

## IN THIS ISSUE

The central theme of this issue is the role of the superpowers in unconventional wars. Specifically, several articles and reviews examine American and Soviet policies and strategies toward such conflicts in the Third World. They highlight, in particular, the character of the respective approaches to the conflicts and the constraints and problems that arise from these approaches and the strategies and policies that inform and guide them.

If one accepts the arguments advanced about the United States in Elizabeth Boles' article and Stephen Hosmer's book (reviewed by Joseph Scolnick), the American approach—historically—has been the worst of all possible combinations. On the one hand, the objective calculation of national interest was replaced by the dogmatic interpretation of policy which ultimately failed the test of credibility. On the other, the United States accepted a number of constraints on the use of its military power in Third World conflicts in order to satisfy a wide range of strategic concerns. The irony of the American experience is that inappropriate and ineffective policies eroded the very base of public support that the self-imposed constraints were supposed to sustain.

The portrait of Soviet policy and strategy that emerges from Daniel Papp's article and Kurt Campbell's book (reviewed by Richard Dale) is of a much more skilled operator: cautious, patient, pragmatic, and flexible. Papp emphasizes in particular the importance of social-political analysis of conflict that is crucial to fashioning effective policy. He concludes by noting the irony of the situation with respect to the two superpowers. The West, he argues, ought to be better placed both for policy analysis and formulation and for execution. Boles and Hosmer, however, provide some thoughtful observations as to why this has not been the case.

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The opinions expressed in the articles, reviews and other contributions are those of the authors alone, and do not necessarily represent those of the Centre for Conflict Studies or of the University of New Brunswick.

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