

The Changing Face of War— And of Our Work

Adam Klein and Joseph Maguire



In their introduction to Volume 9, Issue 1, directors Adam Klein and Joseph Maguire discuss the changes to *TNSR* and their vision for the future of the journal.

This issue of the *Texas National Security Review* looks different. As we embark on Volume 9, our new, bold, stark design represents *TNSR*'s commitment to inviting the world's best thinkers to write about the world's hardest problems.

You may have noticed another difference as well. Traditionally, this space is reserved for the *Review*'s editorial leaders to discuss how the theme of each issue bears upon current national security debates. Instead, this issue's introduction is written by the directors of the institutions that jointly oversee the *Review*. (The *Texas National Security Review* is jointly administered by the Clements Center for National Security and the Strauss Center for International Security and Law, both at the University of Texas at Austin, with funding from the University of Texas System.) At a time of both change and opportunity, we thought it important to explain both the visible adjustments to *TNSR* and our enduring vision for the *Review* and its role in public life.

The relationship between academia and government has rarely been more fraught—or more valuable. What remains of the post–Cold War order is being battered by several concurrent trends: China's emergence as an industrial and technological superpower; avulsive changes in military and civilian technology; the migration of economic and military power away from the G7 and toward the global South and East; and broader cultural and political debates roiling the West. In times of such layered complexity, wise guidance should come from America's great universities.

Yet universities have not always upheld their side of what University of Texas Provost William Inboden, writing in the journal *National Affairs*, recently called their “social contract with American society.” To restore that social contract, “universities must first and foremost remember that they are, quite literally, public trusts.”¹

The *Texas National Security Review* is best understood as an investment by the University of Texas in accepting and fulfilling that public trust, by eliciting the best thinking among academics and practitioners about the pressing security challenges facing our nation and the world.

The design changes in this edition of *TNSR* are the culmination of a broader transformation at the journal this year, all made with an eye toward equip-

ping the *Review* to best fulfill that public trust. Beginning in January 2025, *TNSR* is now printed and distributed by the University of Texas Press, one of the nation's leading academic publishers. Partnering with UT Press will open new channels of distribution for pieces published in *TNSR* and streamline the experience of our contributors. For the first time, all *TNSR* articles are now accessible in academic databases like Project Muse and will soon formally appear in the citation indices on which junior scholars rely for tenure and promotion. As always, all *TNSR* content will remain freely accessible online as well.

In keeping with this theme of adaptation and change, this issue of *TNSR* confronts the changing face of war and the evolving, contested concept of world order.

In his Scholar article, Carter Malkasian examines the shifting nature of war in the Middle East and South Asia, challenging a twentieth-century view of warfare that he critiques as overly government-centric. Although war is often seen as an affair of states more than of societies, Malkasian shows that in the Middle East and South Asia, war has often been an affair of people, shaped as much by the relations between states and societies as formal relations between governments.

Our three Strategist articles offer similarly challenging reflections. In the first, former Indian ambassador, diplomat, and statesman Shivshankar Menon examines the concept of world orders from the vantage point of South Asia. He casts a critical eye on the post-1945 international order, considering how its internal contradictions seeded the present moment of instability and change. His claim—that the present moment should be thought of as much in terms of global disorder as order—is a deeply informed, stimulating provocation to Western perspectives on world order.

A second Strategist article, by Bence Nemeth, engages a similar topic—global order—but employs a very different approach. Nemeth considers how a hypothetical US failure to deter or, if needed, defeat China in the Pacific could undermine the US alliance structure. He draws on the 1956 British Suez Crisis—a shock event that revealed the decline of a great power—to offer a cautionary assessment of how a similar event, if it occurred today, could inflect global understanding of American leadership.

Our final Strategist article, by Eyck Freymann and Harry Halem, examines how the changing geopolitical and technological landscape of warfare affects

1 William Inboden, “Restoring the Academic Social Contract,” *National Affairs*, <https://www.nationalaffairs.com/publications/detail/restoring-academic-social-contract>.

deterrence in the Indo-Pacific. Echoing Malkasian, they situate necessary improvements to American deterrence of conflict with China in how the United States generates the requisite tools of hard power. This task requires reshaping relationships and addressing institutional bottlenecks among actors *within* the United States—the American military, the defense-industrial base, innovators in the tech sector, and elected leaders who appropriate funds and approve the contracts and programs that deploy American innovation in defense of national security.

Tyler Bowen’s Scholar article challenges conventional wisdom on the relationship between nuclear and conventional power among nuclear-armed states. He argues that conventional military power can be used effectively in coercion in a nuclear crisis, but only under precise conditions that are often difficult to accomplish. His article calls for a rethinking of the role of coercion in international relations, and provides specific lessons for policymakers who seek to use conventional military tools to shape their security in the face of a nuclear-armed adversary.

In our final Scholar article, Nathan G. Wood reflects on how autonomous weapons systems can be used within the constraints of international law. As war in Ukraine has foreshadowed potentially greater use of unmanned and autonomous systems in warfare, his article, “Bombs, Bots, and the Principles of Distinction,” speaks to how the evolving technology of warfare requires continuous engagement with the moral questions that drive human use of violence in conflict.

Our Roundtable feature in this issue of the *Texas National Security Review* contains two reviews of Elizabeth Saunders’s recent book, *The Insiders’*

Game (Princeton University Press, 2024). Reviewers Mara Karlin and Mathew Burrows draw on their experiences as scholars and policy analysts to reflect on what Saunders’s work tells us about the critical role of elites in shaping US foreign policy.

Amid global and editorial change, one thing has remained constant: *TNSR*’s commitment to the quality, accessibility, and impact of each article we publish. We remain grateful for the trust of the academics and practitioners who publish with *TNSR*, and for the University of Texas System for this investment in service to the nation.

Adam Klein is director of the Strauss Center for International Security and Law at the University of Texas at Austin and faculty at the University of Texas School of Law. He previously served as chairman of the United States Privacy and Civil Liberties Oversight Board.

Joseph Maguire is the executive director of the Clements Center for National Security at the University of Texas at Austin and holds the Sid Richardson Distinguished Visiting Public Official Chair at UT’s Lyndon B. Johnson School of Public Affairs. He retired from the US Navy at the rank of vice admiral after thirty-six years of service, and previously served as director of the National Counterterrorism Center as well as acting director of national intelligence.

Image: Seal of the University stained glass in the President’s Office 2019 by The University of Texas at Austin.²

2 For image, see <https://utexas.imagerelay.com/share/UT-Seal-President-Office>

