Commentary & Reply

Technology and the Yom Kippur War

To the Editor:

With regard to Robert S. Bolia's article, "Overreliance on Technology in Warfare: The Yom Kippur War as a Case Study" (*Parameters*, Summer 2004), I agree with the author that Israeli doctrinal errors led to their initial losses in the Yom Kippur War and that their ability to overcome these deficiencies soon enough to rally was due to the quality of their tactical leaders and the aggressiveness of their unit tactics. I cannot agree, however, that their initial surprise at the attacks was due to any overreliance on technology; rather, their initial surprise was based on several non-technological factors:

- Their belief in their own "qualitative superiority" led them to maintain lower than adequate forces in the immediate rear of the Purple Line and the Bar Lev Line. They began to address these issues only after a personal inspection of the conditions by the Defense Minister (Dayan) barely hours before the attacks.
- The failure of AMAN, Israel's military intelligence service, to even consider that they could be "spoofed" by signals intelligence was due again to their "superiority complex."
- The Israelis were convinced the balance of forces was so much in their favor that it neutralized the Arab considerations and motives for the immediate renewal of hostilities. (See Avi Shlaim, "Failures in National Intelligence Estimates; The Case of the Yom Kippur War," *World Politics*, April 1976.) This caused them to miss Sadat's actual reasoning for the war, the limited goal of recovering the West Bank of the Suez Canal with a buffer zone prior to accepting any cease-fire.

I also would argue that the war displayed more evidence of Israel's underreliance on the effects of technology on the battlefield than an overreliance on signals intelligence. Israel failed to develop doctrines flexible enough to accommodate the planning of the Arab states—planning designed specifically to overcome tactics that cost them the last four wars.

The Arabs had ample examples of the Israeli overreliance on armor in the assault and planned accordingly, developing a combined-arms doctrine designed specifically to neutralize Israeli doctrine both in terms of armor and close air support. Only the moral dimension allowed Israel to survive these assaults.

Technology is a tool, not a means. New technologies require changes to doctrine, tactics, and training to be used or countered effectively. They can certainly change the face of war, but they will never change the nature of war. Hence, the author is entirely correct in his conclusions about technology getting ahead of doctrine and tactics and the never-ending importance of the human ele-

ment. Like the author, I am concerned about the military's recent embrace of technology practically to the exclusion of the human factor.

Scott Padgett
Los Angeles, California

The Author Replies:

I appreciate the opportunity to reply to Mr. Padgett's comments on my article regarding Israeli overreliance on technology in the Yom Kippur War. Unfortunately, I have little to rebut, as I agree with virtually everything he asserts. My only concern is that he seems to have misinterpreted my position.

Mr. Padgett writes, "I cannot agree . . . that their initial surprise at the attacks was due to any overreliance on technology; rather, their initial surprise was based on several non-technological factors," and goes on to enumerate these factors, which include the arrogance ("superiority complex") of both the Israeli Defense Forces and AMAN and their beliefs about the balance of forces the Arabs would have to achieve in order to attack. I do not disagree that these factors were important contributors to the Israeli failure to perceive war on the horizon. In fact, I pointed to them on pages 49-50 of the article. I also suggested that they were in fact the cause of the overreliance on technology as far as signals intelligence was concerned, which should suggest my view of the importance of technological vs. non-technological factors on this point. I was not suggesting that misuse of signals intelligence was one of the principal causes of the Israeli failure; the fact that it appeared to be stressed relative to some of the more important factors in the article was due to the fact that this particular article was about overreliance on technology—the Yom Kippur War served merely as a framework.

I very much appreciate the opportunity provided by Mr. Padgett to clarify this point.

Robert S. Bolia

More on "Attrition" — Maneuver, Theory, and Strategy

To the Editor:

I am writing in response to Ralph Peters' article "In Praise of Attrition" (*Parameters*, Summer 2004). I am a Concept Developer and an author of the "Joint Operational Warfighting" (JOW) concept that introduced to joint concept development the term "discourse" that Mr. Peters disapproved of. JOW, along with similar efforts of the Joint Staff, was also deeply rooted in the "maneuver" theory that he deprecated. Like Mr. Peters, I spent much of my life (26 years) as an Army officer. I admire Ralph Peters, and have defended his views against colleagues who failed to understand his writings *in context*. In this article, however, while he was substantially correct, he also railed against ideas that he apparently failed to understand, *in context*.

The thesis of Mr. Peters' article was that attrition (of the adversary) is good. In this, he is correct. There are many who reject attrition, mistaking it for the ponderous "Methodical Warfare" (World War I French) model that holds attrition to be its highest goal. They are correct that attrition is not our highest goal, but Mr. Peters is correct that it is still a necessary and worthy goal (a means to an end). He asserts, "Whatever else you aim to do in wartime, never lose your focus on killing the enemy." In some sense, most battles, campaigns, and wars must be dedicated to attrition, but if that is all that they are dedicated to (particularly at the higher levels) then they are usually wasteful. A soldier's job is to kill the enemy, but the general's job is to out-think the enemy, killing as many of them as is useful, but not as an end in itself.

The article subsequently launched into a general attack against theory. Here the author painted too broadly. Theory is essential and inescapable. No action results from cognition without theory first being formed about how it leads to desired outcomes. Sound actions must be rooted in sound theories. The training and leadership that Mr. Peters mentioned as sources of victory must be rooted in theory in order to exist. Purging of theory is necessarily purging of all but reflexive action. Theory need not be a "straitjacket," as the author described it. Sound theory rejects rigid or formulaic solutions (just as he does). JOW (an archetypical example of joint military theory) held that "creative tension" between myriad alternative approaches was the key to successful decisionmaking, and that the need to maintain such tension—between the poles of traditional, "methodical," industrialism and emerging, "maneuverist," post-industrialism—lay at the core of successful warfighting. I believe Mr. Peters confused theory broadly with bad theory based on formulaic approaches and false panaceas (such as the worship of airpower, precision, information, networks, technology, etc.). The armed forces have long been saddled with trendy notions that were inherently unsound. These have led to mistakes in policy and counterproductive actions, but one may never reject theory as a whole. The result must be paralysis, defeat, and tragedy.

Mr. Peters' next target was "maneuver warfare." Having studied Marine Corps doctrine, and working in the joint world, I can state with authority that the Army and Marine Corps mean two different things when they use the term "maneuver." To the Army (and the defense community generally), maneuver is as Mr. Peters described it: movement of forces in the battlespace, and also the complement of fires. That is not, however, the context used by the Marine Corps and maneuver warfare theorists. To them, "Maneuver Warfare Doctrine" is not a doctrine at all, nor is it uniquely related to maneuver. Rather, it refers to a philosophy and culture of warfighting that undergirds and animates doctrine, and which facilitates much more dynamic decision and action. It emphasizes underlying causes and structures, and unleashing human potential to achieve desired effects more quickly and cheaply. It is based on German and Israeli military experience, philosophy, and culture—standing in contrast to French "Methodical Warfare Doctrine." The principal distinction is a shift in emphasis from "control" in the latter, to "opportunism" in the former. The connection between maneuver as culture and philosophy, and maneuver as movement, is that the former, by stimulating emer-

gent behaviors of synergy, adaptability, and opportunism, facilitates much great dynamism in the latter. Hence, the emphasis by "maneuverists" on deep, fast-paced employment of "maneuver and firepower, speed and violent systemic shock, combined to devastate an opposing force," just as Mr. Peters advocates, as opposed to plodding, linear force-on-force engagements (this is where common confusion arises about maneuver being the antithesis of attrition). Maneuverists are not calling for "elegant" maneuvers to replace fires or attrition; they are calling for a transformation of our warfighting culture. Mr. Peters' comments about leaders schooled in caution suggest that he understands this, but in this context, many of his arguments are pointless. He misinterpreted the meaning of maneuver as used by maneuverists. This common confusion is a strong argument for changing the name of Maneuver Warfare Doctrine.

Mr. Peters went on to criticize "desk-bound theoreticians" (of which I am one), especially a suggestion from a "major joint command" (probably my own), advocating "discourse" between commanders and staffs. He stated that such discourse is "academic gobbledygook." Nothing could be further from the truth. The term was, to my knowledge, borrowed by the authors of the cited report from JOW. I was present when the subject of discourse was introduced by Lieutenant Colonel Kevin Woods (a paratrooper and combat veteran). He had borrowed it from that most practical of warfighting organizations, the Israeli army, which holds it as the key to their successes. In context, it is not academic gobbledygook, but routine, expedient, and essential feedback and clarification between leaders and subordinates at every level. Its purpose is to get us away from the "springbutt" culture of empty direction and formulaic, reflexive, and often misoriented response, to one where subordinates can be assured of adequate understanding of their commander's intent—and commanders can be assured of subordinates' energetic and creative execution in satisfaction of same. It is the most effective and reliable means of extending shared understanding of the battlespace. This is not a frivolous concern. It can readily accommodate the "plain talk, honest answers" that Mr. Peters calls for, and it enhances our ability to "close with the enemy and kill [them]," as he urges.

Mr. Peters astutely observed that a critical part of our perceptual problem in warfighting is that "the Department of Defense combines two fundamentally different breeds [cultures] of military services." This cultural bifurcation is aggravated by the fact that between our two warfighting cultures, one human-centric and one technology-centric, the latter currently predominates. Until we resolve this basic conflict, we will suffer from tremendous internal friction (in the Clausewitzian sense) and from needless friction and disharmony between our military operations and the objective demands of battlefield conditions. We are slowly learning that weight of material and precision pyrotechnic displays may not suffice to overcome these handicaps.

The author concluded by suggesting that "in the short term, we shall have to wear down the enemy's forces; in the longer term, we shall have to wear down the appeal of his ideas. Our military wars of attrition in the 21st century will be only one aspect of a vast metaphysical war of attrition." In so doing, he suggested

for the first time the potential meaning of attrition as applied to a higher level than killing the enemy. Inasmuch as the cognitive domain is ultimately decisive (as studies of history and current military operations increasingly demonstrate), it is this appreciation of attrition, mentioned only in passing, that bears much deeper scrutiny on our part.

In summary, Mr. Peters, for all of his usual brilliance, has through innocent misunderstanding and consequent inadvertent mischaracterization, apparently due to confusion regarding context, done a disservice to some very important and worthwhile ideas currently coalescing to form the basis of a future transformation of American warfighting capabilities.

Richard Stuart Maltz
Chesapeake, Virginia

To the Editor:

It is with pause that one considers offering commentary on the views of Ralph Peters. After all, he has rightfully gained renown for his prolific writing and acute insight into current affairs. Nevertheless, his recent article "In Praise of Attrition" raises many points that merit discussion and further analysis. His view of attrition as the central and defining aim in war, at first glance, appears logical and self-evident. War stands alone from all other human activities precisely because it entails the organized, legally sanctioned killing of one group of people by another. However, experience would seem to suggest that attrition is often not the dominant factor in war.

If attrition determined the outcome of war, then surely the Soviet Union would have been defeated in World War II, the Korean Peninsula would today be unified and democratic, and South Vietnam would still exist. Battles of annihilation are infrequent, and wars are seldom fought to a point of physical exhaustion. Likewise, the outcome of war is rarely determined by the straightforward calculations of attrition. If, on the other hand, other dynamics are present, the soldier and statesman would be prudent to devise a strategy that considers all factors having relevance to the problem.

The objectives of war are often varied, and the means to their attainment are frequently complex. Similar actions, under dissimilar conditions, often result in dramatically different outcomes. Actions that, in one instance, are viewed as bold, aggressive, and courageous, under different circumstances achieve entirely different results and are quickly condemned as reckless, rash, and foolish. The same approach is not appropriate to all situations. Similarly, no single strategy is right for all occasions.

Perhaps the most influential strategic thinker of the last century was Basil H. Liddell Hart. Dismayed by the wasteful carnage of the First World War, Liddell Hart concluded, through an exhaustive study of military history, that the most capable commanders are those who draw their enemies away from prepared defenses, strike at lines of communication, and dislocate the balance of their adversaries. Liddell Hart referred to this method as the "strategy of the indirect approach."

Patton and Rommel, alike, openly recognized the influence Liddell Hart had upon their combat decisionmaking. Liddell Hart's emphasis on mobility and surprise and his advocacy of armored forces unintentionally contributed to the development of German blitzkrieg tactics. In fact, we can discern his impact throughout the North African and European campaigns during World War II.

A dramatic variation of Liddell Hart's broader concepts was MacArthur's brilliant island-hopping campaign in the Southwest Pacific. Rather than attacking the Japanese outright in their entrenchment, MacArthur bypassed their strongpoints, severed their logistics, and secured airfields and ports that enabled him to continue his advance toward the Philippines. The allies would later "mop-up" or contain and render ineffective tens of thousands of isolated Japanese troops (98,000 in Rabaul alone). MacArthur succeeded in a campaign that was marked by a comparatively low number of friendly casualties. Today, the ideas of Liddell Hart are thoroughly pervasive and accepted in our military doctrine.

In Vietnam, America eventually rejected the body count, not for humanitarian reasons, but because we learned that it was a flawed measure of progress. The United States realized that the rate of attrition was meaningless unless we could also measure and influence the pace at which the enemy mobilized new combatants. America also recoiled at the corrupting effects the Vietnam body count had upon the Army. More often than we thought possible, Army leaders gave in to the temptation of inflating their battle reports.

Moral and practical considerations demand that the United States should maintain the best trained and equipped armed forces in the world. But, we should never lose sight of the fact that the best troops with a flawed strategy are certainly doomed to failure, whereas even an average force that is skillfully employed has a good prospect of attaining success.

In 1993, the United States withdrew from Somalia after winning a battle in which 18 Americans were killed. In an even more extreme example, the Philippines abandoned the coalition during the current effort in Iraq after insurgents threatened a lone Filipino contractor with beheading. Were these outcomes the products of attrition?

War is inherently a political affair. As others have argued eloquently, war tests the discipline of the state and the resolve of the citizenry as much as the skill and courage of the armed forces. America withdrew from Somalia not because of attrition, but because our government lacked political will and the American people were unprepared to shed blood on a humanitarian mission that had little apparent consequence to the national interests.

Observers have written much on the nature of asymmetric conflicts. A militarily inferior belligerent, fighting for vital concerns, is often more formidable than a potent adversary who is fighting for lesser objectives. Our enemies err when they conclude that our will is poor in all instances, and the role of leadership in shaping perceptions is central. We must not forget Churchill during the blitz.

The political nature of war is seldom more important than during insurgent conflicts. The guerrilla knows that he is weaker and cannot win a contest of military strength. He therefore seeks to exhaust the will of his adversary by prolong-

ing the conflict, by extracting a steady cost in blood, and by denying his antagonists visible signs of progress.

For his part, the counter-revolutionary, despite his power, is denied a speedy victory since the insurgent controls the engagement tempo. If the guerrilla cannot safely operate in groups of 20, he employs more elusive units of ten or five. If this is not possible, he resorts to bombings, assassinations, and kidnappings. He strikes at weakness and melts into the population or seeks refuge in sanctuaries when confronted by strength. Guerrillas are resistant to strategies of attrition.

To the insurgent the population is both the source of his intelligence and logistics and, if turned against him, his greatest vulnerability. A number of incentives are needed in order to earn the cooperation of the population. The measured and discriminate use of violence is of vital importance in order to prevent civilian deaths and to avoid the alienation of local communities.

Modern combat places unprecedented demands on our troops. They frequently must earn the trust and support of local inhabitants while working in partnership with community leaders and indigenous allies. Fighting skill is paramount, but the ability to work with people from other cultures is often critical. Our young soldiers often find themselves in unexpected situations which require pragmatism, quick thinking, creativity, and moral rectitude. Through the modern media, the misconduct of a few, as demonstrated at Abu Ghraib, can often have strategic consequences.

The question is not whether killing our enemies is good. The real issue is whether a strategy based on attrition is adequate. It rarely is. In a time when we wage war by means of bureaucracy, of decisionmaking by consensus, of diluted command authority, of the dominance of narrow agendas over the national interests, it is far too easy to overlook the importance of sound strategy. But we do so at our own peril.

Major George H. Franco, Special Forces
Washington, D.C.

The Author Replies:

I'm honored that Mr. Maltz took the time to think about and criticize "In Praise of Attrition" so astutely. Exciting useful discussion is my fundamental intent when I touch the keyboard.

Well aware of the argument that nothing can be done without an underpinning theory, I reject it entirely. Theory belongs in the sciences, where it only occasionally manages to kill people. When theory intrudes on any form of human behavior, it first turns cruel, then—all too often—lethal. In the 20th century, theories designed to "perfect" human organization killed more innocent victims than we have managed to count, although the number reached the hundreds of millions, from Nazi Germany to Stalinist Russia and Maoist China, from Pol Pot's Cambodia to the theology-haunted lairs of al Qaeda.

I value intellect, study, and discussion (dispassionate or impassioned). But I believe that leaders can think so much that it paralyzes them, whether we speak

of the George McClellans or the William Jefferson Clintons of the world. I'm a Grant man. He didn't worry about Jomini's geometries. He sized up his enemy, then whipped him. Grant fought intelligently—but, most vitally, he fought. Abstract knowledge is a marvelous thing, but it rarely trumps experience, the killer instinct, and courage in the military sphere.

I respect Mr. Maltz's sincerity and engagement, but must disagree with his elevation of theory to a human or military necessity.

Regarding the commentary by Major Franco, I compliment him on his serious intellectual engagement with this issue. One of the most reassuring things about *Parameters* is the quality of thought our serving officers display in the letters section. Honest, forthright debate truly does underpin combat readiness—especially in postmodern warfare.

On some points, Major Franco and I agree. But I also feel that, in his enthusiasm to respond, he did not read the essay closely. I have never suggested that attrition is the sole aim of warfare—although I am convinced it often must be the primary aim in battles and campaigns. Nor do I believe that attrition should be an isolated goal, detached from other techniques and mechanisms. If anything, I believe that we continue to underestimate the complexity of warfare—that, for all our doctrinal manuals, we're far too intent on simplifying humankind's most complex endeavor. But if anything about warfare is clear, it's that violent enemies intent on our destruction need to be killed—often in significant numbers.

My concern is that we have reached a level of politically correct absurdity at which we have convinced ourselves that attrition is bad. Killing the enemy is rarely a mistake. Yet we imagine that it somehow connotes failure.

Imagine how different history might have been if any of the great captains of freedom—Marlborough, Scott, Grant, Sherman, Eisenhower, Harris, and so many others—had been reluctant to shed the enemy's blood. Major Franco cites Patton in his counterargument, yet Patton loved to close with the enemy. He killed with relish. I have trouble accepting Patton reincarnated as a flower child.

Attrition—eliminating enemy forces—may not be the only possible approach in all circumstances, but it had better be among the approaches we consider when we go to war. Nor is it adequate to offer generalizations about the need to interact with the enemy population and address the roots of an insurgency. Generalities kill soldiers and lose wars. We need specifics. If we are not going to kill the enemy, how exactly do we intend to win? Good manners do not constitute a strategy, and good intentions alone do not win wars. As we have learned, again, in Iraq, refurbishing schools may be a good deed, but it does not make deadly enemies disappear.

I'm baffled by the choice of historical examples Major Franco offers in his argument against attrition. He suggests that if attrition warfare worked, the *Wehrmacht* would have defeated the Red Army. But attrition does not work if an enemy has vastly greater reserves of manpower and your kill and capture ratios don't suffice. Proportionality matters, and Belgium could not hope to wage a war of attrition against China. While the Nazis could not defeat the Soviets through attrition, since the Red Army enjoyed not only far greater manpower reserves

but a geography of unrivaled strategic depth, attrition ultimately destroyed the German military. Brilliant Soviet maneuvers at the operational level helped, but, ultimately, the Red Army killed and captured more German soldiers than the Nazi system could replace. Neither side could have won the other's hearts and minds. It took massive amounts of killing to end the war. Attrition worked.

Our goal should be to maintain the capability to kill massively, when necessary, without suffering excessively ourselves. At present, we have the tools but not the will.

As for Major Franco's other historical examples, while killing the enemy is a fundamental good in war, capturing or isolating significant enemy forces also counts as attrition in my definition. The point is to get enemy combatants out of the fight (if psyops could do it, that would be grand, but we're far from that level of sophistication). Even MacArthur's brilliant island-hopping campaign had the practical effect of attriting enemy forces. The Japanese stranded on their island fortresses were effectively out of the war. Under some rare and fortunate circumstances, you can attrit the enemy without actually killing him. But you had better go in prepared to do all the killing necessary.

As for Vietnam, attrition *did* work. By the end of the Tet Offensive, the Viet Cong were finished. But our unwillingness to meaningfully attack North Vietnam and the nonsensical theories of limited war espoused by Washington "whiz kids" negated the effect of battlefield success. Certainly, attrition is useless if a government lacks the political will to win. But soldiers must do their part, and that means killing the enemy. Giving vaccinations and delivering rice can help the cause. But the main focus always—always—should be the destruction of the enemy. The rest is up to the President.

My complaint is that we focus on everything *but* killing the enemy. Certainly, not every war or conflict can be won through attrition alone. But no war can be won by diplomatic table-talk alone. And the claim that few wars are won through attrition is simply incorrect. Any study of history shows that, down the centuries, attrition won most wars. The general's aim must be to make certain that the attrition disproportionately affects the enemy.

I strongly encourage Major Franco, who is clearly a fine, thinking officer, to step beyond criticism and offer a practical alternative to attrition. Don't tell me what won't work. Tell me what will.

Ralph Peters

Keeping Special Operations Forces "Special"

To the Editor:

I would like to commend Lieutenant Colonel John Gordon IV and Colonel Jerry Sollinger on their insightful analysis of the Army's future path ("The Army's Dilemma," Summer 2004). They identify low- to mid-intensity combat as the focal point for Army operations, an assertion that is certainly panning out in

Iraq, Afghanistan, the Philippines, and elsewhere. However, I take issue with the authors' ideas concerning the expansion of special operations forces (SOF). They voice an opinion that is unfortunately shared by many serving and aspiring policymakers—that is, we must produce more SOF to win the war on terrorism. This "if some are good, more must be better" attitude belies a misunderstanding of SOF's assessment/selection methods and operational ethos.

Put simply, special operations forces cannot be mass-produced like conventional forces. The reason why Army Special Forces, Navy SEALs, Air Force Special Tactics, and other SOF are so good is because the community is very selective about the type of individual it brings into these organizations. For example, the Army's grueling Special Forces Assessment and Selection (SFAS) has a historical attrition rate that hovers around 70 percent—with another 10-15 percent lost in the ensuing Special Forces Qualification Course. This is not attrition for attrition's sake; in fact, Special Forces candidates are not harassed, hazed, or otherwise coerced into quitting at any time. Rather, the physical and mental rigors of the training cull out those who do not possess the necessary attributes for service in SOF. The end result is a soldier who is tough, self-reliant, innovative, and flexible. We have witnessed the true value of this process in recent operations around the world—SOF has proven to be a decisive element and the force of choice in our struggle against terrorism.

Any rapid expansion of SOF would almost certainly undermine this proven selection and training process. The SOF community would be forced to cut corners and lower standards in order to produce more special operators. The results would be a degraded operational capability and, tragically, a greater probability of mission failure and lost lives. And while we might garner a certain sense of satisfaction with more Special Forces teams and SEAL platoons on the books, it would be a hollow one at best.

Major James E. Hayes III, Special Forces
School of Advanced Military Studies
Fort Leavenworth, Kansas

The Authors Reply:

Major Hayes points out that special operations forces cannot be expanded rapidly and that any attempt to do so would undermine their quality. We concur. Special forces are just that—special—and quality will always trump quantity. Nothing we said in our article should be taken to mean that the Army should expand the output rapidly. However, we do believe it is possible to expand the structure without eroding the quality. A measured approach that pays careful attention to ensure standards remain high can increase the structure. We also would note, as General Peter Schoomaker did in his 29 July 2003 testimony before the Senate Armed Services Committee, that conventional forces can be trained to do many of the things that special operations forces (SOF) do, which would free the latter to do more of the things that only they can do. This step could have the same effect as increasing SOF structure. Given the time required to produce

high-quality SOF forces (as Major Hayes correctly pointed out) the Army should start the process of expanding its SOF capabilities as soon as possible.

John Gordon and Jerry Sollinger

Correction re the Joint Strike Fighter and Japan

To the Editor:

In reading William E. Rapp's article "Past its Prime? The Future of the US-Japan Alliance" (*Parameters*, Summer 2004), I noticed that he states in endnote 9 that Japan is a partner in the Joint Strike Fighter program. To my knowledge Japan is not now, nor has it ever been, a partner in the Joint Strike Fighter program. This is relevant in that the Joint Strike Fighter, which might be considered for use on the two 16DDH ships Japan is building, will not likely be available to Japan for quite some time.

Dr. David Fouse
Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies
Honolulu, Hawaii

The Author Replies:

Dr. Fouse is correct. In looking deeper than the Japanese news article that I referenced about the Joint Strike Fighter, I too cannot find an official link that puts the Japanese as partners in the F-35 project. The Japanese were set to the pull the trigger on AV-8 Harriers in 1989, but they are not partners with the international consortium building the JSF. I do believe that the British and USMC STOVL (short takeoff and vertical landing) version of the JSF could be of great interest to the Japanese for use on their new 16DDH carrier-like helo destroyer, but the Japanese Defense Agency has not taken that position as far as I can tell.

Lieutenant Colonel Bill Rapp

Commentary & Reply Submissions

We invite reader commentaries of up to 1,000 words on articles appearing in *Parameters*. Not all commentaries can be published. For those that are, the author of the article will be invited to provide a reply. Commentaries may be edited to meet style and space constraints. Send to US Army War College, ATTN: *Parameters*, 122 Forbes Ave., Carlisle, PA 17013, or by e-mail to Parameters@carlisle.army.mil.