



## Adapting to change

Currently Western defence forces face extensive budget cuts, increasing political pressure, a changing world order and continuously more complex realities in mission areas: circumstances that demand change across the military field. The article **The Agility Imperative: A Revelation in Military Affairs** describes the new demands on military organisations and individuals to effectively conduct warfare in the information age. Experiences from military operations the last couple of years force military personnel to rethink their ways of acting as soldiers and as leaders. Innovative methods might be one solution, which is the topic of the article **How to lead in complex situations**. And at the operational level the article **Preparing for the unknown – from an operator's perspective** gives the unveiled version of the complexity of decision making in military contexts. Switching to the strategic level, the article **China's contribution to world order: Challenges and opportunities** outlines the Chinese alternative to Western concepts of world order, an alternative that has great consequences for Western defence establishments.

Welcome to the first edition of Contemporary Conflicts – military studies magazine, which is based on research conducted at the Royal Danish Defence College. Should you have feedback of any kind, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Editor Ole Kværnø, Dean

## The agility imperative: a revelation in military affairs



War fighting in the 21st century and the information age is more about the speed of learning than it is about the speed of reloading. Granted, this simplistic understanding of modern warfare is enticingly suggestive in that it appears to focus on something more than just destruction. The notion that the number of tanks or warships you have matters less than your ability to think network rather than linearly is comforting. But gone is also the physical certainty of winning or losing decisive battles and formal surrenders of state actors. The security environment is driven by an unparalleled explosion in information transfer that has affected how humans fundamentally organise and develop ideas. The military cannot avoid the impact of these developments and the challenges they present. By the end of 2013 the agility imperative will likely stand out as one of the defining characteristics necessary for military organisations to fight wars in the 21st century.

Author: William Mitchell, Dr, Royal Danish Defence College

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## How to lead complex situations



The military leader is experiencing increasingly more complex situations, whether it is as leader in a foreign combat environment or in the home-based public administration. Complex situations like these call for a special set of managerial responses and a special way of leading organisations. The proposition of this article is that the methods that drive innovative processes, strengthening the creative culture, are necessary to manage complex situations in military contexts.

Author: Michael Pingel Hansen, senior consultant, Royal Danish Defence College

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## Preparing for the unknown – from an operator’s perspective



Political involvement in missions carried out today warrants a change to military equipment used in conflicts and calls for an attitude change at the operator level. In a political setting where smaller countries actively contribute to military operations to help promote national values and their benefits in international relations, carrying out complex missions with political success has increasing value. As a result of the increasing importance of political aspects in military operations, procurement of military equipment must be thoroughly analysed and update programmes must be sustained throughout the lifespan of that equipment for it to maintain its political relevance. Also the mindset of operators must change to make generic doctrine work in a political context.

Author: Captain Peter Melgaard, Royal Danish Airforce

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## China’s contribution to world order: challenges and opportunities



China promotes a world order based on coexistence. This concept of coexistence entails extensive policy coordination for conflict management. Coexistence is based on the principles of absolute sovereignty and non-intervention adjusted to developing countries’ demands for enhanced regionalisation of global security management. For Western defence establishments, Beijing’s efforts imply less room overseas for military operations and more room for capacity building.

Author: Liselotte Odgaard, associate professor, Royal Danish Defence College

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## Activities & Publications

- 2013-07-22 Summer university 2013 - NATO and Afghanistan 2001 - 2013
- 2013-08-19 Course on African dynamics
- 2013-09-18 Conference on maritime security off the African east coast
- 2013-11-12 ISMS Conference 2013 Copenhagen

[Operationalizing Battlespace Agility.](#) / Mitchell, Dr. William.

[Narrative Led Operations.](#) / Nissen, Thomas Elkjer.

[Denmark : How not if to Outsource Military Services.](#) / Mandrup, Thomas .

[A New Strategic World Order : Implications for Europe.](#) / Odgaard, Liselotte .

[Northern European Overture to War, 1939–1941 : From Memel to Barbarossa.](#) / Azar Gat, et al.

[Afghanistan, state and society : Great Power Politics and the Way Ahead.](#) / Kværnø, Ole ; Bernard, Cheryl (editor); Thruelsen, Peter Dahl (editor).

[The US Pivot Towards Asia-Pacific : Third Time's the Charm?.](#) / Ulrich, Philip Christian.

[The Power of Principles : : Coexistence in the National Security Strategies of the BRICS Countries.](#) / Odgaard, Liselotte ; Mandrup, Thomas ; de Koning, Cedric.

## Colophon

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