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## From the Editors

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## FROM THE EDITORS

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Senator Barack Obama's election in November as the next president of the United States raises many questions about the future direction of American foreign and national security policy. None is more important than the question whether the Obama presidency will bring about a significant course correction in the grand strategy of the United States. Will an Obama administration cut defense spending dramatically while recapitalizing America's instruments of "soft power"? Will it rethink America's alliance system, in particular its relationship with NATO and the Europeans? Will it usher in a new era of multilateral diplomacy centering on the United Nations and other international organizations? Will it adopt a less proactive strategy in the global war on terrorism and scale down or even phase out American military involvement in the Greater Middle East? Will it place new emphasis on humanitarian intervention by U.S. military forces in places like Darfur? It is impossible to answer these and similar questions at the moment, but the broader national security community as well as the new administration itself will need to face up to them soon enough. In the lead article of this issue, Michael J. Green, a Japan specialist and former staff member of the National Security Council, looks at recent thinking on U.S. grand strategy in Asia by prominent foreign-policy intellectuals that may influence the administration's approach to this critical region.

That Africa has featured more prominently in American strategic calculations over the last several years is hardly a secret. Africa's endemic security problems, stemming from a combination of fragmented national identities, weak state structures, inadequate resources and capacities, and poor governance, have increasingly become a concern for the international community as a whole. The alarming rise of piracy off the Horn of Africa, as well as the ability of Islamist terrorists to operate freely throughout much of the region, has particularly helped fan such concern. In response, the United States has established a limited military presence in strategically located Djibouti in West Africa and has taken steps to stand up a new regional combatant command for the continent. The decision to create Africa Command (AFRICOM), as sensible as it seems in terms of rationalizing the organizational framework of American military engagement in Africa and sharpening the focus of its efforts there, has proved controversial, as

many African countries have voiced concerns over a heightened U.S. military presence in their region and resisted our efforts to locate the command's new headquarters there (it remains for the time being in Stuttgart, Germany; Italy has recently announced its willingness to host its Army and Navy headquarters). It should be added that the U.S. Navy has been actively involved in strengthening American military and diplomatic engagement with the Africans. In particular, the Global Fleet Station is an innovative operational concept—aligned with the new maritime strategy—that the Navy has been testing first in Africa with considerable success. Three of our authors analyze the current state of play in this arena. General Carlton W. Fulford, Jr., USMC (Ret.), provides a valuable overview of the strategic issues involved in American military engagement in Africa and the establishment of AFRICOM. Jonathan Stevenson and Kathi A. Sohn look more specifically at the role and contributions of the Navy to this endeavor. This issue's focus on Africa is completed by Stephen A. Emerson's review essay of eleven books that should be on the reading list of every professional military officer interested in the region.

Our other contributors may be briefly acknowledged. Naval operational art in World War II is the subject of Trent Hone's illuminating account of the interplay of doctrine and tactical combat experience in the U.S. Navy's epic march across the Pacific. Lieutenant Commander John Callaway, USN, provides a timely look at the pattern of learning (and failure to learn) in the U.S. military's approach to force protection since the 1983 bombing of the Marine barracks in Lebanon. Finally, Richard J. Norton offers a fascinating account of the genre of "future military history" and its possible impact on real-world strategic analysis.

This issue also includes what will be a new regular feature: a message from Professor John Jackson, the Naval War College's project manager for the Chief of Naval Operations' Navy Professional Reading Program. Professor Jackson gives a brief overview of the origins and character of this innovative program; in the future, he will update readers on changes in the reading list and related developments. (Look for our own reviews of new books appearing on the list.)

## ERRATUM

In our Autumn 2008 issue, Paul Smith's *The Terrorism Ahead: Confronting Transnational Violence in the Twenty-first Century* was reviewed by Professor Christopher Jasparro, not "Jasper," as printed (page 150). We regret this editorial error.

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Pelham G. Boyer, Managing Editor