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- Military platforms
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The series is peer reviewed and reflects the diversity and quality of the Faculty of Military Sciences at its best. With the NL ARMS the FMS hopes to serve as a trigger for more international comparative research on military sciences.

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The Dilemma of Leaving:
Political and Military Exit Strategies



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FOREWORD

How deep can you go into the woods, asked the instructor? I had no idea what he was talking about. I knew the woods were big, but how big – I had no idea. “2-3 kilometers maybe” was my hesitant answer. No, you can walk until the middle of the forest and then you start walking out of the forest again! Trying to regain my composure, I decided to counter that trick statement with a question: “Ok, but how do I know, when I have reached the middle of the woods”, I asked. “ You don’t” – was the answer from the instructor. “However, if you know your woods and your way in, you will also know, when you are leaving the woods and also in what direction you should leave the woods”.

The same fussiness applies to the concept of exit strategy for international conflicts and military interventions. The beginning of any military operation of a western nation is preceded by a political decision to partake and a military operational planning phase. The beginning is therefore well defined. The exit process and the obtainable end state of the conflict on the other hand are much more complex. Many factors influence the question when it is warranted to terminate an intervention and how to execute the redeployment best. Much depends on whether realistic objectives and desired end states have been formulated but even more on the dynamics of the conflict itself. Invariably initial assumptions have been invalidated once an intervention got under way and exit has subsequently proven a thorny military and political issue.

Since this is a rather new field, very little standard literature is available. Indeed, the very definition of exit strategies and end states is a topic of discussion in this volume. In the present book various researchers from the Faculty of Military Sciences of the Netherlands Defence Academy present a multi-disciplinary approach to the broad theme of exit strategies and end states of military interventions. Hopefully, this work will inspire others to contribute to this important field.

This book is part of the so-called Netherlands Annual Review of Military Studies (NL-ARMS) series of books. Every year the Faculty of Military Sciences (FMS) publishes a NL-ARMS issue around a military relevant theme. Each volume reflects the diversity and quality of the research

fields present within the faculty. I hope you will enjoy the contributions and I am confident the authors are more than happy to give you further information. So, please do not hesitate to contact the researchers directly.

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