

## A Word from the Chairman

**T**his issue of *JFQ* features a number of articles on military innovation, a matter of critical importance as the Armed Forces enter the 21<sup>st</sup> century. It requires leadership, creative thinking, and insight to counter threats to the United States. Looking to the future, one trend that will affect technological innovation, doctrine, and organization is the increasing interdependence of nations.

This interdependence, often labeled globalization, is being fueled by revolutionary changes in communications and information technology and means the world is being tied closer together than ever before. To understand the extent of this trend, consider that a decade ago most people had never heard of the Internet. Today, an estimated 200 million people are using it, a number that is growing by some 300,000 a week.

Globalization is far from complete. Although many people still are not “on the Net,” and millions more do not know what it is, the rise of an interdependent global economy has made nations around the world vulnerable to distant shocks and

*(continued on page 4)*

**globalization is far from complete**

U.S. Air Force (Scott Stewart)



55<sup>th</sup> Signal Company, Combat Camera (R. Alan Mitchell)

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## A WORD FROM THE CHAIRMAN

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disruptions. The Asian financial crisis spread across the region and eventually impacted the entire planet. In addition, the globalization of media has transformed local events into international news with worldwide repercussions. We live in an age when real-time images can be transmitted into homes and offices anywhere in



U.S. Navy (Andrew McKaskle)

### we must pay greater attention to asymmetric capabilities

the world, applying a powerful influence on policymakers. The so-called CNN effect is real.

New threats also will be shaped by globalization. The ever-increasing ability of individuals and groups to rapidly collect, analyze, disseminate, and act on information is breaking down traditional barriers between domestic and international affairs and, in the process, shrinking the power of the nation-state. In the next century we will see the further expansion of the roles of non-governmental organizations and independent actors which make contributions to international crises through humanitarian programs (such as Doctors Without Borders and CARE) and criminal gangs, drug cartels, and terrorist groups which exercise a sinister influence over all sectors of society without reference to national borders.



U.S. Navy (James Staughenaupt)

1<sup>st</sup> Combat Camera Squadron (Stephen Faulstich)

Advances in information and communication technologies provide like-minded groups with the ability to coordinate action, solicit funds from sympathetic patrons, garner media attention, and acquire access to additional resources, including advanced conventional arms and perhaps weapons of mass destruction. One dramatic example of such change is the Ikonos satellite. This system will furnish those who can afford it with high resolution pictures of a one-meter area of any place on earth.



1<sup>st</sup> Combat Camera Squadron (James D. Mossman)

Until recently this type of capability was reserved for only a few nations.

Although globalization has certainly blurred the line between the capabilities of state and non-state actors, the distinction has not been erased. This development does not mean that nation-states will disappear from the scene; nor will their land, sea, and air forces. We must still prepare to defeat conventional forces.

Threats posed by the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction mean that we must pay greater attention to how U.S. military strategy could be thwarted by asymmetric capabilities. Such threats have long been a factor in warfare, and there are many cases of militaries using asymmetries to avoid enemy strengths and exploit their weaknesses. What globalization has changed is the ability of state and non-state actors to leap ahead and acquire means previously unattainable.

Maintaining a robust, credible force demands awareness of how new capabilities unleashed through globalization can be used, an understanding of our vulnerabilities in light of these changes, and innovative thinking about how we can succeed no matter how great the challenge. Innovation is never easy, but the articles in this issue of the journal should assist us as we move into the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

HENRY H. SHELTON  
Chairman  
of the Joint Chiefs of Staff