

From Desert One to Desert Storm

In a society such as ours, overwhelmed with information but deeply dependent upon clear—I do not say *simple*—ideas, journals can play a critical role. The best of them synthesize facts in order to formulate useful ideas. *Joint Force Quarterly* aims to do precisely this. At the same time, its appearance marks a milestone in the history of the American military's progress from a force that first won a young nation its independence, then served as the successful defender of its fundamental values, and finally became what it is today—the most powerful protector of liberty that the world has ever known, whether reckoned relatively or absolutely.

This historic milestone not only marks an extraordinary political success. It bears witness to the development of an American military whose skills and equipment have arrived at a degree of excellence as unachievable as it was unimaginable just a decade ago. In the dozen years between Desert One and Desert Storm, our Armed Forces have reached a watershed in their operational quality. *JFQ* aims to chart and analyze that course, so that the understanding thus gained will enable us to build upon this remarkable achievement and assure its continuation. Here, then, is a forum where wisdom from the past can serve us in the future.

The journal's specific interest is in the ideas that will improve our ability to work together. Hence, it focuses on three related areas: joint and combined operations; interservice and multiservice interests that bear directly on jointness; and unique service concerns that influence the culture of the U.S. Armed Forces. The ultimate purpose is to ensure that our military remains able to deter or defeat any future enemy, should storm clouds again gather on the strategic horizon and hostile forces threaten our interests or those of our allies.

In his introductory remarks, the Chairman writes that such an enterprise demands a competition of ideas on the subjects where the interests of the services converge. General Powell reminds us that, just as there is no substitute in combat for trial by fire, so the best ideas can only emerge after they too have undergone the appropriate trial by debate. In the world of military thought—which needs to precede action in

the field—this competition of ideas should make for lively reading. The success of this or any journal invariably depends on such liveliness.

In the inaugural issue of *JFQ*, for example, Admiral David Jeremiah, Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, observes that “We desperately need to streamline our defense acquisition system.” So strong an assertion from so senior and thoughtful an officer should be a starting point for debate on what kinds of changes need to be made in our approach to building weapons in a period of ambiguous threats and constrained budgets.

The articles by senior officers emphasize cooperation while retaining the distinctive skills of each service. But Seth Cropsey insists that such cooperation must not silence the proper debate about the future roles of the individual services, while Stephen Rosen uses historical examples to argue that structured competition between the services is vital to the health of the Armed Forces.

On the operational level, General Robert RisCassi, who commands U.N. and U.S. forces in Korea, writes that reliance on coalition warfare will increase in the future, and offers an intriguing argument about the universality of military doctrine that is certain to send a legion of military historians to their reference works—and then to their word processors—to approve or dispute his arguments.

Putting ideas into action, Admiral Paul David Miller, the commander of the U.S. Atlantic Command, offers a working plan to preserve military power as U.S. forces decrease in size. Controversial his plans may be; but as virtually every author in this issue recognizes, the comfort of the old, familiar ways is gone.

These are but a few of the articles from *JFQ*'s first issue. Readers will inevitably notice that a hefty number of authors wear several stars on their shoulders. They have been gracious enough to lend their stature to the launching of *Joint Force Quarterly*. Future contributors should not be intimidated by the rank of this distinguished group. This journal is dedicated to providing a forum for every officer—irrespective of rank or position—with interest in the issues raised by the jointness and unity of the services. Jointness is as much a bottom-up as it is a top-down enterprise. As the Chairman urged, I too hope that you will read *JFQ*, write letters in response to its contents, and contribute your own articles. Despite the high rank of the authors in this inaugural issue, “Don't let the stars get in your eyes.”

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