

Editorial Comment

It almost seems impossible to believe that it is only a little over a decade since the end of the Cold War heralded an era when many hoped that the international system was entering an enlightened period of international peace and security. Some went as far as to suggest that the “end of history” had arrived and that conflict would soon be a thing of the past. The attacks of September 11, 2001 and the subsequent counter-attacks by the United States and its coalition partners have shown that such hopes were only wishful thinking. As this editorial is being written a second war in Iraq remains a strong possibility. Countries such as North Korea remain committed to the development of weapons of mass destruction and countries such as the United States seem equally committed to prepare a response to such developments. In short, the international system remains as dangerous as it always has. While the prospect of a massive nuclear war has been slightly lessened, the propensity for violence seems as high as it always has been if not higher.

What is it that seems to prevent the international system from discovering peace? Is it naive to believe that is possible to achieve a better international system? What is the best means to security in the international system. The answers to such fundamental questions seem as elusive as ever. These are the ultimate questions that face all who study military and strategic studies. Recent events have driven home the point that the study of these issues go beyond simply being interesting. There is a need to understand why violence is used and what steps are needed to respond. This gives this particular field of study a distinct status. Failure to come to terms with these problems will have a profound impact on the entire world.

Questions abound that affect not only our understanding of international conflict, but the means by which to respond to it. For example, are the recent attacks by terrorists the act of wicked men, or are their actions caused by reasons deeper than their own pathologies? If it is the case that Bin Laden and his followers are only acting out of a psychological need to inflict pain, then international security must come from the defence against such individuals. If on the other hand, their actions are caused by some “root cause” then these causes must be understood and addressed. Thus the importance of the examination of military and strategic studies continues to be as important if not more than was the case during the Cold War.

In keeping with the mandate to provide a forum for informed study and debate of these issues, the *Journal of Military and Strategic Studies* is gratified to present an edition that examines a broad range of subjects. Three of the articles relate to the interaction between technology and the armed forces. Philip Smith-Eivemark provides a critical examination of the training of the Canadian Army. His main concern is a lack of flexibility that he believes that will inhibit future Canadian operations. Peter Hays offers an examination of space policy in the United States. It is clear to Hays that space represents the next frontier in terms of military capability, but he also provides a detailed analysis of why space power will not offer an autonomous revolution in military affairs that many predict until space is weaponized. Continuing on the theme of space defence, Carolyn James provides an assessment of using internationally-controlled theatre missile defences to defend against proliferated states. Such a system could be used as a means of reducing international tension in regions of conflict where states such as Pakistan and India have nuclear weapons. The fourth article by James Mellon examines the linkage between strategic studies and religion. The author had been addressing this issue before the events of September 11 made the linkages even more clear. In sum, this edition of the *Journal* has a wide-range of excellent articles that address several critical problems to the understanding of military and strategic studies.

A final note is to inform the reader of several changes at the *Journal*. This edition of the *Journal of Military and Strategic Studies* represents a time of change. This will be the last edition that I serve as its editor. Other commitments are preventing me from being able to dedicate the time necessary to properly edit this *Journal*. Stepping in as the new co-editor are John Ferris Department of History and Jim Keeley Department of Political Science, who are both members of the Centre for Military and Strategic Studies at the University of Calgary. They will begin as co-editors for the Spring 2003 edition of the *Journal*.

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