
PREFACE

We have been posing our ideas about conflict in the information age for some years now, beginning in 1991 with our original ruminations about cyberwar, then about netwar, and lately about “information strategy.” With each step, we have kept returning to a favorite set of themes—organization is as crucial as technology in understanding the information revolution; this revolution is giving rise to network forms of organization; and the rise of networks will continue to accrue power to nonstate actors, more than to states, until states adapt by learning to remold their hierarchies into hybrids that incorporate network design elements. Meanwhile, we have kept our eyes on emerging trends in conflict—from the end of the Persian Gulf War, through recent developments in places like Chechnya and Chiapas—to further our understanding that the context and conduct of conflict is changing from one end of the spectrum to the other.

New modes of war, terrorism, crime, and even radical activism—are all these emerging from similar information-age dynamics? If so, what is the best preparation for responding to such modes? When the subject is warfare, for example, it is common wisdom that militaries tend to prepare for the last war, and there is much historical evidence to support this notion. Today, however, it is clear that defense establishments around the world—and especially in the United States—are thinking about how war will change, how the “revolution in military affairs” (RMA) will unfold, and how the next war may well be quite different from the last. Whether the focus is warfare, terrorism, crime, or social conflict, we have striven to anticipate what the spectrum of future wars and other types of conflicts will look like. If

our approach proves correct, then perhaps this volume can help defense planners prepare for the next war instead of the last.

We hope that our own and our contributors' views are largely correct, and that our collective insights will prove useful to those, both civilians and military personnel, who are entrusted with developing and implementing national security strategy. We also hope that the studies in this volume are clear and compelling enough to attract a broad, general readership, since, without greater public understanding and support, all efforts to prepare effectively for conflict in the information age could go astray.

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