

Can you outline your own involvement with RACO?

"My first exposure to active participation with RACO was as part of the team that assisted in the formulation of the RACO submission on the White Paper on Defence. By coincidence, it was my predecessor, Lt Col Paul Allen, who persuaded me to contribute to this submission. Shortly after its completion I was posted overseas and on my return home I ran for election as a RACO representative in the DFHQ constituency. I was nominated by that committee as their representative on the National Executive a position I held for almost three years. During this period I also held the appointment of Honorary Treasurer for the Association. This year I ran for election in the Eastern Brigade and put myself forward for the presidential election and was successful.

What do you envisage the key challenges will be during over the two years of your Presidency?

"On the negotiation front the key issues to be addressed during my term as President flow from Benchmarking and the Sustaining Progress national wage agreement. In accepting Sustaining Progress, which included provision for the payment of the awards recommended by the Benchmarking Body, the Association signed onto a Modernisation Agenda that requires specified change in a number of areas over the next two years or so. This Modernisation Agenda was overwhelmingly accepted by members in the ballot on Sustaining Progress late last year. The detailed negotiation of the implementation of the Agenda has now commenced and will continue throughout my Presidency as we work through the Agenda on the basis of an agreed schedule.

The most significant immediate challenge presented by the Modernisation Agenda is the review of the 1997 long term promotion agreement. Negotiations are currently in progress with both the civil and military management in relation to all systems of officer promotion for the Army, Air Corps and Naval Service. The agreed Modernisation Agenda specifies that the review will include measures designed to allow some officers to achieve higher rank earlier in their careers while also ensuring the continuation of reasonable career officers for the generality of suitably qualified officers. We are committed to this, so we are approaching these very important negotiations in a proactive manner.

Looking ahead

Lieutenant Colonel John Hamill was recently appointed as the new President of RACO. He speaks to SIGNAL.



Lieutenant Colonel John Hamill, the new President of RACO.

However, we are very conscious that the system that results from the review must continue to be one that officers have confidence in and that is not designed simply to benefit a few. Of course, at the end of the day, the results of the negotiations must be accepted by members in a ballot before RACO signs on.

Two other key projects that must also be completed and implemented during my term as President are the review of the medical services and a new system for the induction of officers into the Defence Forces. The review of the medical services

is of critical importance to both the Defence Forces and our members and was included on the Modernisation Agenda at RACO's insistence. The fact is that our medical services have all but collapsed, mainly because for some time now the Forces have been unable to attract and retain sufficient medical officers. The principal reason for this is inadequate pay and this was not resolved by Benchmarking because our medical officers were not benchmarked. It was interesting to see recent media reports that Prison Doctors, who are currently on strike, rejected as

inadequate an offer of 95,000 Euro a year. A Commandant Medical Officer with 20 years service currently earns just 75% of that figure, so is it any wonder that we have recruitment and retention problems. Things are now so bad that for the current rotation to Liberia, the Department has had to resort to contracting two civilian doctors, South Africans I understand, through a private company for service with our troops there. I am determined to ensure that the review of medical services is successful, that it determines what is required to provide the necessary first class medical service and also results in firm action to put in place and maintain the structures, systems and staff necessary to deliver these services.



"There is no room for complacency within RACO."

What other issues would you like to bring to the fore during your term as President?

"I believe that representation must work from the bottom up and that the views of all members must be imparted from formation level to the National Executive. An example of this in action was the establishment of the USAC committee over two years ago, where officers attending full-time third level education accepted the offer of having their own RACO

constituency and a seat at the National Executive table. RACO has benefited greatly from this committee who have brought renewed vibrancy to proceedings. It has also ensured that the National Executive hears directly from a key constituency, the younger members.

Virtually all officers are current members of the Association and there is a high level of interest among our members. However, I would like to see more members taking an active part on an ongoing basis. It is my aim that all RACO members participate actively in representation. The level of participation will increase in the immediate future with the impending establishment of partnership structures at formation level where management and representatives of both RACO and PDFORRA will discuss certain issues of local importance in a round table forum. However, this is an area the National Executive must work on continuously and it is one that I intend to give particular attention to because a high degree of input and feedback from across the Defence Forces is vital for the Association."

On a personal level, do you envisage that your work as President of RACO will add a new dimension to how you approach problem solving?

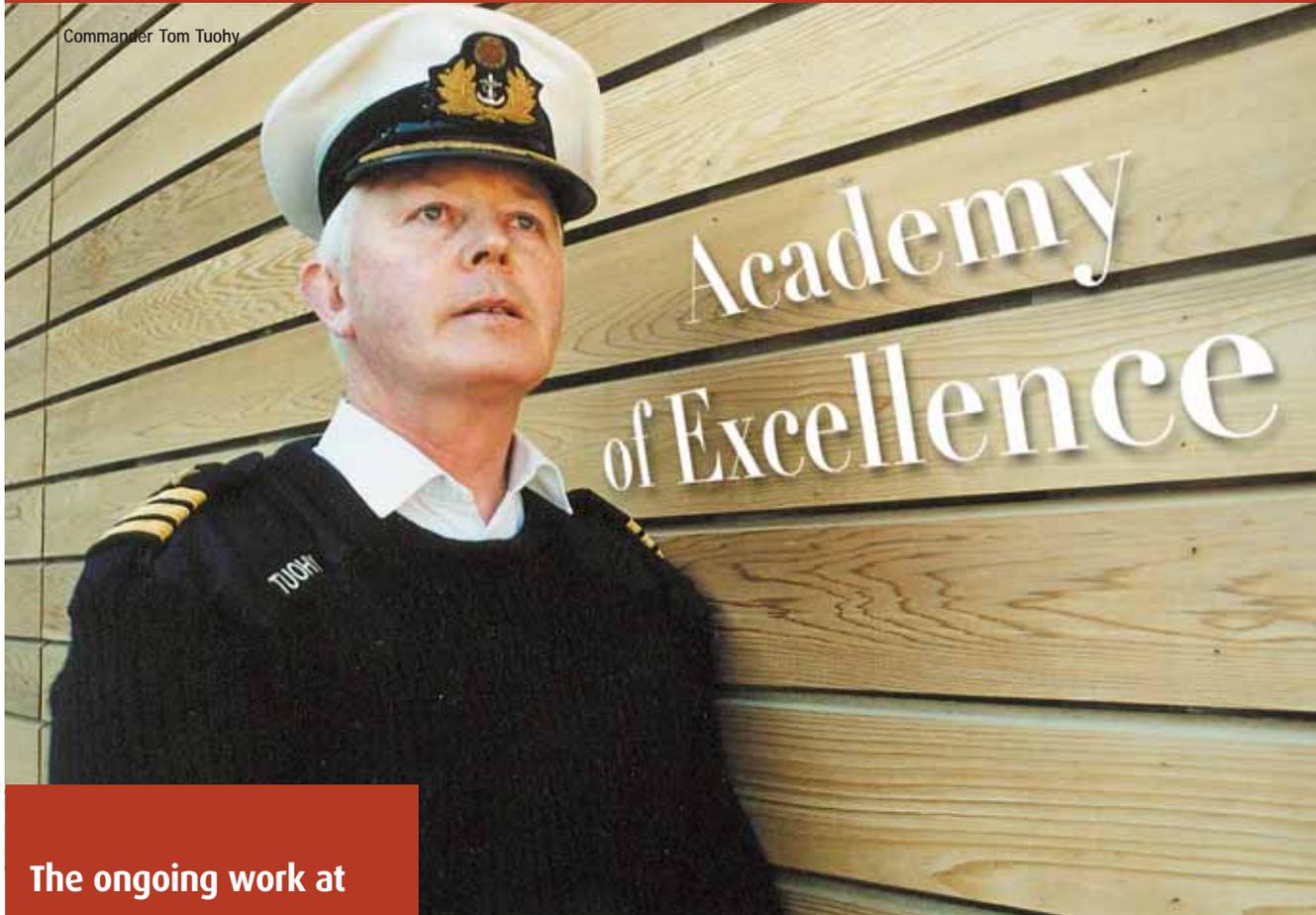
"Problem solving is an inherent and universal aspect of training for an officer. Indeed many years ago the universal military approach to problem solving transferred out to the world of business, in the USA originally, and is still the cornerstone of the Strategic Management approach taught in business schools worldwide. However, I do believe that for most officers involvement in RACO adds at least one new dimension to their problem solving experience. RACO works from the bottom up the members are the masters. So the interests of the members and what the members want must be the key factor in decisions made by the National Executive. Equally there are other factors to be considered by RACO in its decision making process that do not normally apply at the operational level in the military, although they do at the strategic level, factors such as the political, public perceptions and so on. I believe that this broadening of the range of problem solving experience that officers gain through involvement in RACO can only benefit both the officers themselves and the Defence Forces."

It has been said that RACO could be the victim of its own success in that because of what the Association has achieved over the years members have become complacent. Would you agree?

"That is possible. The Association is wholly oriented to servicing the needs of its customers, the membership, and it has been remarkably successful over the past 14 years since its inception, particularly in regard to its key issues namely pay and promotion systems. One of the reasons for this is that it has always taken the strategic and long-term approach to all issues. For example, the conditions of service of all officers have improved markedly over the years and this is reflected by the many and varied industrial relations agreements reached with the official side. On the pay front I think that all members will agree that the success achieved during the benchmarking process was the Association's finest achievement.

However, the Association cannot allow itself to become complacent or to rest on its laurels. There are new challenges every day. Ongoing change is a feature of all organizations today and that includes the Defence Forces. RACO must be proactive in driving the change its members want and shaping all change to best meet its members' needs. There are major battles still to be fought and there always will be. As I've mentioned, negotiating the implementation of the Modernisation Agenda will provide significant challenges over the next two years. There will also be further benchmarking exercises, or whatever system replaces it. There are also the many issues that the Association deals with for members on an ongoing basis. So RACO must stay at the top of its game, and will continue to give full commitment to its members. So to say that RACO could be a victim of its own success may be a valid point but its moot and will not detract it from pursuing issues in a professional manner and from maintaining the highest aspirations and standards.

John is a member of the Artillery Corps and is the current OC of 2 FAR in McKee Barracks, Dublin. He was commissioned in 1974 as a member of the 48th Cadet Class. He has extensive experience at home and abroad having served in the Western Brigade, the Artillery School, Command & Staff School in the Military College, DFHQ and the Eastern Brigade. He has served in Lebanon five times in addition to serving in Bosnia, Croatia, Kosovo and Iraq/Kuwait.



Commander Tom Tuohy

The ongoing work at the National Maritime College of Ireland at Ringaskiddy represents without a doubt one of the most exciting and progressive educational developments in many years. SIGNAL reports.

When completed, this mammoth project will ensure that the Irish Naval Service has a state-of-the-art training facility at its disposal. The project is also a fine example of the positive results of a public private partnership, in this case the Naval Service worked alongside Cork Institute of Technology (CIT) and FOCUS Education (NMCI) Ltd.

Just from looking at the plans of the new Maritime College at Ringaskiddy, it is apparent that it is going to be something truly special. Custom built for marine education and training, it is a benchmark of education architecture that will take some equaling. The college will boast the most modern training facilities available. These will include a fully equipped survival training pool, working engine room, jetty and dedicated workshops. The simulator facilities are most impressive. These include simulation of ships bridges, engine room, radio communications, liquid cargo handling and damage control. The 360-degree and 270 degree 'full mission bridge simulators' will provide a realistic ship's

bridge environment for training students. The Maritime College when completed will consist of three connected blocks. One will be the workshop area, which will include the training pool, workshops and engine room. The central block will include classrooms, laboratories, the simulation facilities and staff offices. The third block will house the library, the canteen, IT facilities and the management and administrative offices. Outdoors will be the damage control and firefighting training facilities as well as a jetty and slipway for launching and landing boats.

Commander Tom Tuohy of the Irish Naval Service says that the new college will provide a quantum leap in terms of training and facilities. "It's really going to be invaluable, in terms of space, facilities and the sheer convenience of having our own dedicated training environment."

The Background

"About 23% of the Irish Naval Service is involved in training at any one time. There is a turnover of personnel and a high degree of upskilling is required at all times. At the



"The concept of fusing the training requirements of both organisations, the Naval Service and CIT, made sense."

moment the training is done here at the Naval Base at Haulbowline, which is not really suitable for a variety of reasons. The Naval Base here was never designed for or functions solely as a naval school. The Naval College as it exists at the moment is scattered throughout the Base utilizing old married quarters, portakabins, etc in order to meet its training requirements. It's just not at all suitable for modern training.

"The genesis of this project goes back to the mid-eighties when the Naval Service vacated nearby Spike Island, which housed the Naval School, as the Department of Justice required it for a prison. The Naval School was then moved back to Haulbowline with a training element located at Murphy Barracks in Ballincollig. Of course, the main problem with Murphy Barracks in terms of naval training is that there is no access to the sea. This meant that we could only conduct some courses there and had to come back to the Naval Base to carry out significant parts of training. The sheer logistics of it was difficult. Eventually all training was centralized in Haulbowline." In 1993, a 10-acre site was acquired following a deal between the Department of Finance and the Department of Defence. Plans were submitted for the development of a Naval School on the Ringaskiddy site, adjacent to Haulbowline Island, but funding did not materialise. "For some years the project lay dormant, but the development of a new

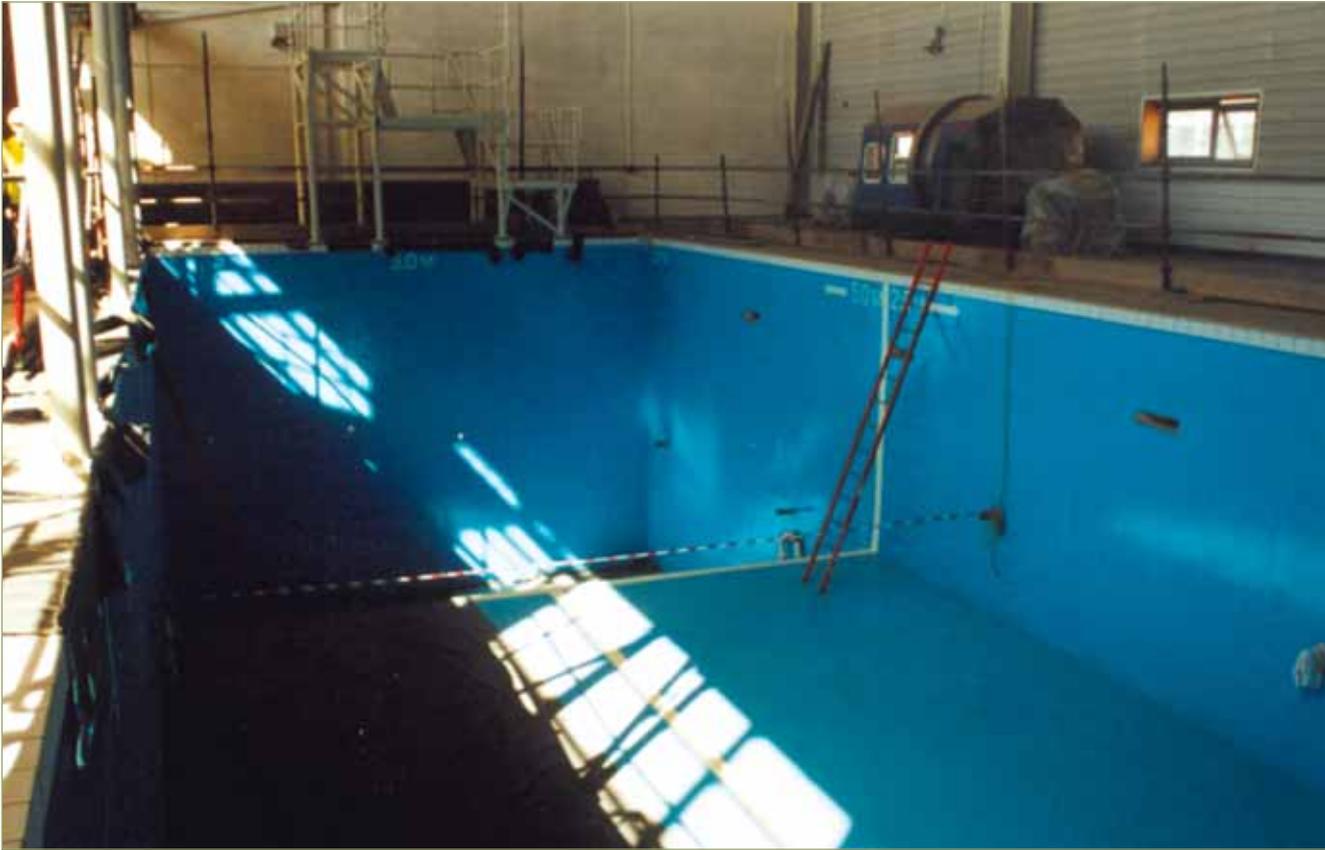
Custom built for marine education and training, it is a benchmark of education architecture that will take some equalling.



The Engine Rooms At NMCI under construction.

training facility remained a key naval service strategic objective," according to Cdr Tuohy.

One of the first happenings that instigated change within the project occurred in 1995 when the International Maritime Organisation overhauled their previous regulations which relate to the Standard of Training and Certification on Seafarers (STCW). "One of the key aspects of this change was the fact that there would be a revalidation of these certificates every five years." One of the points of the new regulations was the recognition of simulation as a vital element in training, both as an educational and assessment tool. "This regulation posed a dilemma to the Naval Service and to our colleagues in the Nautical Studies Department of Cork Institute of Technology, as both were faced with substantial upgrade of training facilities in order to meet STCW 95 requirements." The concept of fusing the training requirements of both organisations, the Naval Service and CIT, made sense when you consider that apart from the military training, both the Navy and the merchant navy have very similar training requirements. The next step in this project saw a joint submission made to the Government task force on seafarer training and employment, which was established in 1997. The main recommendation was that a Maritime College should be established at Ringaskiddy to meet the requirements of a changing world, in regard to the new STCW stipulations. But the actual chance of the college becoming a physical entity was still



The impressive dive pool under construction at the National Maritime College.

not guaranteed, according to Cdr Tuohy. "We still needed approval from government for the project to go any further. It was a good sign when in 1999, inter-departmental Expert Working Group under the Department of the Marine was established to examine the viability of the proposed Maritime College to meet STCW 95 training and education requirements. "This was a crucial part of the whole process obviously," remembers Cdr Tuohy. "The inter-departmental group found that the establishment of a National Maritime College to meet the non military training requirements of the Naval Service and the training requirements of the Nautical Studies Department of CIT was a positive and viable proposition. Significantly, and it's another interesting aspect to the college, the group also recommended that the college should be developed under the Public Private Partnership (PPP) model. It must be acknowledged that both the Military Authorities and the Department of



Michael Delaney, Head of Development CIT.

Defence were supportive of the project at this crucial stage. Funding for the new Maritime College was to be made available from the Department of Education and Science which then took over sponsorship of the project from the Department of the Marine.

When SIGNAL visited the site of the Maritime College, we found a construction operation in full swing. "It's always instructive to come out to the site," says Michael Delaney, Head of Development at CIT, "whenever we visit we always notice developments on some significant aspect of the college. It's progressing at a very impressive rate and we're well on target for our October 2004 completion date." The college is large, in scope, scale and ambition. The 14,000 square metre building, at a cost of €52 million is architecturally and aesthetically very appealing. It is designed as three, 2-3 storey linear blocks with a link element incorporating an entrance foyer and multi-

“ It is really going to be invaluable, in terms of space, facilities and the sheer convenience of having our own dedicated training environment. ”



Ship fire training simulator and DRU.

functional sports hall and gym. The three main blocks are aligned on a north-south axis on the site and incorporate classrooms, laboratories and workshops. Examining the extensive and impressive plans of the college on display at Haulbowline Naval Base, Commander Tuohy explains the scope of the new college. "In all, the Maritime College will have 19 classrooms, with a capacity ranging from 20 to 50 persons. The student capacity at the college will be approximately 750, with a staff of 60, drawn jointly from the Naval Service and CIT. One of the most impressive elements of the new facility must surely be the simulation

suite, one of the training requirements that established the need for the college." Although still in the construction phase at the time of writing, the simulation facilities are at the cutting edge of the latest technology. Cdr Tom Tuohy and Michael Delaney are both very proud of the college's facilities in this respect. "When completed, this simulation suite will be one of the best in Europe," explains Cdr Tuohy. "It will be very comprehensive and the technology will be provided by Kongsberg Maritime, a Norwegian company leading the field in the provision of simulators. The Full Mission Bridge Simulators (FMBS), one with 360-degree visuals, the second with 270-degree visuals, will replicate both Naval and Merchant ships. To make the simulation

experience as relevant as possible for our students we have also completed the digital mapping of large parts of the Irish coast. This will enable students to conduct a coastal passage, navigate a ship into Cork harbour and then for example berth the ship at the Naval Base." Three Auxiliary Bridge Simulators (ABS) and 12 other simulator suites are to be used in the

college for training in Search and Rescue coordination, Vessel Traffic Systems and fleetwork. "In addition to these navigation simulators there will also be a full Engine Room Simulators, damage control/cargo

handling simulators, and GMDSS (Radio) simulators."

One of the most striking aspects of the new Maritime College is the new 20m state of the art survival pool, which, although still in the construction phase, is highly impressive. "The pool depth will range from 5 metres to 2.5 metres and will be used for training personnel in sea survival techniques and life-raft drills." The Naval Diving section will also use the pool for basic diver training. The pool itself is also complemented by a number of additional features, both visual and audio, designed to replicate a range of marine conditions, including storms. This is to ensure that the survival training environment is as authentic as possible." Also HUET (Helo. Underwater

Escape Training) training can be conducted in this pool.

In addition to world-class simulation facilities, attention has been dedicated to ensuring that Engineering Training Facilities are first class and comprehensive. "In the college we will have a fully-fitted engine room with main engines generators, pumps in addition to mechanical engineering workshops, welding workshops and heavy electrical workshops. These facilities are designed to ensure that apprentices, technicians, trainee officers and officers receive the best available training." Cdr Tuohy and Michael Delaney emphasise that the NMCI will be promoted on the international stage with a number of links with international institutions already established.

The completion and the implementation of the National Maritime College represents a massive leap forward in terms of training for the naval service and indeed the Defence forces as an organisation. The fact that it is also an outstanding example of a successful Public Private Partnership process is an added bonus. "It is a massive boost to the organisation," reiterates Cdr Tuohy. "This facility will give us the capability to adequately fulfill our training requirements within the optimum environment. The Maritime College is a major step forward in projecting Ireland's standing as a maritime nation, and as a centre of excellence in the provision of training for seafarers."

“When completed, this simulation suite will be one of the best in Europe.”

How The Maritime College Will Function

To run the college, tenders from development and facilities management consortia were invited. FOCUS Education, collaboration between Bovis Lend-Lease and Halifax-Bank of Scotland, were the eventual successful bidders. FOCUS' role is to build, fit out, maintain and operate the college, guaranteeing availability for designated times to the Naval Service and CIT. Outside of the specified availability hours the facilities may be marketed to third parties. A percentage of these additional earnings will accrue to INS/CIT to be set against ongoing costs. These costs are made up of a unitary payment (mortgage) and operating costs (heat, light etc). After 25 years, the college will revert to state ownership.



TERRORISM: The Perpetual War for Perpetual Peace

By Comdt Rory Finegan

Comdt Rory Finegan continues his series of article with a look at the mutation of global terrorism and the options available to states to combat it.

As we progress through the 21st Century there is no sign of any slackening of academic interest in the study of terrorism and political violence. Terrorism, despite its long history stretching back to Biblical times, has no definition in international law. Almost every study, essay or article written on the subject of terrorism prefaces its main arguments with a caveat about the problems of defining terrorism. The practical way around this obstacle seems to be to attempt to define 'terrorist acts' rather than defining 'terrorism' or a 'terrorist.' The US State Department defines terrorism as "premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against non-combatant targets by sub-national groups or clandestine agents, usually intended to influence an audience." The traditional view has been supported by leading scholars who express the view in the words of Brian Jenkins that "Terrorism wants a lot of people watching, not a lot of people dead."

Terrorism is about power. The famous remark attributed to Vladimir Lenin, that "the purpose of terror is to terrorise," is less direct than it sounds; terror is not an end in itself, but a means to political power and consequently a way to hold political power. In the 1980's however, conventional wisdom that terrorists employed violence

proportionally and discriminately came into question as terrorist activities began to show a tendency towards causing harm to a maximum number of people. In the new century this lethality grew even further as 9/11 demonstrated, the 'new generation,' can be a nihilistic, apocalyptic and angry bunch. In other words we are seeing a move away from the trends we saw between 1968, the year from which the era of modern terrorism is usually dated, and the end of the Cold War. Even the great taboo, the use of nuclear weapons, now seems less unthinkable. Again Brian Jenkins who famously asked the question "Will the terrorists ever go nuclear?" and concluded in the negative now seems less sure.

Clash of Civilisations?

Since Sept 11th, it often feels as if the US academic Samuel Huntington's prediction of a clash of civilizations between Islam and Christianity has come true. Indeed "I Saw the Old World Finish," is a recent French book on the subject. This feeling that a threshold has been crossed now permeates nearly all discussion on this topic. The changing nature of terrorist organizations is a factor in this. Al Qa'ida is not so much a network as a sphere of influence. Al Qa'ida thrives as "the base," the meaning of its Arabic name. Like the

Hydra of ancient Greek mythology, every time a head is severed two more spring forth. A second factor is the way in which the media has changed in the last two decades. In parallel with the globalisation process, 'news' is more global and therefore competition for the headlines is fiercer than ever before. Margaret Thatcher described publicity as the "oxygen of terrorism," and consequently as the practitioners fight for 'breath' in the modern world, they have found that the only way to guarantee media attention is to escalate. Another factor in the increased lethality of terrorism, is the fact that it is, increasingly, motivated and inspired by religion. Links between religion and terrorism are not new, from the Jewish

Equally it is often forgotten that Arab regimes themselves have long hunted down, tortured and killed Islamist opponents

Zealots of the second century BC to the Thugee cult of 15th and 16th century India. Indeed religion has been historically the strongest motivation for terrorism up until the French Revolution. What we saw for most of the 20th century was the underlying trend temporarily overshadowed by a phase of terrorism motivated by ethnic, nationalist and ideological motivations. In the intervening years we almost forgot about militant Islam. Like Communism during the Cold War, it was largely 'contained,' but for Arabs and the Muslim world the before and after is largely an artificial construct.

Nearly twenty-six years ago the Iranian Revolution jolted us into an awareness of fundamentalist Islam. New words were introduced into the lexicon of the Western vocabulary from this time such as fatwa and jihad, and these concepts of sacrifice, glorious martyrdom in turn became powerful "force levelers" employed by Al Qa'ida. Equally it is often forgotten that Arab regimes themselves have long hunted down, tortured and killed Islamist opponents. A report issued by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), in the summer of 2002 documented in detail the often appalling record of Arab governments in economic development, women's rights, education and democratisation. Again, the 2002 UN's, Arab Human Resource Development Report, describes a Third World region which has fallen behind all others, including sub-Saharan Africa, in most of the main indices of progress and development, whose 280 million inhabitants, despite vast oil wealth, have a lower GNP than Spain. Again the report highlights a prime reason for this as the

salient fact that the peoples of the region are the worlds least free, with the lowest level of population participation in government. The Arab nationalist ideologies of the 1950's, the vestiges of which are still in power in Syria, Egypt and used to be in Iraq have failed them. Civil strife fuelled by corrupt rulers and fanaticism claimed hundreds of thousands of lives in a wide arc from Algeria, Egypt to Pakistan. Because of this vacuum Muslims live in an almost schizophrenic twilight existence, faced with the allure of the West and the extreme nihilism of Al Qa'ida. Many Muslims see the West as two sides of a coin, on one hand pulled by the allure of the freedom and wealth of the West, but on the flip side repelled by what they see as its moral and spiritual bankruptcy and by a perceived US double standard. As they see it, the US's post Sept 11th war on terrorism now boils down essentially to an assault on themselves. This they see as a continuum of the European carve up of the region after the First World War, the creation of the state of Israel, and this continuum included US support for corrupt and oppressive Arab regimes, seen by the US during the Cold War period as a bulwark against Communism. For hundreds of millions of Muslims the

Israeli-Palestinian conflict is an open wound, which within the Arab psyche remains a major psychological scar.

This coupling of a radical version of religion with the means of terrorism is particularly effective because the former can serve to legitimise the action undertaken and their outcomes. The irony of the New World Disorder that has engulfed us post



The world we are accustomed to – where every state minds its own business and others have no right to interfere, began to disappear with air travel, the internet, global television, the alphabet soup of globalisation

The Madrid Bombings of March 11th.

9/11 is not that extremists kill, but that they seek to kill Westerners in large numbers.

The Breaking of Nations

Robert Cooper in his seminal work "The Breaking of Nations – [Order & Chaos in the Twenty-First Century], argues persuasively that while we may not be interested in chaos, chaos is interested in us. The world we are accustomed to – where every state minds its own business and others have no right to interfere, began to disappear with air travel, the internet and global television; the alphabet soup of globalisation. We live in a world divided between premodern, modern and postmodern states, according to Cooper. The first of these worlds is a zone of chaos, located mostly in Africa and Asia and defined by the failure of the state to govern. Liberia, Afghanistan and Somalia are prime examples of what are sometimes referred to as Rogue States. It is in this



The human aftermath of the attacks.



primitive world that Cooper contends that we find the source of modern terrorism. The enemy without name or country, which deploys the open highways of globalisation to achieve its ends. Second is the modern state with its traditional emphasis on national interest, security and on the utility of military power in the Causewitzian model. This is the US. The third, the most privileged zone is the postmodern one, occupied by the EU, shunning the use of force as a primary instrument of statecraft. Intriguingly he argues that the EU can enjoy this luxury almost as a gift of the US, because the multi institutional framework of the EU was able to evolve and develop under the umbrella of US military protection, particularly during the period of the Cold War. He believes that the EU should follow the US lead of pre-emptive attacks in the face of terrorism. The US has the military might for pre-emption but will

require the help of the EU to rebuild these failed states. Cooper's overall argument for a realistic appraisal of a world threatened by terrorism complements the best selling thesis of Robert Kagan, *Paradise and Power*.

The other side of the debate in modern terrorism is provided by the American scholar Noam Chomsky in *Hegemony or Survival: America's Quest for Global Dominance*. Chomsky equally sees the events of 9/11 as a defining point in relations between states and he also views terrorism as a major threat to peace and stability. But Chomsky judges terrorism by its actions not by its provenance or origins. He casts mud at the supposed dilemma within academia at always trying to come to grips with defining terrorism and controversially claims that in using the official US definition of terrorism, the US itself is a leading terrorist state.

One man's terrorist...

What then of America's war on terrorism within this matrix? The problem with gauging America's success in the 'war on terrorism,' lies within the use of the phrase itself. Using the yardstick of results against individuals and countries, in short against identifiable enemies, the war has been relatively successful. Al-Qa'ida has been very seriously disrupted. While Osama bin Laden still remains elusive many of his senior operatives are dead or captured. The Taliban regime that offered Al Qa'ida a base has been toppled. (Though some critics argue that Afghanistan was not a model of State sponsored terrorism, but perversely of a terrorist organization sponsoring a state and that because of its amorphous structure, Al Qa'ida has simply moved on.). But waging war against specific terrorists is one thing; war against the shadowy and abstract concept of terrorism is quite



A US Soldier on patrol in Iraq

another. High-tech wizardry can eliminate hostile individuals and hostile regimes but as the American writer Norman Mailer said post 9/11, "many will be eager to fight a war. The question is: how are they going to find the enemy?" This is perhaps a more perceptive view than that of another American novelist Tom Clancy who opined "If they ask for it, we know how to make some really big parking lots in this world."

Draining the Swamp

Many counter-terrorist analysts contend that terrorist networks have not only adapted to defend themselves against US led action but have gained support and succour from a hardening of anti-US attitudes in the Muslim world. In Iraq, the US seems to have put themselves into precisely the kind

of frontline engagement with the extremists that the latter themselves have been looking for. The metaphor that has been coined is the posit of whether "Is Iraq a swamp generating terrorism, or a magnet attracting terrorists?" Allied to this is the contention that Washington has failed to make progress on influencing public opinion amongst the Arab public at large after the horror of 9/11. Indeed US efforts including a Madison Avenue style advertising campaign to favorably influence Arab public opinion have failed. Here again in many quarters of the Muslim world the perception of the US is no longer of a secular republic containing lots of Christians but of a crusading, evangelist entity.

Another strand to this cord is that US involvement in the Iraqi war is damaging the wider war against terrorism on the

global front. There are several reasons for this including inter alia the diverting of specialised intelligence resources to support the Iraq war and the reconstruction. The Iraq war may have reduced other governments willingness to share information, the very cost of the war may have slowed down the domestic defensive measures by the new Department of Home Security and again the argument that the war itself goads Al Qa'ida and other terrorist organisations to further target Americans specifically and Westerners in general.

In search of a Strategy.

Much of the criticism heaped regularly upon the US is often misconceived. It is not always true to posit that the Bush's administration regards military force as the only instrument against the scourge of



The war is against an enemy with neither a legal definition nor a declared boundary of state.

international terrorism. Many American officials have always accepted that this 'war' is different and must combine a variety of instruments from the military stick to economic aid. It is usually forgotten that Afghanistan's biggest single aid donor, even before the terrorist atrocities of 9/11, was the US. In the immediate aftermath of 9/11 the US was correct in rethinking its entire military strategy. In the past US military posture was based on the Clausewitzian tenet that war was conducted between organised states and recognisable governments. The fact that the US remains the world's only superpower with a vast nuclear article is irrelevant in the world of bin Laden and the new asymmetric warfare that has come to the fore. The war is against an enemy with neither a legal definition nor a declared boundary of state.

But the mistake that the US made was to translate this into a new global military doctrine, in doing so repudiating in a single stroke most international norms of behavior whereby Washington choose the freedom to decide when and where to strike, the pre-emption option that is the central pillar of the Bush doctrine. This led to the spurious division that was created of those who either wholeheartedly supported the US or were against it, a case almost of those who are not with us, can only be against us, with the inherent chasm and fissure in relationships this created between the US and much of Europe.

The circle around the argument always returns to the point that no amount of persuasion will persuade most ordinary Muslims that the US can ever be seen as an honest broker so long as the Palestinian issue remains unresolved, creating a equitable settlement that provides the Palestinians with a viable state and guaranteeing Israel with a security that protects its citizens from terrorism. The devil will be in the detail. An equitable resolution of the Palestinian-Israeli dispute will not be a by-product of the fight against terrorism, but is an absolute precondition for depriving terrorists of popular support. The overwhelming majority of the Muslim world abhors violence, but the war for the hearts and minds of the Islamic world is being lost by the US. Equally it is self-defeating to talk of the terrorists in terms as



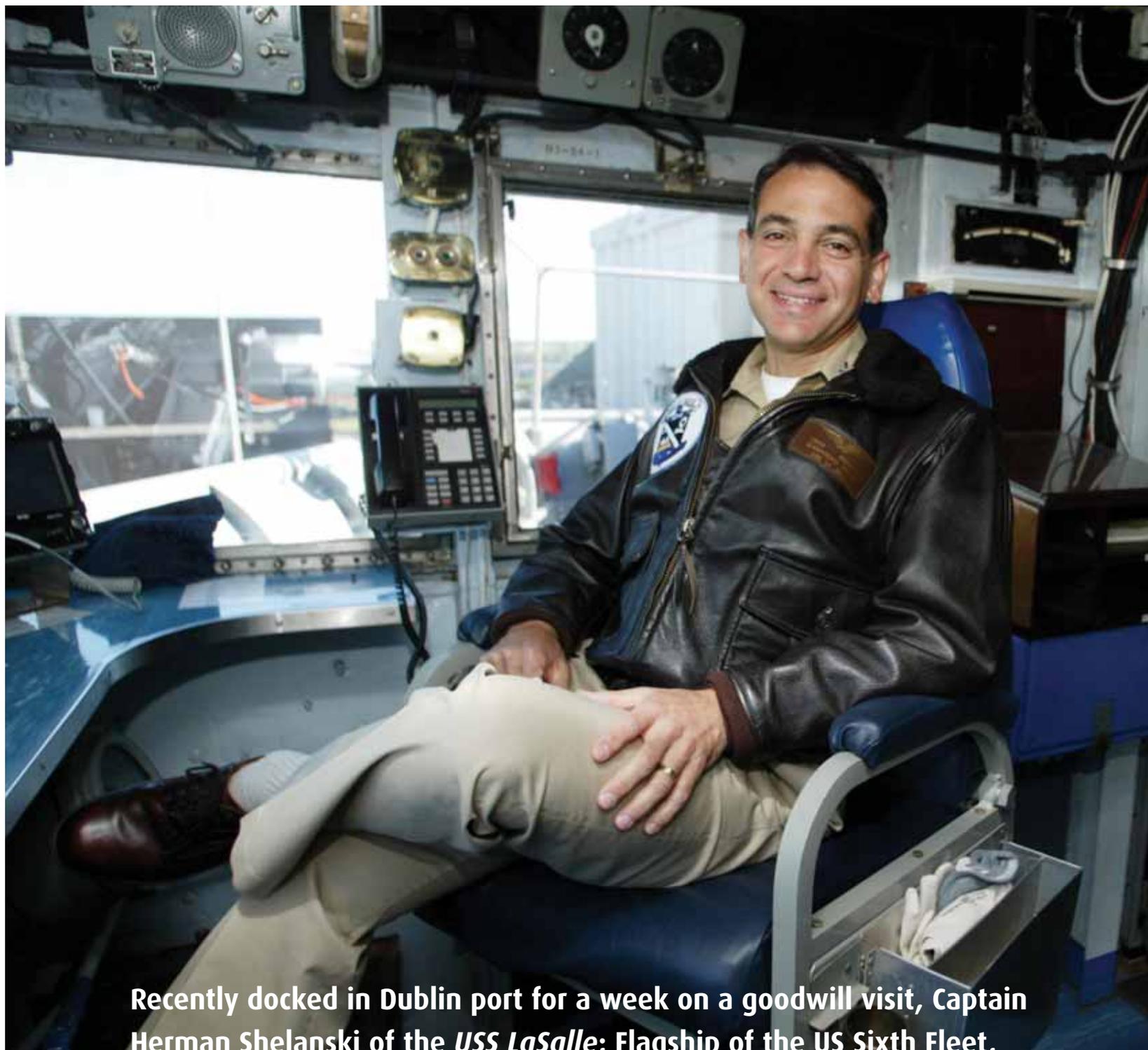
The brutal execution of American national Peter Berg, beheaded on video, shocked the world.

if they are vermin. What they commit is anathema to us, but equally when viewed in a cold abstract light, they are intelligent, well-organised and dedicated. To set as an ambition the forcible defeat and eradication of a politically and religiously motivated terrorism is to condemn us to continuing frustration and disappointment. In the phrase of the American essayist and critic Gore Vidal, that is also the title of the book of the same name, it will lead the world into a "Perpetual War for Perpetual Peace."

Comdt. Rory Finegan BA MA MSc is currently serving as a Military Observer on the Golan Heights with UNTSO, stationed in Tiberius as part of Observer Group Golan (OGG).



US President George W. Bush



Recently docked in Dublin port for a week on a goodwill visit, Captain Herman Shelanski of the *USS LaSalle*; Flagship of the US Sixth Fleet, took some time to talk with SIGNAL. Picture by Charlie Collins.

A ship with a lot of history, the *USS LaSalle* has served the US navy for just over 40 years. The vessel was commissioned as an Amphibious Transport Dock on February 22nd 1964 but was converted to a Miscellaneous Command Ship (AGF) in 1972. The *LaSalle* has served as the flagship of the US 6th Fleet for almost 10 years now. Prior to that it was the flagship of the 5th Fleet, stationed in Bahrain. During the recent Iraqi operations, the *USS LaSalle* was the site of a 'war room' where 6th Fleet Leaders oversaw daily aircraft sorties from the aircraft carriers *USS Harry S Truman*

and *USS Theodore Roosevelt*. The ship was also involved in coordinating Tomahawk Missile strikes on Iraq from other warships in the eastern Mediterranean.

How long has the *USS LaSalle* been in service and what's the history of its name?

"The ship has a distinguished service record and we recently celebrated its 40th birthday. The name, as was typical of ships of the time, comes from an explorer - in this case a French one by the name of *LaSalle*.

What are the main roles of the *USS LaSalle*?

"The primary purpose of this vessel is to house the staff of the 6th Fleet of the United States Navy. That means providing all the comforts and systems required for the staff and therefore this vessel to fulfill its mission and to command the 6th Fleet in the most effective fashion. This means working with our allies and carrying out either training exercises or actual warfare. The ship has also been refitted and overhauled. There was great foresight put into this refit, transforming it into an excellent command and control vessel.