



The nature of the military

The nature of the military is changing – or is it? Fundamental changes to international relations and international law seem to imply change also in the military field. This issue of Contemporary Conflicts presents three areas of research at the Royal Danish Defence College that all discuss aspects, cases and tendencies related to such change. The article **Ambiguous securityscapes: Sierra Leonean ex-militias as local threats – and providers of global security in Iraq** gives us an insight into an evolving private security sector and the discrepancies between local and global security provision. **Danish lessons learned: The comprehensive/integrated approach after Iraq and Afghanistan** analyses the new Danish strategy paper that outlines Denmark's approach to future stabilisation operations. And lastly, the current situation in Syria is discussed in the article **Syria: Civil-military relations during civil war**, which sheds light on the probable turn to diplomatic means by the regime in order to secure its survival after the civil war.

We hope you will enjoy the articles in this issue.

Ole Kværnø, dean

Ambiguous securityscapes: Sierra Leonean ex-militias as local threats – and providers of global security in Iraq



In the wake of 9/11, failed states in Africa are increasingly regarded as spaces of threat to global security, as they can potentially serve as staging grounds for radicalisation and terrorist mobilisations. Sierra Leone is often considered to be the ultimate symbol of state failure. Hosting a surplus population of marginalised ex-militias considered a major threat to security, national and international interventions have aimed to demobilise and reintegrate ex-militias into 'civilian lives'. In recent years, however, private security companies providing services for the US government have found Sierra Leone a fertile ground for the rapid – and cheap – recruitment of military (sub)contractors. This article addresses the outsourcing of security in Iraq to Sierra Leonean ex-militias in order to shed light on the ambiguities that characterise the management of violence and the discrepancies between local and global security provision.

Author: Maya Mynster Christensen, Ph.d., Royal Danish Defence College

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Danish lessons learned: The comprehensive/integrated approach after Iraq and Afghanistan



The lessons learned by Denmark in recent conflicts with respect to combining its diplomatic, development and military instruments in an integrated manner have now crystallised into a new strategy paper outlining the main features of a new approach emphasising the importance of conflict prevention and greater respect for humanitarian principles.

Author: Peter Viggo Jakobsen, Ph.d., Royal Danish Defence College

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Syria: Civil-military relations during civil war



The more than 1,000-days-long and very violent civil war in Syria has left the country and its people in an absolute state of dissolution. A strong patrimonial and sectarian separate regime, unable, by its own capabilities, to end the conflict, both politically and militarily, has been forced to utilise alternative security policy measures to retain power.

Author: Major Lars Cramer-Larsen, Royal Danish Defence College & Professor Bertel Heurlin, University of Copenhagen

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Royal Danish Defence College

Ryvangs Allé 1

DK-2100 Copenhagen

Denmark

Phone: +45 3915 1515

Fax: +45 3929 6172

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Editor: Ole Kværnø, Dean

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