

## Editor's Corner

---

by Mackubin T. Owens

### *In These Pages*

The Foreign Policy Research Institute is fortunate to have a very active and productive Asia Program, directed by University of Pennsylvania's Jacques deLisle. The scholarship this program generates has always been of great quality but is of particular importance now given the Obama administration's recently published strategy with its "Pacific pivot." This issue of *Orbis* reflects this new strategic reality, featuring a cluster of articles based on papers delivered at an FPRI/Reserve Officers Association (ROA) conference on "Contested Terrain: China's Periphery and International Relations in Asia" held in Washington D.C. in November of 2011.

However, the first article of the summer volume focuses on another security issue of great importance: cyber security. Here, Suzanne Nielsen provides a primer on the government's role in enhancing America's cyber security posture. She develops a risk management model that addresses threats, vulnerabilities, and potential consequences of failing to protect U.S. interests in the cyber realm and then offers suggestions concerning an appropriate government response. I intend this to be the first of many articles to address this important topic.

The first five articles of the Asia-Pacific cluster are based on presentations at the FPRI/ROA conference. In his offering, Michael Green examines the behavior of states on China's periphery. Far from being merely passive actors buffeted by the great power competition between the United States and China, Green shows that these countries play an important role in both shaping Sino-American relations and the international order in Asia.

Next, Sheila Smith explores the dispute between China and Japan in the East

China Sea. Then John Garver discusses China's diplomacy *via-a-vis* India, the goal of which is to persuade the latter to accept a significant Chinese role in South Asia and the Indian Ocean. Much depends on whether China rises peacefully, accommodating itself to a liberal world order.

Allen Carlson and Michael Davis look at China's policy regarding its frontiers and "national minorities" respectively. Carlson discusses the current China policy debate concerning how Beijing should govern its vast frontier regions that include Tibet and Inner Mongolia. Davis highlights China's approach to Tibet, arguing on behalf of a more liberal policy than the one China has heretofore embraced.

Three additional articles flesh out the Asia-Pacific cluster. Arthur Waldron looks at the new geopolitical situation in East Asia arising from China's claim of sovereignty over the South China Sea. He suggests that, in accordance with international relations theory, China's neighbors are unlikely to acquiesce in this claim, forming a countervailing coalition of some sort. The role of Taiwan in this scenario is determinative.

Sumit Ganguly and Manjeet S. Pardesi examine the parallel rise of China and India. They conclude that the particular circumstances that the two states face make a limited conventional war between them a distinct possibility, despite the supposedly moderating effect of economic interdependence and possession of nuclear weapons by both parties. Finally, Doug Bandow argues that the transformation of the security environment in East Asia will be smoother if the United States demonstrates strategic restraint in the region, accepting the reality that America's ability to unilaterally

reshape the international order is eroding. A peaceful East Asia, he contends, ultimately depends more on the actions of the states in the region than on the United States. And in a compelling review essay, Colin Dueck evaluates four books which address nuclear proliferation and nonproliferation.

*Impromptus and Asides: The Return of Inter-Service Rivalry?*

In response to perceived operational shortcomings plaguing the U.S. military during Operation EAGLE CLAW, the aborted Iran hostage rescue in 1980, and Operation URGENT FURY, the invasion of Grenada in 1983, Congress passed the Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reform Act in 1986. Congress' intent was to end what its advocates believed to be the baleful effects of inter-service rivalry by spurring "jointness," touted as a way to achieve inter-service cooperation in all stages of the defense process, including research and development, procurement, and operations.

Goldwater-Nichols solved some problems but created others. For instance, while operational effectiveness improved, though not by as much as its advocates had claimed, many of the budgetary battles that had been waged among the service chiefs—the chief of staff of the Army, the chief of staff of the Air Force, the Chief of Naval Operations, and the Commandant of the Marine Corps—now were shifted to the combatant commanders. One consequence of this shift was that the near-term focus of the combatant commanders came to trump the longer-term perspective of the service chiefs who are required by law to organize, train, and equip their respective military branches.

Arguably, much of the success attributed to Goldwater-Nichols came about as a result of increasing defense budgets. Jointness works best when all of the services get most of what they want. From the Reagan defense buildup of the 1980s until today, the defense budget, although less than four percent of the U.S. gross domestic product (GDP) and less than 20 percent of the federal budget, was sufficient to allow the services to

pursue the capabilities required to implement their respective "strategic concepts."

But defense planning is, in essence, the management of risk. Given the security environment that prevailed after the fall of the Soviet Union, the United States military was not required to balance major risks in such a way that one service benefited at the expense of another. The United States was rich enough, and despite 9/11, safe enough that the country didn't have to choose between less land power in order to get more sea or air power.

But this is changing. Although the current U.S. financial crisis results not from defense spending, but from massive spending on domestic programs, especially entitlements such as Social Security and Medicare, that can no longer be sustained, it is clear that the defense budget will be reduced. One consequence of reduced spending on defense is likely to be a renewal of inter-service rivalries and the erosion of jointness.

Of course, the first shots have already been fired. The Obama administration's "pivot" to the Pacific favors naval and air forces given that the region is maritime in character (although there are also substantial ground forces in the theater). Furthermore in 2010, former defense secretary Robert Gates requested a comprehensive plan to ensure that the United States could maintain access to strategic waterways around the globe, even as the defense budget was declining. This provided the impetus for the emergence of what has been termed Air-Sea Battle. While the Marines as a naval service have a role in Air-Sea Battle in the conduct of a naval campaign, there's not much room for the Army, which is already facing substantial force reductions.

Jointness will remain the official position of the military in the future and it is likely that the ability of the United States military effectively to conduct multi-service operation will not atrophy. But the real danger is that declining defense budgets will restore the vicious inter-service fights after World War II when the emergence of air power and an independent Air Force, freed of what airmen saw as its Army shackles, threatened

the fragile consensus that prevailed in the World War II-era defense establishment.

The resulting defense debates of the post-war era involved both programs, seen as essential to the very existence of the services, and service claims to be responsible for certain war fighting domains associated with roles, missions, and functions. The former included the fight over the Air Force's B-36 strategic bomber vs. the Navy's "super carrier," the *USS United States*. The latter included the attempt by the Air Force to gain control of naval aviation. Thus military-civilian coalitions emerged to wage budget and doctrine wars in congressional committee hearings and dueling editorials in the press.

One of the Air Force's most important supporters was Secretary of Defense Louis A. Johnson who told Admiral Richard L. Connelly in December 1949, "Admiral, the Navy is on its way out. There's no reason for having a Navy and Marine Corps. [Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff] General [Omar] Bradley tells me that amphibious operations are a thing of the past. We'll never have any more amphibious

operations. That does away with the Marine Corps. And the Air Force can do anything the Navy can do nowadays, so that does away with the Navy." The battle culminated in the "revolt of the admirals" that same month when a number of high ranking naval officers, including the CNO, Admiral Louis E. Denfield, were either fired or forced to resign.

Of course, there was an amphibious operation at Inchon in 1950. And blamed for the failure to plan for an adequate force structure and the lack of readiness of U.S. troops in Korea, Johnson's tenure as secretary of defense came to an end shortly after the outbreak of the conflict. But the effects of the budget and doctrine debates of the late 1940s lingered, adversely affecting inter-service relations for years.

Reduced defense budgets are likely to pit the roles, missions, and associated programs of the services against each other. Let us hope that the inter-service budget and doctrine battles generated by a reduction of defense spending do not return us to the "bad old days" of the late 1940s.

