



CTX

EDITORIAL STAFF

ANNA SIMONS *Executive Editor*
ELIZABETH SKINNER *Managing Editor*
RYAN STUART *Design & Layout*

EDITORIAL REVIEW BOARD

VICTOR ASAL
University of Albany, SUNY

CHRIS HARMON
*Daniel S. Inouye Asia-Pacific Center
for Security Studies*

BLAIRE HARMS
US Naval Postgraduate School

TROELS HENNINGSEN
Royal Danish Defense College

PETER MCCABE
Joint Special Operations University

IAN C. RICE
US Army

NICHOLAS TOMB
US Naval Postgraduate School

CRAIG WHITESIDE
US Naval War College

From the Editor

The Lernaean Hydra of Greek mythology was a multi-headed snake-like monster that preyed on the people and livestock of villages near the lake of Lerna, where the monster lived. If one of the Hydra's heads was cut off, two others would grow in its place, making the monster almost impossible to kill. Only the hero Herakles (aka Hercules) was finally able to destroy the monster, and even he needed help from another hero and a goddess to prevail.

The Hydra seems an apt metaphor for the violent ideological extremism, embodied in such groups as al Qaeda, ISIS, Boko Haram, Abu Sayyaf, and many others, that has become a prominent driver of both domestic and international politics in the twenty-first century. Al Qaeda's 11 September 2001 attack on the United States not only complicated the world's system of air travel and increased many people's tolerance for infringing on civil rights in the name of security, it also led to vicious metastatic civil wars that continue to rage seventeen years later. Cutting off the head of al Qaeda in Iraq led to multiple extremist outgrowths, and ultimately to the seemingly unstoppable monster called ISIS, which appeared poised to take over the Middle East in 2014.

Although ISIS has been forced out of its once-extensive territories in Syria and Iraq, no one who is paying attention believes it is defeated. A suicide attack in Syria on 16 January 2019 that killed 19 people and was quickly claimed by ISIS reinforced this reality. What happens once ISIS is forced from its last Syrian stronghold is anyone's guess, but we would be fools to imagine that the Hydra of ideological terrorism is dead.

This issue begins with an account of Finland's first Special Operations Surgical Teams (FINSOST), told by LTC Arto Hilden, who helped create the FINSOST program, and Dr. Antti Lahdenranta, a SOF reservist who served as a surgeon on one of the inaugural teams. The authors begin by describing the painstaking ten-year process to design team requirements and train the medical personnel to function in a battle zone. They then discuss the work the teams did and the obstacles they faced as they supported Iraqi and coalition troops in the months-long fight to free Mosul from ISIS.

In the next article, authors MAJ Rick Breckveldt and Dr. Martijn Kitzen use the Philippines' decades-long fight against violent insurgencies and extremist

ideologies as a case study to examine the value of traditional state-on-state coercion theory for use against non-state actors. Several Philippine provinces are home to a variety of insurgent groups with goals that range from economic and human rights to outright secession. The authors suggest that the Philippine government and its US ally should consider using non-traditional coercive tactics that target the groups' weaknesses but also offer them a way to cooperate in achieving long-term peace.

The third article describes another kind of innovation in CT partnerships, the Localization Strategy. Belgian SOF officer Pierre Dehaene and his team, along with several other specialized SOF teams, were tasked to train Nigerien armed forces in counterinsurgency and counter-extremism tactics and strategies, but with a difference. Instead of imposing European methods and equipment onto the host nation forces, the Belgian SOF team worked with the Nigeriens and other partner nations to leverage local capabilities so that the Nigerien forces would be fully self-sustaining when the foreign advisors departed.

Finally, researcher Ryota Akiba reminds us that extremists have carried out a number of attacks on Japanese citizens working abroad over the past several decades. In each instance, Japan has had to rely on the host nation's police and military to respond, with mixed, sometimes tragic results. Akiba proposes that Japan should develop the legislation and capabilities to set up a Japan Special Operations Command that is specifically empowered to handle hostage situations and other crises that threaten the lives of Japanese citizens overseas.

Our book review comes from LTC Flemming Haar, who discusses an anthology of essays on the value of SOF for small countries. This volume, notes Haar, seeks to fill a yawning gap in the existing literature on SOF, which has focused primarily on countries with large militaries such as the United States and the United Kingdom.

Be sure to look over the latest offerings from JSOU in our Publications Announcements. If you're in Monterey in March, you might be interested in attending the Special Operations Research Association's annual Symposium. See the announcement on p. 53.

We'd love to hear from you at CTXEditor@GlobalECCO.org or on Facebook whenever you read something in *CTX* that sparks your interest, raises questions, or demands a response. As always, we encourage you to send your article and review submissions to CTXEditor@GlobalECCO.org.

ELIZABETH SKINNER

Managing Editor, *CTX*
CTXEditor@globalecco.org