

Dear Reader,

In 1947, commanding general of Air University Major General Muir S. Fairchild established *Air University Quarterly Review*. In the inaugural issue, Fairchild wrote that the fledgling “journal of Air Power will not be just another news-magazine, nor is it intended as a periodical of interest only to the Air University. Rather, it will be a professional publication . . . and will reflect not only the highest scholastic standards and educational accomplishments of Air University, but also—and more important, perhaps—the best professional thought concerning global concepts and doctrines of air strategy and tactics.”¹

Over the years, the flagship journal of the Air Force has featured content ranging from the finer points of air and space operations to national security strategy and international security. A sample of articles from a 1977 issue of then-titled *Air University Review* includes “Nuclear Proliferation and U.S. Security,” “Air-to-Air Training under the DOC System,” and “Deterrence: Reckless Prudence.”

Until the turn of the century and, in particular, before the advent of the internet and social media, global events and a global, strategic interest on the part of readers tended to be confined to certain echelons within the Air Force and Air Force professional military education. At the same time, air and space operations became a priority focus for the journal, renamed a fifth time in 2002 to *Air & Space Power Journal (ASPJ)*. By the late 1990s and early 2000s, content in the journal was predominantly focused on the operational level, and the journal had a dearth of contributions by authors outside of the service. In 2006, Air University’s commander, then-Lieutenant General Stephen R. Lorenz, recognized this intellectual gap and directed the establishment of *Strategic Studies Quarterly (SSQ)*.

This winter issue marks the fifteenth year of this highly respected publication. What began as an effort to showcase strategic thought of leading national security intellectuals has developed into a well-respected strategic military journal on par with its long-standing sister-service strategic journals.

Over the past decade and in an accelerated manner likely unanticipated by most, social media has created access to and, by extension, expanded general interest in global affairs and national and international politics. Airmen and Guardians of today scroll through daily feeds that include news of new air and space platforms, People’s Republic of China military activities in the Taiwan Strait, Russia massing troops on the border of Ukraine, crowded low Earth orbit, and leadership and manage-

ment theories and lessons learned. Strategic interest is no longer solely the purview of scholars and practitioners including Air Force and national security leaders and their staffs. Indeed, lines between operations, national security strategy, and international relations are ever more opaque—intellectual seams increasingly less relevant to today’s informed Airman and Guardian.

A true flagship Air Force journal effort of the twenty-first century needs, then, to encompass the overlapping, interdependent realms of operations and national and international security. With this in mind, in 2022, Air University Press will bring *SSQ* and *ASPJ* under one web platform that will serve as the Air Force flagship journal effort. The platform will also give the Press the opportunity to feature additional digital content such as planned and potential partnerships with the Thomas N. Barnes Center for Enlisted Education, NATO and EU military air and space journals, and outreach to Historically Black Colleges and Universities.

Further, with the veritable explosion of online journals, it is increasingly important that journals signal immediately their association with their organization as well as their focus. Accordingly, *ASPJ* will take on a slightly altered name, *Air & Space Operations Review (ASOR)*, highlighting that publication’s focus on operations. In the same vein, *SSQ* will become *Æther: A Journal of Strategy and Airpower*, making explicit its Department of the Air Force affiliation and acknowledging in advance the likely emergence of a US Space Force-sanctioned journal in the next few years. While the content of both will remain largely the same, *SSQ*’s new name embraces the journal’s emphasis on highlighting the relevance of national and international security policy concepts and theory to the Department of the Air Force.

Moreover, Chief of Staff of the Air Force General Charles Q. Brown Jr. recently called on Air University to be a leader in innovative thought and theory, noting that in addition to traditional deterrence measures, cultural understanding was vital to combating our adversaries. Understanding an adversary’s mind via culture sometimes requires an unconventional approach. *Æther* will be looking for such content—rigorous, scholarly, and intellectually creative.

A discussion of content is incomplete without a note about sanctioned military journals. Although taxpayer funded, by charter and regulation and residing under professional military education institutions, these service journals operate with academic freedom. One only need look back through the pages of almost 75 years of the Air University Press family of journals to see that authors and editors have shown no reluctance to ad-

dress sensitive issues or to air well-deserved criticism of Air Force leaders and initiatives—a true loyal opposition when warranted.

The first editor and editorial board of *Air University Quarterly Review* noted in the inaugural issue that “if the appearance here of articles which may not agree with accepted policy, or even with majority opinion, will stimulate discussion and provoke controversy, an important part of this journal’s mission will have been accomplished: to induce airmen to have original thought on these matters and to give these thoughts expression.”²

In addition to continuing the 75-year tradition of academic freedom, both journals will continue to be refereed, and issues will be published quarterly and limited in page count. Due to significant budget cuts, *ASOR* will move to a digital-only publication, something that journal has done in the past. *Ether* will continue a print distribution. The journals will also continue to solicit content from authors associated with the Air Force as well as voices from outside the service. The platform will host a single book review effort, and submission requirements for both journals will be largely identical.

As the last issue under the current name, this *SSQ* winter edition features a selection of content including a special commentary, articles, and retrospectives. The issue begins with a contribution from *SSQ*’s first editor, Anthony C. Cain, which details the journal’s conceptualization, launch, and first few years. In our special commentary, Richard Hanania questions the application of Graham Allison’s notion of the Thucydides Trap to the contemporary US-China relationship.

Leading our articles, Marie Harnly finds the Air Force experiences varying degrees of autonomy when Congress and the president differ on policy issues, which is at odds with classic tenets of civil-military relations theory. Our forum on deterrence features two articles. Andrea Charron and James Fergusson advocate for a joint Canada-US deterrence-by-denial approach to continental defense. Matthew Kroenig argues strategic stability can only be guaranteed by encouraging technology-related policies that bolster US, Ally, and partner militaries. In our final article, Wendy Whitman Cobb analyzes four strategies in a popular Chinese science fiction trilogy to highlight the ways in which Chinese strategic thinking differ systematically from Western modes of thinking.

Our *Reconsidered* forum includes four contributions primarily from Air University faculty. Dan Connelly and Joseph Piroch contend then-Lieutenant Colonel Clinton S. Hinote makes critical assertions that underpin airpower efficacy today. Continuing in the vein of airpower strategy, John Terino Jr. highlights the prescience of a 2008 article by

Major General R. Michael Worden considering future challenges to American airpower strategists such as technology, information, funding, and recapitalization.

Turning to planning, Brian Price considers Daryl Morini's 2010 call for a diplomatic surge in Afghanistan and the lack of strategic design in the Coalition approach to the Afghanistan War. Closing our forum, Sean Braniff finds that while Robert Ross's 2013 prediction that China would be the main focus of US grand strategy has come to fruition, his opposition to engaging mainland East Asian nations in that strategy in meaningful ways was shortsighted.

Our Winter issue also includes a recently added element, *Par Avion*, which features translated articles from our NATO and EU Allies and partners—a section that will continue in *Æther*. In this issue, *Par Avion* features a contribution from Mickaël Aubout, a French Air Forces officer, discussing the notion of a shared, international aerial strategic culture.

In closing, the editor would like to recognize the hard work of the former editors of *SSQ*, Dr. Anthony C. Cain, Colonel, USAF, retired, and Mr. W. Michael Guillot, Colonel, USAF, retired; myriad contributing editors and reviewers; and the skilled and dedicated staff of the journal, some of whom have retired and those still with the Air University Press family, namely Tawanda Eaves, Jeanne Shamburger, Megan Hoehn, Donna Budjenska, and Nedra Looney. Without these individuals' vision, commitment, excellence, and teamwork, *SSQ* would not have succeeded. We are grateful for the efforts of the *SSQ* team, past and present, and we intend to honor and continue that commitment to excellence and rigor as the Air Force flagship journal effort sets its sights on its 100th birthday in 2047.

When he became Chief of Staff of the Air Force, General Brown called on the Department to “accelerate change or lose.” Air University Press takes this charge seriously and welcomes leadership that advocates for dynamic adaptation to the realities of today's complex physical and intellectual universe. **SSQ**

~The Editor

Letter from the Editor

Notes

1. Editor and Editorial Board, “Editorial,” *Air University Quarterly Review* 1, no. 1 (Spring 1947): 91.
2. Editor and Editorial Board, “Editorial,” 94.

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