

From the Editor

In this issue, we welcome three new members to our editorial board: Drs. Paul Kan, Janeen Klinger, and Marybeth Ulrich. All are accomplished professors from the US Army War College who broaden and deepen our pool of expertise. Sadly, we are also losing a long-standing and distinguished member of the board in Professor Leonard Fullenkamp; he is stepping down after more than twenty years of service. His thoughtful comments and candid insights will be missed.

Our summer issue opens with a Special Commentary, “The Lure of Strike,” by Conrad Crane. Crane reminds us where unfounded expectations have led us in the past. History never truly repeats itself, but sometimes it comes remarkably close. The practice of reducing strategic flexibility to save defense dollars has become something of a habit; but conditions have changed.

Our first forum, “Women in Battle,” builds on the recent decision by the US Secretary of Defense to rescind the 1994 Direct Ground Combat Definition and Assignment Rule (DGCAR). Rescinding the DGCAR means the tide has turned in favor of expanding the roles of women in combat. However, several critical issues remain, among which are adjusting military culture to accept new norms and developing objective standards to reflect modern combat tasks. Anthony King, “The Female Soldier,” shows the combat performance of women in Afghanistan and Iraq has, in fact, won over male counterparts. Ellen Haring, “What Women Bring to the Fight,” exposes the flaws in the most stubborn of arguments against full integration. Robert Egnell, “Gender Perspectives and Fighting,” suggests the US military would do well to reexamine all its traditional assumptions about war and gender as it assesses its performance in Iraq and Afghanistan.

If, as Socrates said, “the unexamined life is not worth living,” then surely “the unexamined war is not worth fighting.” In that spirit, our second forum, “A War Examined,” is the first in what will be a regular series for the Quarterly. It aims at assessing our own and others’ experience in war. This time, we take a look at our “Allies and Ethics” over more than a decade of war. Hew Strachan, “British National Strategy: Who Does It?” asks what has become of Britain’s capacity for making strategy. His essay reminds us that Americans are not the only ones who find it difficult to do strategy. We would also do well to remember our own failings in strategy have repercussions for some of our most valuable allies. George Mastroianni, “Understanding Abu Ghraib,” asks what “legitimate” lessons can be drawn from the Abu Ghraib events, and then offers six well-considered ones.

The third forum, “Dealing with Iran,” considers the prospects for easing tensions between the United States and Iran. There are no easy answers; however, Gawdat Bahgat, “The Iranian Nuclear Crisis: An Assessment,” lays out a reasonable path for rapprochement. Christopher Bolan, “The Iranian Nuclear Debate: More Myths than Facts,” clarifies some of the realities of the situation regarding Iran’s nuclear program. With the outcome of recent elections in Iran, pundits are cautiously optimistic. However, it is difficult to see whom time actually favors in this case.

Our fourth forum, “After the Arab Spring,” asks what changed in the Arab world as a result of the wave of reform that began in early

2011 and what it means for US interests. Zoltan Barany, “Revolt and Resilience in the Arab Kingdoms,” argues Arab monarchies in the Persian Gulf region survived largely intact. They managed to “purchase peace” through social programs and financial incentives, or ceded only minor concessions to a disjointed political opposition. Andrew Terrill’s review essay examines the latest scholarship on political reform in the Middle East, and offers some implications for the US military. The transitions in the Middle East work against US military intervention on any scale, especially in Syria.

We are pleased to feature some probing comments by Tom Ricks, Ulrike Franke, and Robert Gregory on articles from the previous issue. The authors’ replies appear as well. As always, we welcome comments and questions from our readers. Your participation benefits all of us.~
AJE