

# *Strategic Studies Quarterly:* From the Beginning

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In January 2007, then-Lieutenant General Stephen R. Lorenz, the Air University commander, asked me to start a new journal for the Air Force focused on strategic matters. He described a journal that would include articles from military, government, and academic professionals interested in how air, space, and cyber power contributed to national security. General Lorenz said he wanted something like *Foreign Affairs* (the long-standing publication of the Council on Foreign Relations), *Parameters* (the US Army War College's quarterly journal), and the *Naval Institute Proceedings* (a publication of the independent Naval Institute).

I told him the three journals he described targeted very different audiences—one was clearly a flagship journal for the international relations community; the other aimed to reach graduates of the Army War College; the third was a forum for readers interested in matters related to operations and strategy for the Sea Services. Creating a journal that was sustainable and that would attract readers from a wide array of professional perspectives was a challenge that seemed both exciting and daunting—a challenge I enthusiastically took on.

Immediately after I told General Lorenz I would accept the challenge of becoming the founding editor in chief of the new journal, which he had already named *Strategic Studies Quarterly* (*SSQ*), he asked me when I would publish the first issue. I thought of all the things we needed to do: hire a staff (there would be a managing editor, an editorial assistant, and me), design the cover, procure a printing contract, determine the number of pages in each issue, design the interior format, coordinate production schedules with Air University Press, develop distribution lists, create peer-review processes, and, most importantly, collect articles aimed at General Lorenz's vision of the target market. I told him we would publish the first issue on September 1, 2007, nine months from the date I was hired. In true Lorenz fashion, he said, "Let me know what I can do to help." He also added, "I'll hold you to it."

My first task was to hire my staff. Luetwinder (Tawanda) Eaves was the new journal's managing editor. Tawanda and I had worked together at *Air & Space Power Journal*, and in my opinion, there's no one better at managing the thousands of tasks required to publish a professional journal. To

many of our authors, Tawanda *was* the journal. She accepted their draft articles, explained our peer review processes, assigned peer reviewers, served as the conduit between the reviewers, the authors, and me, and made sure we met all our timelines to publish the journal on time.

Later, as we added contributing editors and an editorial advisory board, she coordinated the meetings of those groups. Through her efforts, *SSQ* established a solid reputation of never missing a publication date, and, more importantly, our contributing authors had a positive experience with the publication process.

Betty Littlejohn was our editorial assistant. Betty did everything imaginable to make *SSQ* successful. She managed our book review program by requesting the latest books on strategy, national security policy, international relations, economics, history, and air, space, and cyber power from publishing houses. She advertised the books we had available, provided them to reviewers, and passed along the completed reviews to me and Tawanda for inclusion in the journal. She planned and coordinated the travel, lodging, and meals for our editorial advisory board meetings. But her most challenging task was to handle my travel schedule.

To reach the potential contributors and readers in the military, government, and academic communities General Lorenz had identified as our target audience, I had to travel extensively—on average three weeks a month for the three years I served as editor in chief. Betty planned and deconflicted all the travel arrangements—often connecting events in different places on the same trip.

She prepared and shipped copies of *SSQ* and our promotional materials to the places I was visiting to make sure I had tangible products to use to reach out to our potential partners. When things changed on the fly, as they often did, Betty activated her impressive list of contacts to adapt to the change. Her cheerful attitude and her willingness to take on any task was a key ingredient that helped make *SSQ* successful and sustainable from the outset.

From the beginning, we planned for *SSQ* to have print and electronic subscribers. I believed the ability to place a printed copy of the journal in someone's hand, to have a copy on someone's desk or in a senior leader's waiting area, and to give authors the ability to pass along a copy of the journal with their article was a foundational element to starting the new publication. I also believed electronic media would become the normal way for most readers to access content in the future.

In early 2007, libraries had begun to include eBooks in their collections, and by November 2007, Amazon released its first Kindle e-reader.

I wanted *SSQ* to be positioned to reach any reader in any format. We sent out an announcement advertising the launch of *SSQ* with the first issue to appear in September 2007—and offered early sign-up to those who wished to subscribe electronically. The print version of the journal would reach 5,000 readers; by September 2007, we already had about 20,000 electronic subscriptions, and these e-subscribers have remained a key part of *SSQ*'s readership.

Professional journals rely on peer-review processes to ensure quality and credibility. *SSQ* developed an impressive list of peer reviewers starting with the Air University faculty and including professionals within the Defense Department, other branches of the government, and US and foreign faculty members in key disciplines. Our challenge to the peer reviewers was to provide clear, actionable feedback to authors on what they could do to improve their draft articles. In some cases, the peer reviewer recommended an article was a better fit for publication in another journal. We welcomed that kind of feedback because our ultimate approach was to help authors get their ideas published—whether it was with *SSQ* or not.

Contributing editors also helped instill rigor and quality in *SSQ*. I wish I could take credit for this idea, but it came from Dr. John T. LaSaine, a long-serving member of the Air Command and Staff College faculty. The idea was to provide me with a group of counselors from all the academic disciplines at Air University. When articles had gone through the peer review and refinement process, and I deemed them worthy of consideration for publication, the contributing editors, initially all full professors or senior faculty members in Air University graduate degree-granting programs, met to discuss the slate of prospective articles and make a recommendation. These meetings were always fun and interesting and, most importantly, gave me invaluable perspectives on preserving *SSQ*'s quality and credibility.

Our editorial advisory board comprised key senior military, government, and academic leaders who provided advice and perspectives on *SSQ*'s direction. Typically, I reviewed *SSQ*'s charter and operating philosophy with the board before plunging into the details of articles published since the last meeting, the types of articles scheduled for publication during the next year, budget planning and execution, and, most importantly, the ways in which the board could help make *SSQ* more effective. Invariably, the members generated more ideas than I could execute in a single year, but their perspectives as senior leaders helped me keep *SSQ* aimed at the strategic level that General Lorenz had set as the target.

*Strategic Studies Quarterly* appeared for the first time in September 2007, as I had forecast in January of that year. General Lorenz had con-

tributed his perspective, “Ideas—The Essential Elements for Strategic Security in an Uncertain Future.”

We look forward to seeing an active, enthusiastic exchange of ideas that contributes directly to making our nation more secure, and we encourage you to bring ideas into this forum—to offer your views and proposals here, where they will receive the serious consideration they deserve. We expect that some of the answers to the tough problems we will confront in the rapidly changing strategic environment will appear in the pages of this journal.<sup>1</sup>

Congressman Terry Everett (R-AL) wrote about the need for a comprehensive space protection strategy. Dr. Edwina Campbell wrote about the collapsing transatlantic consensus; Dr. Jeffrey Record provided a perspective on the Powell Doctrine; Dr. Jim Forsyth wrote the first of several articles that would appear in *SSQ* over the years on great power competition; and Dr. Phil Meilinger wrote about restoring the influence of Clausewitz for military strategists.

When I placed the first copy in General Lorenz’s hands, he laughed, presented me a coin, and said, “I never thought you would do it!” Then, the more daunting issue hit me: What had taken us seven months to accomplish (it took nearly two months for Air University Press and the printer to edit, typeset, print, and ship each issue) now had to be done in less than two! Nevertheless, *SSQ* had launched. For the next three years, Betty, Tawanda, and I worked, learned, and grew as professionals in the journal business.

As the Air University team evolves *Strategic Studies Quarterly* into *Æther: A Journal of Strategy and Airpower* to serve as a forum for contributors to offer and exchange ideas to accelerate change to meet our increasingly complex security challenges, I believe that *SSQ*’s continuing legacy will be to encourage its readers to think, to encourage authors to produce their best ideas for public consumption, and, as General Lorenz wrote in that inaugural issue, to find answers to some of our toughest national security problems. I trust that today’s leadership team at the professional journals division will enjoy as much success and as much fun with *Æther* as the *SSQ* team did throughout our time creating new and compelling professional publications for our Air Force. **SSQ**

**Anthony C. Cain**

Dr. Cain, Colonel USAF, retired, served as the editor for *Strategic Studies Quarterly* from 2007 to 2010.

## **Notes**

1. Stephen R. Lorenz, "Ideas—The Essential Elements for Strategic Security in an Uncertain Future," *Strategic Studies Quarterly* 1, no. 1 (Fall 2007): 3, <https://www.airuniversity.af.edu/>.

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