War Studies from the Royal Military College of Canada. He is currently assigned to 2 Mechanized Infantry Battalion, Royal 22 Regiment in Quebec City.

Emily Spencer and Tony Balasevicius, 'Crucible of Success: Cultural Intelligence and the Modern Battlespace', *Canadian Military Journal*, Vol. 9, No. 3, 2009, pp. 40–48, <<http://www.journal.dnd.ca/vo9/no3/doc/07-spencer-eng.pdf>>.

The problem of distinguishing between one's enemies and one's friends lies at the heart of the difficulties that the coalition faces in Afghanistan today. Central to this issue is what Emily Spencer and Tony Balasevicius characterise as 'cultural intelligence'—essentially, the ability to discern what is and is not natural in the battlespace, and what will and will not alienate the population who lives there.

While Australia, like other Western forces, has taken great strides to improve the cultural sensitivity of its forces, much more is necessary than simply knowing 'what not to say'. It is only from taking this next step that Australian forces will be able to understand the battlespace comprehensively and make informed decisions that will contribute to mission success, rather

than act in ignorance and alienate the host population. For senior officers striving to achieve this important improvement in operational capability, Spencer and Balasevicius's article offers an instructive view of how Australia's ally Canada is coping with its own shortcomings and how it can potentially improve in the future.

Emily Spencer holds a doctorate from the Royal Military College of Canada and is currently an Assistant Professor of History at the University of Northern British Columbia. Major Tony Balasevicius is an experienced infantry officer currently assigned to the Department of Applied Military Science at the Royal Military College of Canada.

Ron Schleifer, 'Psyoping Hezbollah: The Israeli Psychological Warfare Campaign during the 2006 Lebanon War', *Terrorism and Political Violence*, Vol. 21, Iss. 2, pp. 221–38.

The 2006 Lebanon War between the Israeli state and the Lebanon-based Islamic organisation Hezbollah was more than just a conventional war. Behind the kinetic operations lay a ghostly psychological war whose outcome was just as critical to victory or defeat.

Ron Schleifer details both Israel's and Hezbollah's PSYOPS tactics during the conflict, analysing the effects that each sides psychological operations had on the other and provides a 'lessons learnt' approach throughout the article. Schleifer focuses particularly on the activities of MALAT (Mercaz L'Mitzaei Toda'a: The Center for Consciousness/Perception Operations), which was the Israeli unit responsible for psychological warfare operations, providing specific examples of their tactics. Throughout the 2006 war, it tried to combine psychological warfare with the campaign's conventional air and ground operations. Overall, these efforts failed as a result of both the nature of the PSYOPS tactics Israel used as well as their organisation of the conventional offensive itself. The article also explores Israel's targeting of Hezbollah's leader Hassan Nasrallah. One such example includes the Israeli air drop of car air-fresheners depicting Hassan Nasrallah hiding behind Lebanon's national symbol, the cedar tree.

'The successes and failures of Israel's psyop offensive have significant regional and global implications.'

'The message of Hezbollah was to portray Israel as a weak and sickly state, populated by a decadent lot, evoking the image of a tattered cobweb about to be blown away.'

Schleifer concludes his piece by outlining significant shortcomings in Israel's integration of psychological operations into overall organisation of the 2006 war. The article is a thoughtful look at the way psychological warfare is waged in a conflict between a sovereign state and extremist religious organisation. It provides an excellent analysis of the failings of the Israeli PSYOPS campaign while providing details of how to

counter the problems faced. Senior officers will find this article an important learning tool when examining how PSYOPS can be used against extremist organisations and other non-state actors.

Dr Ron Schleifer is a senior lecturer at Ariel University Center in Samaria, Israel.

Jim Molan, 'Do You Need to Decisively Win the Information War? Managing Information on Operations in Iraq', *Security Challenges*, Vol. 5, No. 1, Autumn 2009, pp. 37–52.

Information operations are becoming increasingly central to 'wars among the people'. Having completed a tour in 2004–05 as Chief of Operations, Headquarters Multinational Force–Iraq (MNF–I), Major General Jim Molan (retd) is one of the best placed Australian military professionals to comment on such matters. His experiences, outlined within this article, indicate that information operations, while important to mission success, are not vital.

Molan is, however, quick to point out that information operations, while not likely to be resoundingly successful are still important for the effects they produce. Molan reminds commanders that even when setbacks are suffered in information operations, the enemy most likely has suffered some setbacks, too, and that some ground, therefore, has been made.

The author examines some of the practical issues he encountered in Iraq where he attempted to manage information and put it to good use to influence target groups, ranging from issues with ineffective spokespeople to the morality and legality of exploiting captives. Senior officers will find Molan's observations of value as they represent the experience of an officer who directed a large force engaged in precisely the sort of operations that Army is preparing itself to fight—possibly even as a coalition leader—in the future.

Major General Jim Molan (retd) served as Chief of Operations, Headquarters Multinational Force–Iraq in 2004. He has published a book regarding his experiences in Iraq entitled Running the War in Iraq.

David C Gompert "'Underkill": Fighting Extremists amid Populations', *Survival*, Vol. 51, Iss. 2, pp. 159–74.

For decades now, non-lethal, or less-than-lethal weapons have been an 'emerging' technology with slow development meaning that they have not yet become a realistic option for commanders in the field. Consequently, the 'spectrum' of response options for troops faced with an angry mob effectively consists of only two options: fists or firepower. Needless to say, shooting at—or into—a crowd of civilians is an ineffective way of winning their support in fighting insurgents. Furthermore, only having deadly force available serves to make the enemy propagandist's job considerably easier: if coalition forces possess only lethal weapons, then it is that much easier for a roadside bomb blast or suicide bombing to be passed off as the work of the counterinsurgent.

'Hostile propagandists have a field day when US, Israeli or NATO soldiers kill or hurt innocent people.'

While non-lethal weapons should be employed as part of a spectrum of response options, it is easy to see the significant benefits that would accrue from having these weapons to hand. Indeed, in the majority of cases where insurgents or terrorists are open to targeting, innocents

are at risk of becoming ‘collateral damage’ and so an opportunity is missed. In these instances, non-lethal weapons allow the enemy combatant to be targeted; innocent lives are saved; property damage is kept to a minimum; the enemy loses an opportunity for a propaganda victory; the combatant can be interrogated for intelligence, and then charged with a criminal offence. The criminal prosecution of an enemy combatant provides the coalition with a whole series of public relations victories: it demonstrates success; puts a ‘local face’ on the counterinsurgency; increases public confidence in their security forces and judiciary and enhances the perceived legitimacy of those organisations; and finally, a criminal prosecution damages insurgent morale by showing them the consequences of continued anti-government activity.

David C Gompert’s article is a relatively brief, well-written piece that provides senior officers with an opportunity to examine the concept of, and latest technological developments in, non-lethal weapons. It is, therefore, highly recommended as an entrée for officers into this infrequently examined topic which, while still maturing, has considerable potential.

David C Gompert is a Senior Fellow of the RAND Corporation. He has previously served as a Senior Adviser to the Coalition Provisional Authority–Iraq and as a senior official of the US National Security Council.

Minxin Pei and Jonathan Anderson, ‘The Color of China’, *The National Interest*, March–April 2009, pp. 13–30.

‘The end result is a state built on weak political, economic and societal foundations with a potentially unhappy and restless people.’

The rapidly deteriorating global financial situation has called into question many assumptions and trends that have underpinned the strategic and defence ideas held by many commentators. For example, one of those most frequently heard is that China’s continued economic growth will keep it internally stable and free it to focus on developing

a powerful, expeditionary military force. Minxin Pei argues that in light of the global financial crisis this is now far from certain. Jonathan Anderson disagrees.

The debate that unfolds between Pei and Anderson is entertaining and illuminating. The exploration they conduct of the many ‘truths’ about China expose many of the assumptions that have been built in to the strategic debate. This article will serve to remind senior officers of the tremendous speed and depth of change that is possible in global affairs, and will help them to grasp what has, and has not, remained constant in the strategic calculus of the Pacific region.

‘In strict macroeconomic terms, so far China is unambiguously the most successful emerging economy of the postwar era.’

Minxin Pei is a Senior Associate at the Carnegie Endowment. Jonathan Anderson is the Senior Global Emerging Economist at UBS.

Robert D Kaplan, 'Center Stage for the Twenty-first Century', *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 88, No. 2, March/April 2009, pp. 16–32.

By 2020, Australia's capacity to execute a maritime strategy will be greatly enhanced with the arrival of both Navy and Army assets that will allow credible power projection, albeit on a modest scale. The timing of this, Robert D Kaplan would argue, is quite fortunate as it is around this point in time that the Indian Ocean will take 'centre stage' in the strategic balance of the twenty first century.

Kaplan's article examines the driving financial, commercial, industrial and political forces that are pushing the Indian Ocean to the forefront of every major power's mind. Most of the world's oil is shipped through this ocean, and the most populous nations on the planet—which may soon be the richest, too—are located on its periphery. The United States, Kaplan argues, must be prepared to cede dominance of the ocean in the face of rapidly growing Indian and Chinese maritime forces and instead posture itself as the critical alliance partner. This may result, as Kaplan hopes, in an 'elegant decline' of US power in the Indian Ocean.

While non-traditional security threats such as terrorism and piracy afflict the Indian Ocean today, it is only a matter of time before serious strategic competition between China, India and the United States is witnessed in this vital region. Senior officers will find Kaplan's article of worth, therefore, for its clear exposition of what will drive the globally significant 'powerplays' that are set to occur in Australia's western waters.

'So in what quarter of the earth today can one best glimpse the future? ... the Indian Ocean—the world's third-largest body of waters—already forms center stage for the challenges of the twenty-first century.'

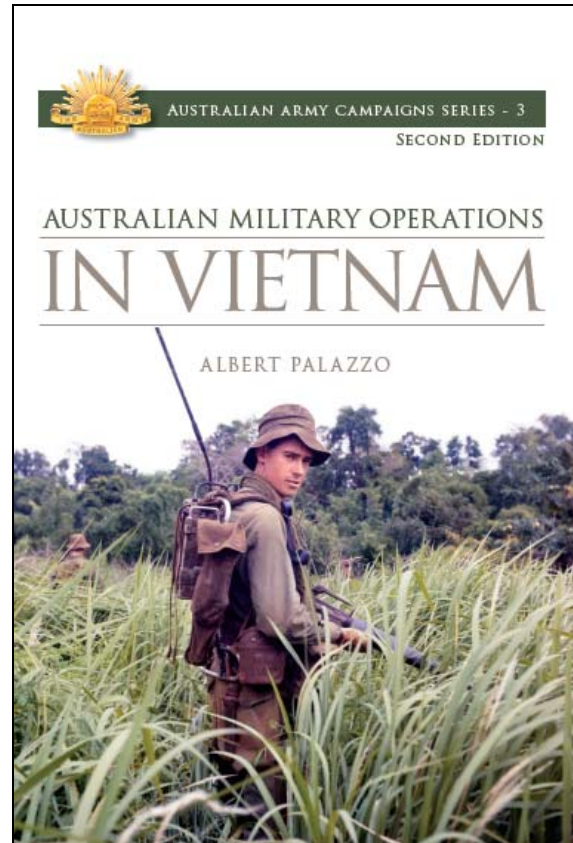
Robert D Kaplan is Senior Fellow at the Center for a New American Security and is currently writing a book on the Indian Ocean. He recently completed an appointment as the Class of 1960 Distinguished Visiting Professor in National Security at the US Naval Academy.

Australian Army Campaign Series

The Army History Unit announces the release of the latest addition to the Australian Army Campaign Series: Volume 3 – Albert Palazzo’s *Australian Military Operations in Vietnam* (Second Edition).

From 1962 to 1972 Australia joined the United States in fighting a communist inspired insurgency war in the jungles of South Vietnam against infiltrators who sought to overthrow the local government. Over 50,000 Australians served in Vietnam, 519 lost their lives, and the conflict ended ignominiously in the insurgents’ victory.

Over 30 years later, Australia again finds itself joined with the United States in a struggle against an insurgency, this time in the deserts of Iraq and the mountains of Afghanistan. Although now in the past, the Vietnam War resonates with lessons for the Australian Army as it strives to defeat not communism but terrorism. *Australian Military Operations in Vietnam* highlights some of the successes and failures of an earlier generation of officers for the benefit of today’s leaders.



Australian Military Operations in Vietnam is available to Australian Army personnel from the Army History Unit.