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by James Kurth

**T**he grueling U.S. war in Iraq and the challenges it has presented to the U.S. military have wonderfully concentrated the minds of American defense-policy analysts. As long as this war continues—and if the Vietnam War is any guide, for years thereafter—professional discussions of U.S. defense policy will be shaped by the consequences and the lessons of Iraq.

Even after the U.S. debacle in Vietnam, however, the United States still had to have an active defense policy, and the various services and agencies of the U.S. defense establishment still played an active role abroad. So it is now, in the midst of the Iraq War, and so it is likely to be after the war is over. It is useful, therefore, even during the current ordeal in Iraq, to evaluate U.S. defense policy and its array of instruments as they operate in other areas and arenas. This issue of *Orbis* is largely dedicated to such a project. Included are authors who discuss U.S. conventional military forces, special operations forces, defense industries, intelligence services, and police forces. Each of these instruments can be

seen as a crucial element of the U.S. defense establishment as it operates abroad.

### *U.S. Military Forces: Structure and Strategy*

Our first two articles deal with the structure and strategy of U.S. military forces. Frank Hoffman is one of the U.S. Marine Corps' premier defense analysts, and he discusses the new challenges that "complex irregular warfare" poses to the United States. This kind of global insurgency, rather than the high-tech, info-war versions of conventional warfare that were the object of so much military debate in the 1990s, represents the next—and the real—"revolution in military affairs." Hoffman delineates both the strengths and the limitations of the transformation project that resulted from this debate.

Thomas Donnelly, also an experienced defense analyst, applies the important concept of "strategic culture" to the United States and to the rising powers which it now confronts. These are China, radical Islamists, and rogue states with nuclear weapons, including not only North Korea

and Iran but also Pakistan. Each of these rising powers and growing threats has its own distinctive strategic culture. American defense analysts need to understand these strategic cultures, along with their own, and to know how these different cultures will interact with each other and their implications for U.S. military forces.

### *The U.S. Defense Industry*

U.S. military forces provide the central pillar of the structure of U.S. defense, but fundamental to that structure is the U.S. defense industry. Stephanie Neuman, one of America's leading defense-industry analysts, demonstrates that U.S. predominance within the world's defense industries is even greater than its predominance within the world's military forces. This kind of dominance places the United States at the hub of weapons production, with the defense industries of almost all other countries reduced to being satellites integrated into the U.S. system. It is not surprising that Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, with his background in the defense industry, came to think that all war was defined and fought by the products of this industry and that the overwhelming U.S. predominance in industry would easily result in overwhelming U.S. predominance in warfare. It is therefore understandable that he completely missed the reality that the new version of warfare was actually going to be irregular, rather than industrial.

### *U.S. Intelligence Agencies and Police Forces*

Also crucial to an effective U.S. defense are two non-military components: intelligence agencies and police forces. Not only can they be seen as essential pillars in the U.S. defense structure, but when they operate at high effectiveness, they also make the actual—and costly—use of military force unnecessary, by detecting and suppressing early on emerging threats to U.S. security overseas. A smart defense policy should be built upon close cooperation between U.S. intelligence agencies and police forces and their foreign counterparts. The current state and future possibilities of the first is comprehensively discussed by Derek Reveron, an experienced intelligence analyst, and the second by David Bayley, a leading professor of criminal justice and police practices.

Among the instruments of U.S. defense policy are the Special Operations Forces, and, as Frank Hoffman discusses, they have become particularly central in complex irregular warfare. These forces—who partake of and link up with other defense components such as the military, intelligence, and police—are undergoing a large expansion in their size and role in the Bush administration. One place where they are especially active is in Colombia. As it turns out, Colombia, and the Andean region more generally, is becoming a major theater in U.S. defense policy.

*The Andean Challenge*

The war in Iraq and the other problems the United States faces in the Middle East quite naturally dominate the news at present. If, however, that war had never happened and the Middle East had somehow become a calm oasis in international politics, the front pages of our newspapers would be full of stories about the Andean region in Latin America. The populist regimes in Venezuela and Bolivia, the popular demonstrations in Ecuador and Peru, and, above all, the perennial war—involving both insurgents and drugs—in Colombia make this region one of the most demanding challenges to U.S. foreign policy.

Kenneth Sharpe, a prominent and longstanding analyst of U.S. policy toward Latin America, provides us with an illuminating account of the U.S. role in Colombia's war. Although the United States' use of Special Operations Forces in Colombia is obviously very different, and far less costly, than its use of conventional military forces in Iraq, the assumptions and presumptions that underlie the two interventions have much in common, and Sharpe argues that in both cases they are leading to failure. Seth Kaplan adds a detailed account of the sources of the recent turmoil and change in Bolivia and suggests ways the United States can still work out a constructive and useful relationship with that problematic country.

*The Expanding Islamist War in Western Europe*

Of all the major regions of the world, the one where the United States could most enjoy a high degree of peace and tranquility in recent decades was Western Europe. Now, however, the rapid growth of Muslim communities, the rise of militant Islamists in these communities, and the terrorist attacks and destructive riots that have occurred there since 2004 have made even that region a principal theater in the expanding war between Islamism and the West. Philip Jenkins discusses how immigration from both the Middle East and the "global South" has changed Europe's demographics and religious beliefs and practices. In my own article, I discuss some historical relationships between war and identity in Europe and how the shift from a Christian identity to a secular or liberal one in recent years has made Western Europe gravely vulnerable to the Islamist assault.

*The Iraq War: A Three-year Retrospective*

But of course there is that most dismal current theater of U.S. defense policy, the war in Iraq. Glenn Kutler, in a quantitative analysis and research note building upon his earlier one in the Summer 2005 issue of *Orbis*, provides an account of the changing patterns of combat fatalities in Iraq over the first three years of the war. He concludes that the

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insurgents' war against U.S. forces has largely been succeeded by their much more lethal war against Iraqi forces and Iraqi civilians.

Our special emphasis in this issue of *Orbis* upon U.S. defense policy extends to our two review essays. A recent major statement about the use of the U.S. military and its changing relations with different sectors of American society is the much-discussed book by Andrew Bacevich, *The New American Militarism*. Michael Desch provides a thoughtful review of this important work, along with his own informed analysis of military-civilian relations in America and in

other Western nations. Michael Noonan adds an informative account and critique of the recent *Quadrennial Defense Review*, that central Defense Department document stating the basic principles and objectives of U.S. defense policy as they are conceived by the current administration but laying the groundwork for defense planning and procedures for the next two decades. The chief defense policymakers of the Bush administration will be out of office in a couple of years, but all of us will be living with the consequences of their decisions—be they for good or ill, for peace or war—for a generation to come.

