



Editor's Corner

Welcome to the first edition of *Small Wars Journal's* monthly electronic newsletter - we hope you find it both useful and interesting. Have something you think our community of interest and practice should know about? Please send it along to comment@smallwarjournal.com.—SWJ

SWJ News

Journal. SWJ continues to receive quality article submissions from students and practitioners of Small Wars and related issues. Many thanks to all our talented authors.

Small Wars Journal, Vol. 7, No. 3 was published on 5 April and featured new (as of 31 Mar) articles as well as select reprints and an index of all articles from March. [Click here](#) for the full issue, or directly on these titles for single articles.

- *Countering Extremism in Yemen: Beyond Interagency Cooperation* by Kaz Kotlow
- *Shaping Coalition Forces' Strategic Narrative in Support of Village Stability Operations* by Scott Mann
- *The Fallacy of COIN: One Officer's Frustration* by Scott Dempsey
- *Building Relationships and Influence in Counterinsurgency: One Officer's Perspective* by Eric von Tersh
- *Libya's Rebel Leaders and Western Assistance* by Jamsheed K. Choksy and Carol E. B. Choksy
- *Book Review: How the Weak Win Wars: A Theory of Asymmetric Conflict* by Timothy Richardson

In This Issue

SWJ News.....	1
Doctrine Man @ SWJ.....	2
Starbuck & Zenpundit Recommend.....	9
Professional Reading.....	11
SWJ Interviews.....	15
Book Reviews.....	16
Upcoming Events.....	20

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Vol. 7, No. 4 was published last night (as this newsletter was being finalized) and will be [found here](#).

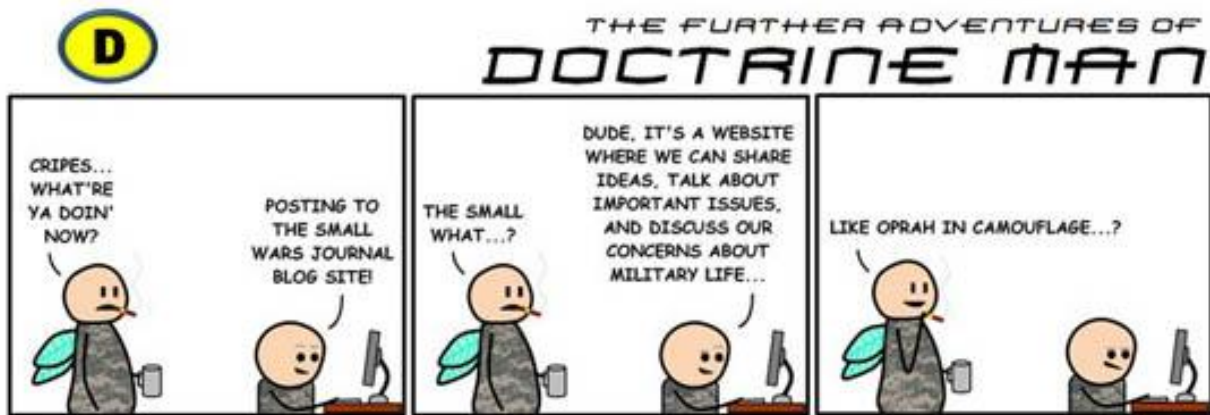
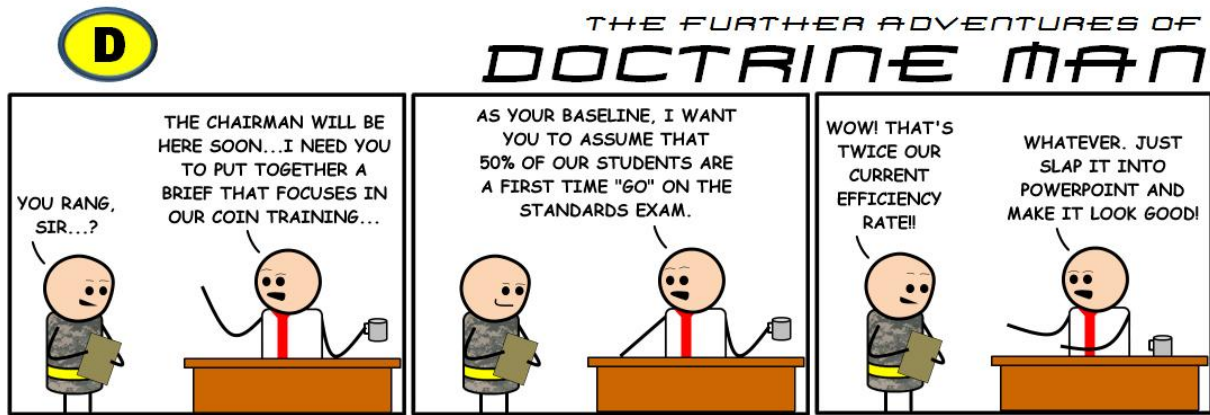
A recap (with links) of single published articles over the last month follows:

Simply a Nirvana Fallacy (4 April) by Metin Turcan. Author suggests that the tribal and rural characteristics of Afghanistan precede the Islamic identity of Afghanistan, and therefore, the current debacle of international community in rural Afghanistan does not conform to established frames or assumptions in the literature.

Shaping a Culture of Privacy in the DoD (5 April) by Michael E. Reheuser. A response to a 6 December SWJ article

entitled *The Military's Cultural Disregard for Personal Information* concerning the DoD overreliance on Social Security Numbers as a common identifier

and the risks which its pervasiveness present to military personnel both at home and deployed across the globe.



Look for Doctrine Man Adventures created exclusively for SWJ in each issue of the newsletter.

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To Design or Not to Design (Part Four) (5 April) by Ben Zweibelson. Major Zweibelson continues his series (part 4 of 6) on Design doctrine and suggests that U.S. Army design doctrine suffers an identity crisis in which holistic approaches to complex systems struggles with an institutional preference for tacticizing all levels of war.

Defense in an Age of Austerity: 2022 (6 April) by Neoptolemus, a retired infantry officer, currently a senior defense official in the Pentagon. Article is a fictionalized speech is delivered by a future Secretary of Defense in 2022. It discusses the implementation of the results of the Preserving America's Economic Security Commission.

Attacks on Journalists and "New Media" in Mexico's Drug War: A Power and Counter Power Assessment (9 April) by John P. Sullivan. Lieutenant Sullivan of the Los Angeles Sheriff's Department examines the impact of attacks on journalists on media reportage within Mexico's drug wars, known as "la Inse-

guridad" in Mexico. It examines two concepts in communication theory (agenda-setting theory and "mind framing" for power and counter-power) to frame the impact of drug cartel information operations (info ops).

The Pacification of Zaganiyah (Part One): Fighting for Intelligence to Overcome the Information Gap (6 April) by James Michael Few. Major Few discusses perfecting the proper mixture of gentle influence and violent coercion required by an external intervention force conducting counterinsurgency. His essay describes how one Army reconnaissance unit approached this issue in a small village perched in a rural, hostile valley.

Tell Me How to Do This Thing Called Design! (8 April) by Grant Martin. Major Martin discusses how he, and many others, believes there is too much theory and not enough practical application associated with "Design". His article is sympathetic towards those who desire

less background theory and more operational “how to” instructions.

Civil Affairs as a General Purpose Force: An Opportunity (10 April) by Phil W. Reynolds. Major Reynolds maintains that CA doctrine has not kept pace with the execution of CMO by maneuver forces and this is creating a dangerous seam. CA is supposed to provide the commander with expertise in the execution of tasks that deal with the civil component of the battlefield. Stability Operations, Security Assistance and Non-Lethal Targeting all are areas which need to be addressed because of their strong civil component. With publications like FM 3-07 and FM 3-0 outstripping CA doctrine, the framework of operational themes and missions to CA missions is broken.

The Statistical Irrelevance of American SIGACT Data: Iraq Surge Analysis Reveals Reality (12 April) by Joshua Thiel. Major Thiel writes that maneuver warfare at its core is a mechanistic endeavor and fits with a corresponding necessity of top-down hierarchies. Conversely, counterinsurgency is a more ambiguous environment that varies in its complexity and context; it is the chess match of war. It is different in every locale and can cover the entire spectrum of war simultaneously. Consequently, counterinsurgency is difficult to put on a bumper sticker, to trademark as a catch phrase, or sell to a population and their representatives.

Stuxnet: Cyberwar Revolution in Military Affairs (14 April) by Paulo Shakarian. Captain Shakarian argues that that the malicious software Stuxnet represents a revolution in military affairs (RMA) in the virtual realm – that it fundamentally changes the nature of cyber warfare.

To Design or Not to Design (Part Five) (14 April) by Ben Zweibelson. Major Zweibelson continues his discussion concerning design. He begins by writing that the invention of writing made standardization and conceptual control of information both possible and necessary as human civilizations passed experiences and values from one generation to the next. “Writing makes possible the codification and systemization of assertion, and hence the birth of doctrine.” Doctrine originally fused religious ritual with the exclusivity and power of literacy. The educated minority subsequently created effective models for controlling human action, and through both access and knowledge of codified information, limit how the majority could deviate from them.

Warlord’s Writing Tips (16 April) by John M. Collins. This short writing guide appeared as part of a larger article, *Sharp pens sharpen swords: writing for professional publications*, in the May-June 2006 issue of *Military Review*. It is republished by SWJ with the author’s kind permission.

Iraq: The Whole Thing Was Much Harder Than It Needed To Be (19 April) by Robert Tollast. Three former diplomats who served in Iraq during three phases of the conflict share their thoughts on the security, economic and political issues of their time in country. While Iraq faces many tests in the months and years ahead, especially following the departure of U.S. forces at the end of this year, it now stands as the Arab world’s first experiment in liberal democracy with a genuine chance of success.

The Case for Joint Professional Security Education for the Afghan National Security Forces (20 April) by Warren K. Vaneman. Captain (USN) Vaneman writes that during the 25 years since the enactment of the Goldwater-Nichols Act, the U.S. Military has embraced the reforms that paved the way to develop joint warfare capabilities. One of the main tenets credited with the advancement of joint collaboration was the development of service specific officers into joint officers through Joint Professional Military Education (JPME). Today, the NATO Training Mission-Afghanistan (NTM-A)/Combined Security Transition Command- Afghanistan (CSTC-A) is working to convey the lessons learned by the U.S. Military, during the last quarter of a century, to the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) by establishing Joint Professional Security Education (JPSE). However, will JPSE work in Afghanistan?

Sandals and Robes to Business Suits and Gulf Streams: Warfare in the 21st Century (20 April) by Michael T. Flynn. Major General Flynn writes that used to be a bi-polar structure, state on state. Our defense establishment was more concerned with templating our enemies in a force-on-force engagement that was grounded in understood “rules of war.” The battlefield was linear and structured, with clearly defined battle lines. We could isolate, contain, outflank, and attack our enemies well into the depths of the rear of their formations. Our enemies had tangible and recognizable infrastructures that, when attacked, could shut down their telecommunications networks and transportation systems. We were able to counter their numbers. There were parallel technologies, and in most cases numerical capabilities that we could quantitatively

overcome. There were observable indications and warnings that enabled our high-tech intelligence system the advantage to provide the necessary early warning to detect movement of our enemy’s formations. Those were the days.

War by Any Other Name Is War (27 April) by Jason Whiteley. The author argues that in *Starship Troopers*, Robert Heinlein wrote that, “War is controlled violence, for a purpose.” After the recent military intervention in Libya there has been a rush in some circles to distinguish the purpose of this most recent episode of ‘controlled violence’ from those military offensives launched by the United States against Iraq and Afghanistan in 2003 and 2001, respectively. Analysts aplenty have published observations on the normative use of military force and even provided frameworks for analyzing the latter half of Heinlein’s quotation. However, to better inform ourselves on the context of the question of whether or not to initiate ‘controlled violence,’ we, as citizens, must also be certain that we have a common understanding of what is meant by war.

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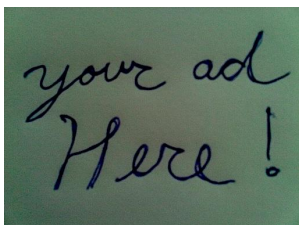


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Beyond the Basics: Looking Beyond the Conventional Wisdom Surrounding the IDF Campaigns against Hizbullah and Hamas (28 April) by Lazar Berman. The author writes that the United States military devotes great resources and attention to understanding the Israeli campaigns against Hizbullah (2006) and Hamas (2008-9). The Pentagon has sent

at least twelve teams to interview Israeli officers who fought in the 2006 Second Lebanon War. The conventional wisdom, especially in the US military, is that the IDF erred in several key areas during the Second Lebanon War. The IDF ceased training for high-intensity warfare. Perhaps more damagingly, the wisdom holds, the IDF adopted a new doctrine based on Effects-Based Operations (EBO), a doctrine that led IDF generals to abandon ground maneuver, and to believe they could defeat Hizbullah from the air. After the war, according to this approach, the IDF simply returned to previous understandings and doctrine, as shown in Operation Cast Lead in 2008/9.

A Primer for Generating Force Integrated Strategy to Campaign Plan Development (29 April) by Rob Thornton. This paper is designed to assist organizations responsible for strategic planning in understanding how a process can be used to develop a business strategy and how it can be used to operationalize that strategy into FY (Fiscal Year) campaign plans within the Generating Force. The paper does not seek to distinguish who has authority to make a strategy with respect to establishing an overarching course that guides actions, rather it seeks to assist those charged with strategic planning in distinguishing why the Generating Force may require specific processes based on the nature of its roles, responsibilities and the constraints, limitations and conditions that affect it.



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SWJ Challenge Coins.



Coming this week as part of our 2011 fundraising campaign – the *Small Wars Journal* challenge coin. The front image is called *Tracking Bin Laden* and was painted by U.S. Army Center of Military History, Museum Division's staff artist Sergeant First Class Elzie Ray Golden, US Army. The image on the back of the coin is called *After the Battle* and was painted by Michael R. Crook in Tan Hep, Vietnam, 1967. Both paintings are part of the U.S. Army art collection. Be looking for details on how to snag one very soon at *Small Wars Journal*.



Blog. Don't forget to catch SWJ Managing Editor Robert Haddick's weekly op-ed, *This Week at War* on Friday evenings at *Foreign Policy* and SWJ Blog.

Here are April's THAWs:

- *Don't Arm the Rebels, Train Them* (1 April). Topics include Libya's rebels need boot camp, not more weapons and a new bomber is cheaper than Tomahawks -- if you do enough bombing.
- *Waiting for the Intermission* (8 April). Topics include how to play the stalemate in Libya and Afg-

han skeptics prepare to take over in Washington.

- *What if the Surge Didn't Work?* (15 April). Topics include do troop surges really work and NATO looks for a new strategy in Libya.
- *Billions for Libya?* (22 April). Topics include the cost of getting serious in Libya and Mexico's drug cartels try to control the message -- and spark a media insurgency.
- *Company Men* (29 April). Topics include the long-anticipated yet sweeping reorganization of the national security team and where Panetta stands on grand strategy.

SWJ Blog staples include the daily news and opinion roundup as well as standalone links to professional journal, professional military education, and think tank articles, studies and papers of importance to our community of interest and practice, SWJ staff op-eds, and information concerning Small Wars-related conferences, seminars and webcasts.

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Council. Join other members of the Small Wars Council in conversations on topics of interest to our community of interest and practice. Register here to access all the forums and conversation threads, and to establish your own profile. Below are just a few of the current conversations you can join.

And Libya Goes On... "The US will certainly be a spent force, and soon, if it doesn't reduce the number and scale of

its interventions abroad. There's no quicker way to become a spent force than to spend your force on fights you don't need to be in and staying in fights long after you need to be there. The US has done way too much of that recently, and paid a high price. Many Americans would argue that any involvement in Libya was too much, and from a purely pragmatic standpoint they have excellent arguments, but keeping the involvement limited and stepping back to a supporting role as soon as possible are steps in the right direction. A lot more great powers and empires have fallen from overreach and overextension abroad than from failure to assert themselves abroad..."

(Response) "Wrong again. The US problem has been that it continues to apply the *brute force with ignorance* approach to such interventions. Direct involvement in Afghanistan should have terminated when the Taliban government folded. The Libyan involvement seems to have been passed to NATO. Even the \$500m worth of missiles was overkill and probably largely wasted. So the approach to Libya is better in that they looked for a short sharp intervention to achieve that mission but the implementation was woeful (probably because of micro management by politicians). But essentially you are correct in that until the US learns how to intervene in a short sharp (probably very violent) manner to achieve the aim it is better they just stay out of these conflicts as they would tend to do more harm than good. Sadly often good intentions are spoilt by poor execution. The US military must take some responsibility for this."

More Piracy Near Somalia "For a while, yeah. But piracy is going to be an issue on some timeline no matter what. We can beat it down now and see a re-

surge in a year or two or five, or we can work to contain it and also work to remove the root cause. It seems unlikely that we can do both, or I might advocate that. Because the money is not the only thing sustaining this activity. If it were just money, then we'd see people from every corner of the globe, first world certainly included, engaging in this sort of piracy. I don't know about you, but *my* projects don't net hundreds of thousands to millions of dollars each. I know a lot of other people who don't see that kind of money, either.”

(Response) “Money is half of what sustains piracy. The other half is the absence of adverse consequences. People in most corners of the globe don't engage in piracy because they wouldn't end up rich, they'd end up in jail, or dead. People don't want to be in jail or dead, so they don't hold ships for ransom. Take away the adverse consequences, keep the profitability in place, and people hold ships for ransom. If you want to remove the root causes, focus on the root causes: high profitability and few or no consequences. Reduce the profitability and/or impose consequences, piracy ceases to be attractive. If the "root causes" were poverty, overfishing, and waste dumping, you'd see a lot more piracy around the world, because none of those are unique to Somalia. You don't see them in many other places because people in those places are afraid of the consequences. What is unique to Somalia is the complete absence of governance capable of imposing consequences in a place with easy, direct access to busy sea lanes. Of course if we could establish stable effective governance in Somalia that would end piracy, but we can't... so what's the point in discussing it?”

The Roles and Weapons with the Squad “In regards to the SA-80, all I've ever heard from Brit soldiers is complaints. I was sharing a range with some Brits in AF a couple of months ago and they were ogling over my M4. They mentioned they were supposed to be transitioning to the M4 sometime in the future. I don't know the truth of that - maybe just soldier rumor mill. The bullpup design certainly has its advantages. In regards to some such as the Steyr AUG, the manufacturer needs to modify it a bit with standard rail systems to allow for attachments and a choice of optics. For those who really need to shorten the M4 length, there is always the option of the "shorty" barrels a lot of SOF guys like to use. Good for MOUT, but obvious a little less on the max effective range in long engagements. But, if you know the ballistics of your rifle you can always engage effectively with your weapon - whatever it is. An M4 can hit man-sized targets consistently 500 - 600 meters if you know how to judge the winds. It just takes practice.”

(Response) “About ten years ago the Brits wanted to improve the reliability of the SA-80 5.56mm standard issue shoulder arm. The German arms design and manufacturing company Heckler and Koch was employed and reportedly did a good job. It is likely that Brit soldiers in Afghanistan have been issued the upgraded SA-80. So their complaints could be instance of poor reputation following like a bad smell regardless of improvement, or the improvement was inadequate. SA-80 has been in service for several decades and perception - even if misguided - counts for a lot, so Brit Army may have decided to succeed the SA-80 with a weapon that is clearly better. That weapon could be the M4. But the M4 operates with direct gas

which also smells. Successor for the SA-80 is more likely to be the FN Mk16 or the HK416 as both have gas piston operation. Externally the HK416 resembles the M4 so that is a possible source of confusion. The F88 AUG currently produced by ADI has Picatinny sight rail plus forward lower assembly with handgrip or 40mm grenade launcher plus side rails for laser designator/pointer, taclight, etc. For operation in Afghanistan and elsewhere the F88 carries many different combinations of reflex, and variable magnification day and night sights. The particular combination can be partly a user choice. For rifle shooting at 500m and beyond it would be preferable to use a 7.62mm big brother such as the fwd-mag FN Mk17 or HK417. FN and H&K each seem to have plenty of corporate energy, so hopefully and before long it will be possible to use a bullpup relative of the Mk17 or HK417.”

Stuxnet: Target Bushehr? “Stuxnet lacked, as can be seen readily by some of the results of the HBGary debacle, what's known as 'anti-reverse' code. Meaning it didn't have any provisions to protect it against decompilation or reverse engineering. Which considering everything else it was doing was something of a serious oversight. It had somewhat obscure, but still present pointers that have caused some attempts at attribution in the code. That if it was intentionally diversionary was a good idea. If it wasn't a diversion, well obviously in that case it's clear it was a really bad idea. Strategically there are some different things I probably would have done that the authors didn't do. On the other hand, it did some really slick things too, and interestingly enough the stuff that's interesting are attributes that aren't of any great use to the criminal

malware community, and granted it's something of an idiot filled sewer, but not completely either. If that was the case no one would need AV software anymore.”



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2011 Best U.S. Navy Blog
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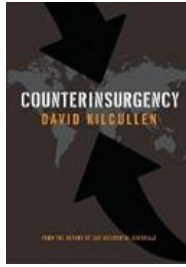
Starbuck and Zenpundit: Recommended Reading

Welcome to “Recommended Reading” where Crispin Burke (Starbuck) and Mark Safranski (Zenpundit) offer SWJ readers intriguing links from the previous month in a tidy digest format.

Insurgent Consciousness (Alex Olesker): Jihadist Rap and Counterinsurgent Poems - Cultural adaptation by al Qaida and radical Islamists and their implications.

Milpub (Seydlitz89): Erwin Rommel's First Offensive In North Africa - A very different Libyan campaign.

Best Defense (Tom Ricks): Dempsey: Here is Who I Am, Okay? - The new CSA, English major and avowed Power-Point hater, for starters.



Counterinsurgency

Dr. David Kilcullen

**Dedicated to
Small Wars Journal**

Defense-Aerospace (U.S. Army): Army Develops Smartphone Framework, Applications for the Front Lines - Wanna kill the Taliban? There's an app for that!

Maggie's Farm (Bruce Kesler): Functional analysis of President Obama's Foreign Policies - Kesler argues that Obama's foreign policy is a result of internalizing the worldview of Cold War Revisionist historians, an interesting take in light of the next link.

*Democracy Journal (Anatol Lieven): Strength Through Restraint - Lieven calls for a deliberate reduction of American power in a review of Charles Kupchan's *How Enemies Become Friends*.*

Fast Company (Neal Ungerleider): Counterterrorism Software Helps Cops Shine Light Into Terrorism's Dark Corners - An impressive open source fusion data base tools.

Popular Science (Clay Dillow): 2020 Vision: A Look Forward to the Promises of A Truly Amazing Year - Futurism of synthetic brains, asteroid mining and decent looking augmented reality glasses.

Abu Muqawama (Erin Simpson): Rules for Using Statistics Outside of Baseball - Take this in conjunction with last year's discussion on metrics at SWJ.

Iron Dice (Iron Captain): Recent Brigade Commander Fails Have the CSA's

Attention - General Dempsey promises action to curb leadership failures.

Washington Post (Greg Jaffe): How the US Military Fell in Love With "Three Cups of Tea" - Much of the military's belief in tea culture can be traced back to Greg Mortenson and his memoir. Also see related comments posted at SWJ.

Small Wars Journal (David Ucko): Counterinsurgency and its Discontents - The value of retaining counterinsurgency as a concept, along with its associated principles and theory.

Wings over Iraq (Adam Elkus): Magic Bullets and Charity - It's time to apply some of the same critiques of COIN and military operations to soft power. Building schools does not change the nature of power politics or negate the fundamentally political reason that drives conflict.

Jamestown Foundation (Roger McDermott): Russia's "Spineless" Army: Paper Sergeants - The NCO cadre has effectively ceased to exist in Russia, and the latest efforts to address this crucial issue have been encased in another experiment.

*Line of Departure (Carl Prine): Rolling Porn - *Rolling Stone's* "Kill Team" wasn't journalistic poison, like Hastings' latest story "Another Runaway General: Army Deploys Psy-Ops on U.S. Senators" which was lamentably horrible, but it also wasn't very well written, researched or edited, which is a shame because most of the facts it details are true.*

Foreign Policy (Stephen Walt): Top Five Reasons We Keep Fighting All These Wars - It remains to be seen whether this latest lurch into war will pay off or not, and whether the United States and its allies will have saved lives or squan-

dered them. But the real question we should be asking is: *Why does this keep happening?*

New York Times (Ben Brantley): Tale of the Iraq War, Still Resonating - The touring production of "Black Watch," a group portrait of Scottish soldiers in Iraq that was first seen here in 2007, still feels as fresh and raw as the recruits portrayed by its young, open-faced new cast members. These lads of the Black Watch, a centuries-old regiment of the Scottish Highlands, are as spontaneously foul-mouthed, exuberant, angry and frightened as they were four years ago.

Huffington Post (Adam Elkus): The Flexibility of Conventional Warfare - There are basically two "ideal" types of military operations - irregular warfare fought by guerrillas and terrorists on the small-unit level and regular force-on-force engagement drawing on the employment of combined arms. Because these are ideal types, most wars are a mixture of the two.

Wall Street Journal (David Mamet): Looking at War from Many Angles - Five best books, David Mamet looks at war.

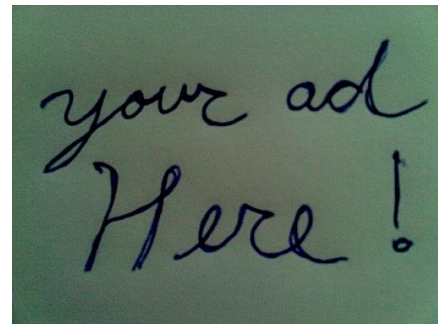
The Atlantic (Diana Wueger): The Global Risk of Arming Libya's Rebels - Flooding the country with guns could set off an unpredictable and dangerous chain of events. We've seen it happen before.

The Offshore Balancer (Patrick Porter): Intervention vs. Counter Proliferation - Reading *Obama's Wars* overnight, it is striking that when they considered a new strategy in the Af-Pak region, Obama's advisors briefly speculated on whether an invasion of Pakistan was conceivable, against a client state playing a double game in support of Ameri-

can and anti-American interests. They dismissed it quickly: on the basis that Pakistan is a nuclear state. Deterrence, it seems, can take effect.

Thinking Strategically (Aaron Ellis): Failed States and Their Threat to Our Country - The conventional wisdom that failed states are ideal homes for international terrorism is not true, and the solution is not a quasi-military one, as David Cameron believes, but a diplomatic one.

Foreign Affairs (Nassim Teleb): The Black Swan of Cairo - The upheavals in the Middle East have much in common with the recent global financial crisis: both were plausible worst-case scenarios whose probability was dramatically underestimated. When policymakers try to suppress economic or political volatility, they only increase the risk of blowups.



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Professional Reading

Great Small Wars-related articles and talented authors are not limited to SWJ. Here are some recent (or recently caught our eye) items of interest from national defense related journals and magazines.

Counterinsurgency and Its Discontents: Assessing the Value of a Divisive Concept (April) by David Ucko, *Stiftung*

Wissenschaft und Politik. Dr. Ucko's article examines the value of retaining counterinsurgency as a concept, along with its associated principles and theory. Much depends on what is expected from this term, which lacks both definition and clear substance. Counterinsurgency provides neither a strategy for military intervention nor a campaign plan for deployed soldiers and will fail if mistaken for more than what it is. Counterinsurgency does offer a collection of insights, which, if used in a manner sensitive to local context, can help in the design and execution of expeditionary campaigns.

An Evaluation of Counterinsurgency as a Strategy for Fighting the Long War (21 March) by Lieutenant Colonel Baum Fulk, U.S. Army War College Strategic Studies Institute Letort Papers. LTC Fulk argues that The Long War is anticipated to continue for decades, perhaps generations. Thus, it is imperative to select the best strategy or strategies for employing military forces. Based on historical lessons in combating terrorism, the best strategy is efficient and sustainable and avoids overreacting, acting incompetently, or appearing to be either over reactive or incompetent.

A Long-Term Counterinsurgency Strategy (Autumn 2010) by John James Patterson VI, *Parameters*. Commander Patterson addresses the global demands of US interests on the military in the "Long War" and the distinct possibility that those demands may exceed the means available, particularly amid the likelihood of shrinking defense budgets resulting from continued economic strain. He maintains that the SOF-airpower team provides a uniquely high level of strategic return on investment across the spectrum of irregular warfare

which remains unrivaled within the military element of national power.

The Way Out of Afghanistan (March-April) by Bing West, *Military Review*. Bing West argues that Afghanistan was the wrong war for the counterinsurgency strategy. Our troops are not the Peace Corps; they are fighters. Let them fight, and let the Taliban fear.

"Monetary Ammunition" in a Counterinsurgency (Autumn 2010) by Seth Bodnar and Jeremy Gwinn, *Parameters*. Majors Bodnar and Gwinn maintain that while billions of economic aid dollars have been spent in support of US operations in volatile regions around the world, there is little understanding of the effectiveness of this spending or how best to employ this important resource. Anecdotal evidence abounds, but it is still very difficult to say with any confidence what actually works. At best, this state of affairs wastes vast sums of money for little purpose; at worst, it can be an unintended boon to our enemies.

Message to the Next SecDef (April) by Joseph J. Collins, *Armed Forces Journal*. COL (Ret.) Collins writes that some capabilities need to be nurtured and protected. Gates has lauded one such capability – the provision of advisers and security assistance. Counterinsurgency (COIN) will continue to be an important mission, but expeditionary force COIN will be the exception, and "COIN Lite" the rule. Helping others help themselves might prevent a larger conflict. It also avoids wear and tear on our forces and makes sense operationally. Armies of Western soldiers cannot defeat an insurgency; ultimately, local forces have to do it. The provision of thousands of advisers worldwide will be an important mission for special operations and general purpose forces.

The Insurgent's Response to the Defense of Cities (Autumn 2010) by Eric Jardine, *Parameters*. Dr. Jardine writes that a significant and recurring feature of most, if not all, counterinsurgency campaigns is that the forces of counterinsurgency begin their efforts in the major cities of a contested country. Ideally, once effective control within these urban centers is achieved, the forces of the counterinsurgency then work outward from these islands of geographic isolation in an effort to establish political and administrative control over the rural countryside.

Hunt to Kill (March) by A.E. Stahl, *Armed Forces Journal*. The author maintains that "targeted warfare" has a legitimate place on the irregular battlefield. In increasingly complicated security dilemmas, some states are finally and overtly coming to grips with the reality that blunt military responses are the path to progress. The engagement in an attempted "kinder, gentler war" to quell severe and irregular warfare is simply not working, nor should it have ever been expected to work in places such as Afghanistan.

Military Theory, Strategy, and Praxis (March-April) by Jacob W. Kipp and Lester W. Grau, *Military Review*. Dr. Kipp and LTC Grau write that strategy today is not what it was during the Cold War or even during World War II. There is a radical difference between strategy formulated to fight conventional wars and deter nuclear wars and that necessary to conduct armed struggle in the post-modern world. The state no longer defines the nature of the conflict in the latter case. In regards to South Asia they argue that one should not confuse articulating a strategy with predicting the course and outcome of the conflict. There are too many variables beyond the

power of even the United States to control. In the final analysis, the peoples of Afghanistan and Pakistan will determine the outcome of the conflict.

An Excerpt from "The Wrong War" (April) by Bing West, *Marine Corps Gazette*. Excerpt from Bing West's latest book *The Wrong War: Grit, Strategy and the Way Out of Afghanistan*. Mr. West maintains that Afghanistan was the wrong war for our strategy of benevolent counterinsurgency. Our strategy has been to give money and some protection to the Pashtun tribes in order to win over their hearts and minds. In return, the Pashtuns were expected to stand against the Taliban who were, in fact, their stronger relatives. This strategy has failed. The Pashtuns have not rejected the Taliban.

Lost in Libya: The U.K. Does Not Understand Strategy (April 2011) by Patrick Porter, *Infinity Journal* (free registration required). Dr. Porter writes that the limited war of 2011 would refuse to be quarantined. After all other options were exhausted, it could culminate in a land war against Tripoli. Distressingly, we would shoulder the burden of invading, pacifying and administering this country. Occupation would probably lead to resistance – and Libya propelled more foreign-born jihadi volunteers into Iraq than any other nation. A new front in the War on Terror would open up. Idealists now calling for humanitarian rescue would discover that all along they opposed Western imperial hubris.

Human Security in Complex Operations (March) by Mary Kaldor, *Prism*. Professor Kaldor writes that human security has a multifaceted definition which includes the security of individuals rather than states; security from both violence

and economic and environmental threats; and security that is established through law rather than through war. It is a concept that can facilitate both the way one understands complex operations and how one designs the toolkit for addressing these risks and dangers. Although related and overlapping, human security is distinct from counterinsurgency.

Greater Than the Sum of Its Parts: Putting the Inter into the Interagency (March) by Eric A. Jorgensen, *Prism*. Col Jorgensen writes that genuine interagency coordination and collaboration remain merely aspirational. In order to achieve true interagency coordination and collaboration, horizontal and vertical reorganization of the executive branch is needed. Such horizontal reorganization would align departmental and agency expert areas and integrate regional responsibilities.

Interagency National Security Teams: Can Social Science Contribute? (March) by James Douglas Orton with Christopher J. Lamb, *Prism*. Dr. Orton and Dr. Lamb maintain that social science can serve national security practitioners by providing insights on best practices for interagency teams. The interagency team approach is an increasingly frequent recommendation for solving the much lamented problem of inadequate coordination and collaboration for national security. Historical examples indicate interagency teams can indeed be highly effective, but recent research at NDU also suggests that interagency team effectiveness is not widespread, easily replicated, or well understood.

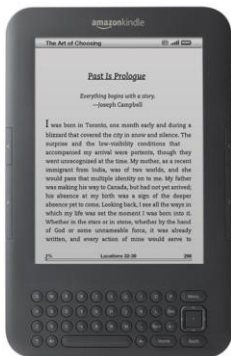
Undermanned, Overwhelmed (March) by Dan Green, *Armed Forces Journal*. The author writes that much of our ap-

proach to stability operations has been about doing what our bureaucracies are comfortable with rather than dealing with the problem of insurgency on its own terms. A significant portion of our approach is capital-centric, biased toward formal government institutions, focused on long-term development versus stabilization and imperfectly partnered with the U.S. military. In the face of an opponent that blends civil and military approaches seamlessly, is strongest in the countryside, has a nuanced engagement strategy with the local population, and has no manpower shortage, we shouldn't be surprised at the problems.

The Comprehensive Approach in Afghanistan (March) by James G. Stavridis, *Prism*. Admiral Stavridis writes that counterinsurgency has always required a holistic or comprehensive approach of one form or another. At the global level, the comprehensive approach articulates the connections of the full spectrum of complexity of operations, from security through rule of law and governance to humanitarianism, and describes the most appropriate roles for soldiers and civilians. At the national level, it is an approach that conceptualizes the interaction among security forces, the rest of government, and civil society. Yet, the realization of the comprehensive approach internationally and in the host country remains problematic.

Rethinking the Fundamentals of Statebuilding (March) by Roger B. Myerson, *Prism*. Dr. Myerson writes that successful stabilization depends on the new regime developing a political network that distributes power and patronage throughout the nation, whether the power network manifests in democratic form, feudal form, or colonial form. In a decentralized regime, local leaders

throughout the nation can compete for a share of power even if they are not affiliated with the faction that controls national power at the center. Thus, a decentralized system can create a broad class of local leaders in all communities who have a positive expected stake in defending the new political system. Yet the leading collaborators of a stabilization operation may endorse a system of narrow political centralization. Paradoxically, for the sake of expediency and convenience, such centralization may initially be welcomed by foreign interveners, although it may itself be destabilizing. Planning for a successful state-building stability mission requires a more expansive perspective and an understanding of the stability impact of the constitutional distribution of power.



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[Airpower in Counterinsurgency and Stability Operations](#) (March) by Norton A. Schwartz, *Prism*. General Schwartz writes that since the dawn of aviation, airpower has played an important role in counterinsurgency operations. This has been especially true as the security situations in Iraq and Afghanistan have deteriorated. While ground forces learned to reapply old lessons to a new environment, air support was reshaped to provide an asymmetric advantage. The capabilities that were developed have become indispensable for conducting a modern counterinsurgency effort. The proliferation of anti-access and area

denial capabilities along with long-range precision weaponry will result in greater challenges for all military operations, even COIN. Airpower will continue to provide critical support and must integrate lessons from operations in Afghanistan and Iraq.

SWJ Interviews

Recent *Small Wars Journal* interviews with links:

[Interview with Dr. David Kilcullen](#) (7 November) by Octavian Manea. The counterinsurgency founding fathers of the '50s and '60s are still relevant, but the practice in the field has moved on significantly in the last 5 years.

[Interview with Colonel Peter Mansoor](#) (9 November) by Octavian Manea. Local relationships are really the key in winning a counterinsurgency.

[Interview with Dr. John Nagl](#) (11 November) by Octavian Manea. Counterinsurgencies are after all learning competitions.

[Interview with Dr. David Ucko](#) (14 November) by Octavian Manea. The conceptual and institutional advances within the U.S. military since Iraq are the product of a whole counterinsurgency community.

[Counterinsurgency Insights with Tom Ricks](#) (17 November) by Octavian Manea. The U.S. Army organizational culture before emphasis on counterinsurgency.

[Interview with Brigadier General \(ret\) Dr. Klaus Wittmann](#) (18 November) by Octavian Manea. A new NATO social contract.

[Interview with Colonel Gian Gentile](#) (14 December) by Octavian Manea. Think-

ing critically about counterinsurgency and creatively about strategy and war.

Interview with Colonel Alexander Alderson (26 January) by Octavian Manea. Counterinsurgency as a whole of government approach: Notes on the British Army Field Manual Weltanschauung.

Interview with Jeffrey Dressler (1 February) by Octavian Manea. An interim assessment on the campaign for regaining the momentum in Helmand Province, Afghanistan.

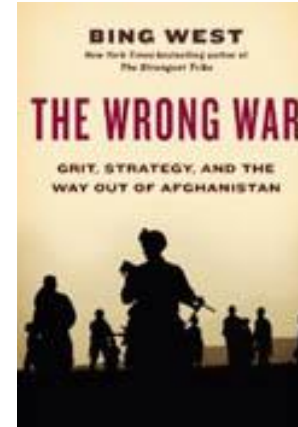
Interview with Karl Hack (11 February) by Octavian Manea. Setting the record straight on Malayan counterinsurgency strategy.

Interview with Bing West (21 February) by Michael Few. The wrong war; grit, strategy, and the way out of Afghanistan.

Interview with Etienne de Durand (3 March) by Octavian Manea. Reflections on the French school of counter-rebellion.

Interview with General Jack Keane (5 April) by Octavian Manea. Continuation of Octavian Manea's interview series at SWJ. General Keane discusses the philosophy behind the Iraq "surge" and other issues associated with conducting a successful counterinsurgency campaign.

Interviews with Professor Theo Farrell and Major General Nick Carter (14 April) by Octavian Manea. The Battle for Helmand: Observations and lessons from the field.



The Wrong War: Grit, Strategy and the Way Out of Afghanistan
By Bing West

SWJ Book Reviews

Wrong War, Wrong Policy, or Wrong Tactics?

Review by F. G. Hoffman

Bing West, *The Wrong War, Grit, Strategy, and the Way Out of Afghanistan*, New York: Random House, 2011, 307 pg, \$27.95. (maps and photographs)

The Long War against extremism has spawned an explosion in books on global terrorism and America's interventions in Iraq and Afghanistan. While Operation Enduring Freedom was the first counter-blow, following quickly on the heels of 9/11, it has not garnered as much attention as the larger Iraqi conflict. In contrast, the protracted contest in Mesopotamia generated George Packer's *Assassin's Gate*, Tom Ricks' superlative *Fiasco* and *The Gamble*, and Linda Robinson's *Tell Me How This Ends* among others.

Afghanistan has produced some notable exceptions. Sean Naylor's *Not a Good Day to Die* topped the field until Sebastian Junger's *War* was issued last year. The former was an operational history of

the ferocious fight against Al Qaeda in the Shahikot Valley during Operation Anaconda in March 2002. Junger's micro-epic focused more narrowly on a small unit over a longer period of time in 2008 in the Korengal Valley.

The imbalance in our bookshelves is starting to become rectified, and Bing West's latest book tops the list. Mr. West, a former Marine, Pentagon policy official and noted author, brings much insight and no small amount of prior experience to this particular subject. During the Vietnam War, he had the opportunity to closely examine creative approaches and political complications of modern conflict. His first book, the renowned *The Village*, captured the complexity of American efforts to provide local security assistance to a foreign population beleaguered by a fierce conflict.

West strapped on his armor once again decades later in *The March Up*, co-authored with Marine Major General Ray Smith. This offered a close up account of modern ground fighting with the 1st Marine Division during its rapid drive to Baghdad from 20 March to 10 April 2003. West surpassed it with *No True Glory*, a magisterial depiction of Operations Vigilant Resolve and Phantom Fury, the 1st Marine Division's two thrusts into the dangerous streets of Fal-lujah.

As in all his works, Mr. West brings an experienced military eye to his project. He captures the military viewpoint extremely well, both in terms of the nature of the terrain and the character of the fighting. I don't think anyone else has truly captured the day-to-day life of the infantryman (Marine or Army) since James Webb, another Vietnam grunt. There is probably no better chronicler of

a grunt's perspective of combat today. His writing is so vivid, one almost feels the heavy packs cutting deeper into the shoulder, smells the sweat in soiled Under Armor T shirts, and the lingering cordite in the air after each contact. *The Wrong War* complements West's superb narrative with equally excellent maps, an all too rare necessity for truly comprehending the story.

Simply put, West's ability to capture the tactical context of battle and the human element is unsurpassed. There is something to be said for the maxim that war can only be best described by those who have borne witness to the face of war and fought themselves.

While nine tenths of *The Wrong War* is a graphic narrative of patrols and daily military life in Afghanistan, West's central theme is that American military forces are not fighting the war properly. To West the U.S. military is following academic theories about counterinsurgency, based on a doctrine that links operational success to the constrained use of force and population security, coupled with development and assistance. To West this has sapped the martial spirit of our armed services, making them a "gigantic Peace Corps" too involved with conducting shuras, sipping tea, and doling out dollars for local projects. The notion that Afghanistan can be won indirectly by winning over the neutral population is labeled a fantasy.

Despite his own experiences in Vietnam, West finds modern COIN doctrine incoherent. He correctly notes that FM 3-24 has shortfalls, particularly in its treatment of religion. To West, COIN doctrine fails to cover relevant circumstances found in today's theater, namely a government lacking legitimacy or

competence, and insurgents that enjoy external support and nearby sanctuary. These are not immaterial conditions, but they are quite normal for modern insurgencies. They complicate the application of sound COIN tactics and extend the length of insurgencies, but nonetheless they don't invalidate best practices. Admittedly, we need a broader range of operational approaches for modern COIN, but FM 3-24 is simply doctrine not a cookbook. It requires professional judgment in application, and American generals in Afghanistan have not been lacking when it comes to creative techniques or the measured use of violence. West makes existing US COIN doctrine into a caricature, "benevolent nation building" and "political drivel." The doctrine has its detractors, but few offer a cogent counter argument or an alternative doctrine. The COIN doctrine does not eliminate the need for force to "clear" enemy forces from population areas, quite the contrary. As the manual clearly notes, "killing or capturing insurgents will be necessary, especially when an insurgency is based in religious or ideological extremism." (p. 1-23)

Many insurgents were killed in Iraq in 2007 pursuant to the "surge" there, and many Taliban leaders and cadres have been targeted in Helmand and inside Pakistan. Good COIN doesn't eliminate the need to "neutralize the enemy," which Bing West properly calls the US military's core competency. However, the application of violence has to serve a large political objective and context, despite the U.S. military's strong predisposition to think and act tactically. Fighting and winning tactical battles was too often the problem in Vietnam, where we won almost all the actions. Despite the handicaps Mr. West aptly captures and the evident frustrations it creates, the

solution is not to be found in sweeps, kinetic surges, or massive bombings. Many observers find concrete signs of success in recent operations in places like Marja and Sagin, and those operations fit within our current COIN doctrine even if they focus more on influencing the hearts and minds of the opponent instead of the civilian population. As Nate Fick and John Nagl of the Center for a New American Security, both veterans of the long war, recently wrote on the progress being made in the southern provinces:

The United States certainly can't kill its way to victory, as it learned in Vietnam and Iraq, but it can put enough pressure on many Taliban fighters to encourage them to switch their allegiance, depriving the enemy of support and giving the coalition more sources of useful intelligence.

While Mr. West may find it to be a "theory that has enfeebled our warrior ethos," one has to conveniently overlook that progress in Helmand where aggressive patrolling, population security and local development projects are slowly degrading the Taliban. The grit being displayed by Marines there offer a way out, ultimately, and one more consistent with the COIN manual than simply dealing with the Taliban as a conventional adversary.

Surely, historically speaking, revolts and insurgencies can and have been beaten with sheer force. But I think Mr. West recognizes that neither ISAF nor the United States has the political will and resources to outfight the Taliban indefinitely. He recognizes that time is not on our side, that our efforts to bring about a less corrupt government depend on Mr.

Karzai and eliminating the opium trade, and that our development projects and cash created a sense of dependency or entitlement in Afghanistan. His preference for Afghanistan's fledgling forces bear the burden of their own defense has merit, but is it not a likely way to ensure U.S. core interests in the near term.

West is perceptive enough to realize that the clock is running out on America's patience. As this summer rolls around, and the 2012 Presidential election starts to heat up, the subject of our experiment in state-building in Afghanistan will be the central national security debate. Sustaining our forces there until 2014 is needed to bring about sustainable security. But many voters will find it hard to justify spending another \$300 to 400B (borrowed to boot) to keep Hamid Karzai's government in power and the Taliban at bay. The fragile state of our own economy makes it hard to sustain our commitment to a government in Kabul at the expense of Kalamazoo or Kansas City.

This is a timely product with clear policy implications. Thus, if you have not gotten a copy of this book yet, I would encourage you to do so immediately. If you have it at the bottom of a stack by your bedside, put it at the top and start it today. You won't regret it and I don't think you'll put it down either. One can argue with Mr. West's solution as a way out, but his pessimism and assessment come honestly and from intimate contact with the problem.

Mr. Hoffman is a retired Marine Reservist and frequent contributor to Small Wars Journal.

The Muslim Brotherhood: The Burden of Tradition by Alison Pargeter. Published by Saqi Books, London. 300 pages,

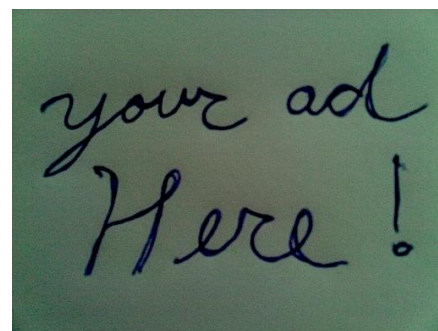
2010. *Small Wars Journal* review by Commander Youssef Aboul-Enein, MSC, USN.

The Ayatollah's Democracy: An Iranian Challenge by Hooman Majd. Published by W. W. Norton, New York. 2010, 282 pages. *Small Wars Journal* Review by Commander Youssef Aboul-Enein, MSC, USN.

How the Weak Win Wars: A Theory of Asymmetric Conflict by Ivan Arreguin-Toft. Published by Cambridge University Press, New York. 250 pages. *Small Wars Journal* review by Timothy Richardson.

US Civil-Military Relations After 9/11: Renegotiating the Civil-Military Bargain by Mackubin Thomas Owens. Published by Continuum Books, New York. 211 pages. *Small Wars Journal* review by Frank Hoffman.

Book Review: It Happened on the Way to War: A Marine's Path to Peace by Rye Barcott. Published by Bloomsbury USA, New York. 2011, 340 pages. *Small Wars Journal* review by Major Michael Few.



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Small Wars-Related Events

2 May: Field Report: The Fight to Secure Helmand Province; United States Navy Memorial, Washington, DC. Sponsored by the Institute for the Study of War and the Marine Corps Association. ISW and MCA cordially invite you to a conversation with Major General Richard Mills, the Commanding General of I Marine Expeditionary Force (Forward) and ISW's President, Dr. Kimberly Kagan. During their discussion, Major General Mills and Dr. Kagan will discuss counterinsurgency operations in Afghanistan, and the recent successes and future challenges in the coalition's fight to secure southern Afghanistan. No cost.

8 - 10 May: Transforming Public Security in the Americas; George Washington University, Washington, DC. Sponsored by the U.S. Army War College's Strategic Studies Institute, George Washington University, and others. The Western Hemisphere's experience shows that organized criminal networks, with their resilience and their ability to integrate domestic gangs and international syndicates, pose a grave and multidimensional threat to social development and regional stability. Governments can no longer treat this complex problem as a routine matter of domestic law enforcement, private security, and border control. To regain effective sovereignty, governments will need to approach public security by combining domestic and international elements in comprehensive responses that match the strength of the threat. This conference explores ways to transform the character and capacity of public security by integrating non-coercive and coercive responses to adversaries and creating positive momentum. The session seeks to rethink

how societies confront deteriorating security conditions and identify more effective practical domestic and sub regional practices without creating fresh imbalances among military, police and civilian institutions. \$

10 - 12 May: 2011 Joint Warfighting Conference and Exposition; Virginia Beach Convention Center, Virginia Beach, Virginia. Sponsored by the Armed Forces Communications and Electronics Association and the U.S. Naval Institute. The fifth annual Joint Warfighting Conference offers an East Coast companion to the popular AFCEA-USNI West conference held each year in San Diego, CA. This conference provides a premier venue for engaging the warriors and industry leaders who are shaping the nation's military strategies and warfighting platforms. \$ (for meals only)

23 - 25 May: 2nd Annual Irregular Warfare Summit 2011; Key Bridge Marriott, Arlington, Virginia. Sponsored by the Institute for Defense and Government Advancement. IDGA's 2nd IW Summit will present latest advancements for concepts, capabilities, requirements and lessons learned from recent Irregular Warfare efforts. This event will take a closer look at military strategies for irregular warfare including special operations forces, counter insurgency operations and complex environments. Due to increasing challenges, acquisition decisions are currently being made, as well as new requirements for industry. \$

26 May: International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers 8th Annual Conference: Creating a Secure Foundation for the Peace-builders; Whitehall, London, U.K. Sponsored by the Royal United Services Institute (RUSI). This annual conference, jointly organized by the

United Nations Association, Westminster Branch and RUSI, and supported by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, has established itself as one of the U.K.'s most authoritative reviews of U.N. peacekeeping activities. \$

1 - 2 June: RUSI Land Warfare Conference; Whitehall, London, U.K. Sponsored by the Royal United Services Institute (RUSI). The British Army faces a challenging period following the Strategic Defence and Security Review. It is required to achieve success in Afghanistan while beginning to transform for future conflict, and must undertake both these tasks while managing a very difficult financial situation. Although its operations in Afghanistan are protected, post SDSR the Army arguably has less certainty about its force structures and capabilities than the Royal Navy and Royal Air Force. The Land Warfare Conference is therefore a timely opportunity to influence thinking and decisions. It is the first public opportunity for RUSI and the Army to examine where land forces should be going following the Strategic Defence and Security Review by encouraging professional debate and discussion within the land environment and with a wider Whitehall and international community. \$

2 June: Center for a New American Security's (CNAS) Fifth Annual Conference; Willard InterContinental Hotel, 1401 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Washington, D.C. Sponsored by the Center for a New American Security (CNAS). Registration information, the agenda and featured speakers will be available at the link soon. This year's conference will focus on how the United States can manage global risk and seize opportunities in a time of growing economic constraint. Featured topics include cyber security and Internet freedom, the rapidly evol-

ving Middle East, a new phase of the war in Afghanistan, and cooperation and competition in the Asia-Pacific. No cost.

8 - 9 June: Defence Information Superiority 2011 - Information Superiority in an Age of Uncertainty; Whitehall, London, U.K. Sponsored by the Royal United Services Institute (RUSI). In an uncertain security environment and at a time when opinion, news and information is available globally in near real time, information superiority at the strategic, operational and tactical level remains essential to the success of military operations and the political decision-making process underpinning them. At the same time, financial constraints demand that the Ministry of Defence (MoD) makes the most of existing information systems through application of best practice from allies, other government departments and industry while strategic partnerships will be essential to maintaining the MoD's information advantage. This conference, once again supported by the MoD, will bring together another senior panel of speakers from MoD, Industry and allies to address emerging trends and means to improve the MoD's information management and exploitation. \$

1 - 4 August: Connections 2011; National Defense University, Washington DC. 2011 is the 200th anniversary of modern wargaming. Sponsored by National Defense University. In keeping with this anniversary the theme of Connections 2011 is "The Next 200 Years of Wargaming - Expanding Our Scope" For example, Connections 2011 will explore how wargaming can evolve to effectively explore; science and technology alternatives, optimizing tooth and tail mix, orchestrating all of government responses. Connections 2011 will explore this theme through; keynotes, four panels,

three working groups, demos and a play test. Many believe the most valuable element of Connections is the chance to meet leaders from across the branches of wargaming. \$ (for meals only).

24 - 27 October: 16th Annual Expeditionary Warfare Conference; Bay Point Marriott, Panama City Beach, Florida. Sponsored by the National Defense Industrial Association. The conference objectives are to provide an opportunity for the services to present clear statements of their requirements and intent to industry, service laboratories and other interested parties; an opportunity for frank dialogue between the military services, industry, and other attendees; and an atmosphere of trust and cooperation that exists between the military services and industry.

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