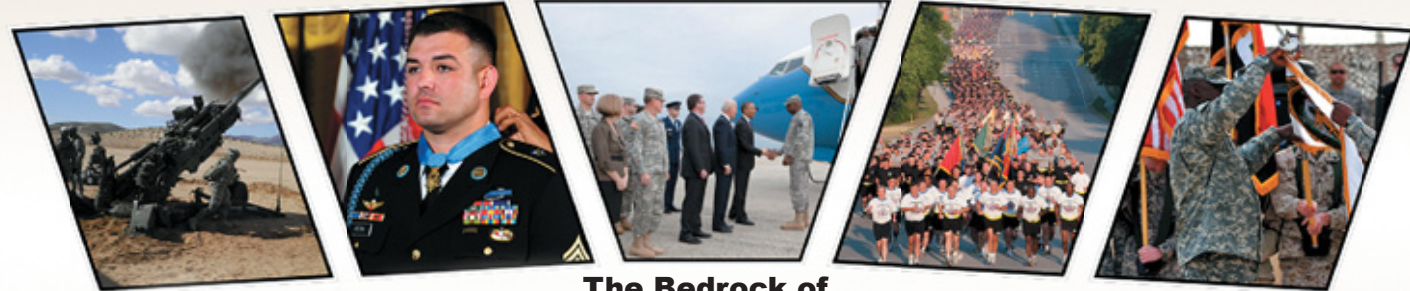




Five Essential Characteristics of the Army Profession



Our Ethical Application of Landpower

Our Noble Calling to service and Sacrifice

The Bedrock of our Profession

Our Winning Spirit

Our long Term Responsibility

Trust between Soldiers
Trust between Soldiers and Leaders
Trust between Soldiers, and their families and the Army
Trust between the Army and the American People

Loyalty · Duty · Respect · Selfless · Service · Honor · Integrity · Personal · Courage

Ethical Foundation: Legal and Moral

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PB-100-13-9/10
Headquarters, Department of the Army
PIN: 103675-000
Approved for public release; distribution is unlimited

September-October 2013

Military Review

THE PROFESSIONAL JOURNAL OF THE U.S. ARMY

September-October 2013

Special Edition

<http://militaryreview.army.mil>

Military Review

Special Edition



America's Army—Our Profession

Center for the Army Profession and Ethic

After more than twelve 12 years of war, our soldiers, Army civilians, and families have faced extraordinary challenges. Together we have prevailed amidst the complexities of an ever-changing operational environment and learned to adapt to a wide range of hybrid threats. Time after time, Army professionals have performed exceptionally well, demonstrating a genuine commitment and remarkable resilience. Collectively, we have successfully completed our missions and in turn have secured the trust of the American people and our Nation’s elected officials.

To sustain the trust of the American public and the elected officials who represent them, we must all continuously exhibit the five essential characteristics of our Army Profession: trust, military expertise, honorable service, esprit de corps, and stewardship. These must be present in our culture, our professionals, our units, and in our external relationships. Together, these characteristics must represent more than just words. Each one reflects American values embedded in the Army’s approach to protecting our Nation and winning its wars. The Army meets the standards of a military profession when its members remain committed to maintaining these five essential characteristics.

All leaders and trainers should focus on “Trust” in the coming year during professional development sessions, placing emphasis on the importance of—

- Making transparent, values-based decisions and maintaining candid communications.
- Trust between soldiers and Army civilians.
- Promoting a positive command climate where soldiers and Army civilians at all levels are empowered to use their initiative and learn from their mistakes.
- Increasing awareness that in today’s culture of instantaneous information one incident of misconduct, indiscipline, or unprofessionalism can jeopardize trust with the American people.

Leaders should engage soldiers and civilians within their ranks in inspirational dialogue. We must continually self-assess our role as members of this honored profession. We should also discuss and assess the greatest challenges to our Army Profession through the lens of the five essential characteristics. These make for powerful and insightful engagements within your team. Such assessments demonstrate our shared commitment to who we are as professionals and what we are as a profession. These actions are supported by the many excellent resources on the Center for Army Profession and Ethic website at <https://cape.army.mil/aaop>.

The Army will transition to an America’s Army—Our Profession “Stand Strong” campaign for fiscal year 2014. All Army professionals must “Stand Strong” together to eradicate instances of indiscipline and acts of misconduct from our ranks. Our profession demands that every Army soldier and civilian take personal responsibility for their own behavior, for courageously confronting unacceptable conduct, and for resolving any incident that violates the dignity and respect of any individual. All of our actions must result in an Army Profession that demonstrates trust, expertise, honorable service, esprit de corps, and stewardship. When every Army professional fully exhibits their character, competence, and commitment, we can truly say we have resolved these issues.

When our dedicated Army professionals stand strong together, and remain grounded in the five essential characteristics of the profession, we can accomplish anything.



ARMY STRONG.®

Army Strong!

Raymond F. Chandler III
Sergeant Major of the Army



Military Review is a refereed journal that provides a forum for original thought and debate on the art and science of land warfare and other issues of current interest to the U.S. Army and the Department of Defense. *Military Review* also supports the education, training, doctrine development, and integration missions of the Combined Arms Center, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas.

Headquarters, Department of the Army
U.S. Army Combined Arms Center
Fort Leavenworth, Kansas

Volume XCIII — September-October 2013, No.5

website: <http://militaryreview.army.mil>
email: usarmyleavenworth.tradoc.mbx.military-review-public-em@mail.mil

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The Secretary of the Army has determined that the publication of this periodical is necessary in the transaction of the public business as required by law of the department. Funds for printing this publication were approved by the Secretary of the Army in accordance with the provisions of Army Regulation 25-30.

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Authorization no. 1322008

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Military Review (US ISSN 0026-4148) (USPS 123-830) is published bimonthly by the U.S. Army, CAC, Fort Leavenworth, KS 66027-1293. Paid subscriptions are available through the Superintendent of Documents for \$42 US/APO/FPO and \$58.80 foreign addresses per year. Periodical postage paid at Leavenworth, KS, and additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *Military Review*, CAC, 290 Stimson Avenue, Unit 2, Fort Leavenworth, KS 66027-1254.



Trust Erosion and Identity Corrosion

Col. John A. Vermeesch,
U.S. Army

No profession can survive if it loses the trust of its client; and the Army now has much to do to restore its credibility as a self-policing institution.

— Don Snider, Ph.D.

PROFESSOR DON SNIDER'S warning to the Army in the 2004 edition of *The Future of the Army Profession* is now more relevant than ever. The U.S. Army spent the last two years studying and debating what it means to be a profession and what qualifies individuals as professionals. It worked to maintain its professional status as an institution and avoid becoming just one more government bureaucracy. However, the critical task that lies ahead requires the Army to identify the future threats to the profession and safeguard against them. This article tackles that task. It identifies challenges to the Army profession in 2020 and beyond, and makes recommendations to overcome them. The primary threats to the Army profession in the next decade are the erosion of the American people's trust combined with identity corrosion among Army professionals.

There is a growing division between the civilians who control the military and the officers who lead it, brought on by an increasing belief that the officer corps fails to self-police the institution. Senior leaders in the Army exacerbate this perception by committing the very crimes they are charged with policing. While not yet fully manifested in the opinions of the American public, evidence of this loss of trust is rapidly emerging in the form of calls for oversight by the Army's civilian masters, in both the executive and legislative branches of government.

The threat of loss of trust is significant by itself, and is compounded by corrosion of professional identity in the segment of the officer corps entering its tenure as senior leaders. As the stewards of the profession, these leaders are now inhibiting their own ability to develop the future of the profession and socialize the next generation of soldiers and leaders.

Both of these potential threats, the erosion of trust and the corrosion of professional identity, are by themselves significant challenges. However, set

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PHOTO: From left to right: U.S. Rep. Michael Turner of Ohio, Gen. Martin E. Dempsey, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Defense Secretary Leon E. Panetta, and U.S. Rep. Loretta Sanchez of California participate in a press briefing at the House of Representatives in Washington, D.C., 16 April 2012. (By Lisa Daniel, American Forces Press Service)

in the context of the volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous environment of the 21st century, they could result in significant damage to readiness. Set in the context of an impending period of resource reduction, the Army must find efficient solutions to prevent the bureaucratization of the institution and its decay as a profession.

The Army as a Profession

The Army's senior leadership envisioned the purpose of the campaign as facilitating "an Army-wide dialog about our Profession of Arms."¹ The Army's senior leaders took a fresh look at the Army as a profession and the impacts that a decade of war had on it. The campaign sought to answer three critical questions:

- What does it mean for the Army to be a profession?
- What does it mean to be a professional soldier?
- After nine years of war, how are individual professionals and the profession meeting these aspirations?²

The campaign, headed by the Center for the Army Profession and Ethic (CAPE), answered these questions and yielded important definitions and concepts that are the basis of the work laid out in chapter 2 of Army Doctrinal Publication 1 (ADP 1), *The Army*, and Army Doctrinal Reference Publication 1 (ADRP 1), *The Army Profession*. Both are now the accepted standard by which the Army measures itself as a profession.

ADRP 1 describes four aspects that must be met for any occupation to be considered a profession. First, it must provide a vital service to the society that the society cannot provide for itself, but that the society must have to flourish. Second, it must provide the service by working with abstract knowledge and practice developed into human expertise. Such work is rarely routine or repetitive and generally takes years of study and experiential learning to master. It is measured by effectiveness, not efficiency. Third, a profession must earn and maintain the trust of its clients through the effective and ethical application of its expertise. Finally, based on trust relations with the clients, the clients must grant relative autonomy to the profession in the application of its art and expertise. They expect the profession to continuously exercise discretionary judgment as individual professionals self-regulate the profession.³

ADRP 1 further describes the essential characteristics of the Army profession:⁴

- Trust.
- Military expertise.
- Honorable service.
- Esprit de corps.
- Stewardship of the profession.

The American people *trust* their Army as a profession. Trust has always been the bedrock of the Army's relationship with the American people.⁵ As Snider describes it, "Because of this trust relationship, the American people grant significant autonomy to the Army to create its own expert knowledge and to police the application of that knowledge by its individual professionals. Nonprofessional occupations do not enjoy similar autonomy."⁶

In the Army, *military expertise* equates to the "design, generation, support, and ethical application of landpower."⁷ *Honorable service* alludes to the fact that the Army exists to support and defend the Constitution and the American way of life. Army professionals do so by adhering to Army values.⁸ *Esprit de corps* refers to the bond between Army professionals that provides common purpose and the perseverance to overcome obstacles and to win wars. Finally, *stewardship* of the profession is about the Army being "responsible and duty bound not just to complete today's missions with the resources available, but also those of the future to ensure the profession is always capable of fulfilling whatever mission our nation gives us."⁹ As long as the Army's leaders, soldiers, and civilians maintain their commitment to these five characteristics, the Army remains a profession.

For the sake of this paper the following assumptions apply. First, the Army is a profession by the definitions outlined above. Second, as Snider and others effectively argued, while the Army is inherently a profession, it also possesses many of the characteristics of a bureaucracy. The challenge for the Army to remain a profession must be to strike the appropriate balance between both. When trust erodes, autonomy declines, and the military looks more an obedient government bureaucracy than a profession.¹⁰ That "the Army [strives to be] . . . a vocation comprised of experts certified in the ethical application of land combat power, serving under civilian authority, entrusted to defend the Constitution and the rights and interests of the American

people,” suggests that it aspires to professionalism.¹¹ With this aspiration defined, one can examine direct challenges to the Army’s “professional” status.

The Erosion of Trust

ADP 1 devotes the entirety of its second chapter to a discussion of the Army profession and begins by defining the profession as being built on trust between individual soldiers; trust between soldiers and leaders; trust among soldiers, their families, and the Army; and trust between the Army and the American people. It further explains the importance of discipline in units as fundamental to building that trust.¹²

Likewise, Army Chief of Staff, Gen. Raymond Odierno, lists one of his strategic priorities as an enduring “commitment to *the Army Profession*, a noble and selfless calling founded on the bedrock of trust.”¹³ He further describes high standards and discipline, as well as integrity, among the most essential guiding principles for the Army.¹⁴ If one accepts that trust is essential, then the profession should pay attention when issues with that trust begin to surface.¹⁵ It appears they have. At a recent Army Leader Day discussion at the Army War College, students clearly understood that Congress is concerned about indiscipline in the military. Some members of Congress are recommending withholding authority under the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ) from military commanders over a perceived lack of seriousness in dealing with acts of misconduct. When

Some members of Congress are recommending withholding authority under the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ) from military commanders over a perceived lack of seriousness in dealing with acts of misconduct.

commanders lose the ability to use the UCMJ to enforce discipline in the profession, they lose the ability to self-police, one of the four aspects of being a profession. When the client loses trust and

begins to withhold autonomy from the profession, the profession moves a step closer to being just another bureaucracy.¹⁶

The Army is not without historical precedent of loss of autonomy occurring because of the perception that it was failing to exercise sound discretionary judgment. The late 1990s provide an example of the Army losing its clients’ trust over trainee abuse at Aberdeen Proving Ground.¹⁷ Congress imposed external regulations. Such loss of trust represented a loss of the currency of professions—“If we (the Army) were to lose our trust relationship with the American people, the entire edifice of our profession would crumble.”¹⁸ The Army lost trust as a result of Aberdeen, and Congress took action.

For the last decade, the Center for Public Leadership at Harvard University has collected and published data in its National Leadership Index about the level of confidence the American public has in major sectors of American society. In 2010, data continued to reflect that “despite a perceived crisis of declining confidence . . . the military remains the most respected sector of our society.”¹⁹ Likewise, a 2012 Gallup opinion poll shows that 75 percent of Americans place a “great deal” of confidence in the military, more than in any other occupation.²⁰

Such statistics indicate that the American public’s trust in the Army is not yet an issue, but one needs to look no further than recent congressional proposals to see that some congressional members are losing trust in the Army. The recent actions in the legislative branch of government reveal cracks in the foundation of trust with the military. Some members of Congress have lost faith in the military to adequately deal with indiscipline, and America is tired of reading about sexual assaults, hazing, and Army problems with suicide prevention. Accordingly, constitutional authority is moving to provide oversight to the military through legislation that limits the military’s autonomy to self-regulate these issues. The Army, among the other services, appears at the forefront of issues with sexual assault, hazing, and suicide, and therefore holds its share of the blame for the erosion of trust.

The military retains approximately one-third of its convicted sex offenders. Amendment 3016 to the 2013 Defense Policy Bill, introduced by Sen.

Kirsten Gillibrand of New York, demonstrates Congress' new interest in this fact. It easily passed in the Senate, and requires any service member convicted of rape, sexual assault, or forcible sodomy to be administratively discharged if their sentence does not already entail dismissal from the service. This is only the first of many acts of oversight aimed at controlling the military's options when it comes to dealing with sex crimes.²¹ The legislation comes from her belief that "sexual violence in the military continues to occur at an alarming rate."²² In essence, the Senate is telling the military in general, and the Army in particular, that it no longer trusts the Army to handle the problem.²³

In the House, Rep. Speier of California sponsored the Sexual Assault Training Oversight and Prevention (STOP) Act, in November of 2011, aimed at providing oversight in sexual assault cases. The proposal calls for "removing authority from the chain of command to investigate sexual assault allegations."²⁴ Beyond the STOP Act, Speier advocated further action in 2012, writing the House Armed Services Committee chairman

saying "it is imperative that Congress hold the military accountable and truly implement a zero-tolerance policy in response to this problem."²⁵ Those are certainly not the words of a civilian authority that trusts the military to police itself.

Most of the proposals outlined in the preceding paragraphs were made formal when President Barack Obama signed them into law as part of the 2013 National Defense Authorization Act.²⁶ Clearly this indicates an erosion of trust. Legislation aimed at limiting a military commander's ability to deal with acts of indiscipline are rare, and the military should view such Congressional oversight as evidence it is losing the faith of its civilian masters.

One purpose of the UCMJ is to give commanders the ability to self-police the profession. It offers a full range of options in dealing with offenses whereby professionals exercise discretionary judgment and do not necessarily have to deal with all cases in the same way.²⁷ If the Army desires to remain a profession, Congress must allow it to self-regulate within the guiding principles of its own ethic.



(U.S. Army)

Army Chief of Staff Gen. Ray Odierno tells Congress that sexual assault and sexual harassment will not be tolerated in the Army, as Gen. Martin Dempsey, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, listens. Odierno said in the 4 June 2013 hearing that the Army is taking steps to address the problem and prevent future instances of assault and harassment. (Lisa Ferdinando, ARNEWS)

The evidence so far could easily lead one to believe that recent congressional oversight is only related to sexual assaults in the military. However, Sen. Patty Murray of Washington introduced similar legislation aimed at overhauling the Department of Defense's mental health and suicide prevention programs.²⁸ One could conclude that Murray, and the rest of the U.S. Senate that passed the amendment, has lost confidence in the military to handle the issue on its own.

The executive branch of government flexes its oversight muscles too by forcing military leaders to take a hard look at themselves in light of acts of indiscipline by senior members of the military profession, including prominent retired general officers. As chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. Martin Dempsey recently stated, "If we really are a profession . . . we should want to figure it out before someone else figures it out for us."²⁹ In the aftermath of misconduct by some of the military's senior leaders, in effect, he warned that if the military does not get its ethical shortcomings under control, then those who control the military will.

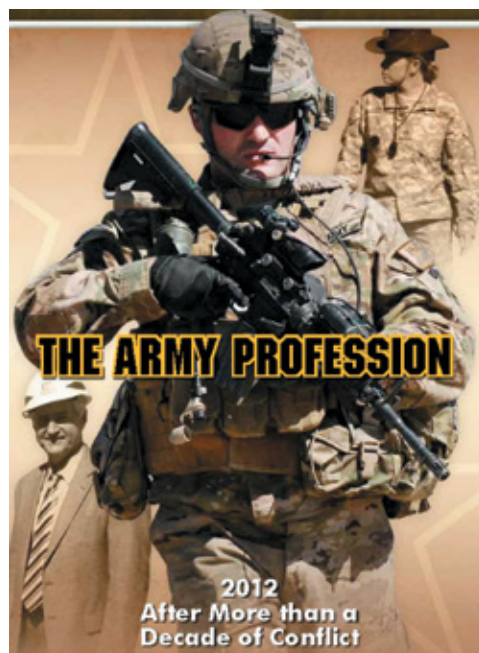
At the time of this statement Dempsey was responding to the Secretary of Defense's direction to look holistically at the military's ethical training programs to determine if those programs for senior officers were satisfactory.³⁰ This is evidence the executive branch's confidence is waning, and Dempsey's review of ethical training standards is an attempt to quickly fill newly forming cracks in the foundation of trust.

As in any foundation, cracks do not just happen, they indicate deeper ethical issues that have to be addressed. Snider contended with this point by saying—

The Army's client, the American people, gets to make the judgment of the extent to which the Army is a profession, and they will do so based on the bond of trust created with them by the effective and ethical manner in which the Army continues to build and employ its capabilities.³¹

Said another way, America's trust is the lifeblood of the profession. If the Army loses that trust then the profession could cease to exist.

Fortunately for the Army, as it moves forward, it already possesses solid mechanisms to help restore withering trust. A significant outcome of



***The Army Profession* booklet, Center for the Army Profession and Ethics, 2012.**

the Army Profession Campaign is the advent of the 2013 "America's Army—Our Profession" education and training program, developed by the CAPE. The program officially began at Joint Base Langley-Eustis on 3 January 2013 when TRADOC hosted a professional development workshop designed to introduce the program.³² The education regimen includes quarterly topics Army leaders must address within their units.³³ From October to December 2013, the fourth quarter focuses on trust, the bedrock of the profession. During that period, the Army will emphasize those trust-based relationships both within the institution and with society in general.³⁴

As the CAPE's leaders develop educational packages that address trust, they should incorporate vignette-based scenarios that demonstrate how misconduct becomes the agent that breaks down the Army's foundation of trust. In developing these values-laden educational scenarios, they must incorporate sound pedagogical models, likely requiring immediate research about how to best use such models.

However, beyond 2013's fourth quarter, the Army must make certification in all aspects of

the profession, including trust, an educational requirement. ADRP 1, *The Army Profession*, is the doctrinal manual for the profession and ensures the Army speaks with one voice across all developmental programs.

The Army should leverage gaming concepts to advance the values of the profession. While some first-person, game-context, ethical-training modules such as the CAPE's *Moral Combat* exist, the Army should advance this virtual construct further.³⁵ It requires only incremental improvements of scenarios to fuse ethics education with other simulations like those used for combat vehicles and small unit training. Finally, Army senior leaders should direct scenario improvements that force Army professionals to make values-based decisions within realistic collective training events at all levels.

If done correctly, one can envision after action review discussions at the Army's combat training centers focused not just on competent tactics, but also on sound ethical decisions that enhance the future of the profession. By incorporating such methods, the Army can begin to caulk the cracks in the bedrock of trust and ensure they never reappear.

Identity Corrosion

Turning from the threat of erosion of trust, corrosion of professional identity emerges as yet another threat to the profession in the coming decade. One concept surfacing from the Army Profession Campaign is the "renewal of the unique aspect of the identity and role of the strategic leaders of the Army—the sergeants major, colonels, general officers, and members of the Senior Executive Service—as the 'stewards of the Army Profession.'"³⁶

However, many of these stewards do not understand what being a professional means in the way emerging Army doctrine defines it. They do not view themselves as professionals. Even more concerning, many do not see the necessity to redefine the Army as a profession or to maintain its professional status. This lack of professional understanding among emerging strategic level leaders should not come as a surprise for at least two reasons.

First, among the conclusions emerging from the 2002 publication of *The Future of the Army Profession* was the finding that junior officers did

not view themselves as professionals.³⁷ Now, more than ten years later, those same captains and majors of 2000 are the lieutenant colonels and colonels of 2013. By the Army's definition they are the stewards of the profession, but the Army has done little in the past ten years to increase this cohort's sense of professional identity. Beyond one year of study at the Command and General Staff College, which included only one course on leadership, this group received little, if any, formal education about profession identity. The focus on the wars has created some of this problem.

Anecdotal evidence suggests this shortcoming is contributing to corrosion of identity. One only

...one can envision after action review discussions at the Army's combat training centers focused not just on competent tactics, but also on sound ethical decisions...

needs to talk to a group of colonels and ask a few pointed questions about the profession. This became apparent following Snider's address to the Army War College resident class of 2013—his remarks focused on challenges facing Army strategic leaders in maintaining a military profession during the forthcoming defense reductions.³⁸ Ensuing seminar discussions following his address revealed that many War College students saw little relevance in the topic.

In an approaching era of constrained resources, these emerging strategic leaders will likely revert to what they learned during the 1990s. In that previous era of constrained resources, effective business practices of doing more with less led to the initial loss of professional identity and other bureaucratic tendencies in the first place.³⁹ Making this potentially worse, many of today's generals were the battalion and brigade commanders executing those practices during the last defense drawdown period.

This cohort of colonels lacks professional identity, and they bear responsibility for creating the developmental programs to instill the professional

values in the next generation of leaders. The Army recognizes that the Millennials will be the greatest influencers in the Army from 2015-2024, both as seasoned soldiers and fresh recruits. As a group, Millennials are a diverse and disjointed generation. They appear to be a tolerant, pragmatic, ambitious, and optimistic cohort. They believe in their influence and unique identity. They are innately intimate with the digital world. However, most relevant to the Army, their values do not align with the Army's and remain in flux.⁴⁰

The Josephson Institute of Ethics declared, in extensive surveys of American high school students, over 50 percent report having cheated on an exam, and over 55 percent report having lied to a teacher about something significant in the past year.⁴¹ While these trends have improved slightly over previous years, they indicate significant values problems with America's youth. Additionally, by many accounts, Millennials are generally driven by "more of an emphasis on extrinsic values such as money, fame and image" and much less by "intrinsic values such as self-acceptance, group affiliation and community."⁴² One should reasonably expect this value gap to continue to widen as

the generation of Millennials rises to lead the Armed Forces.

In 2014 the Army will submit its Program Objective Memorandum charting the Army's future resource allocation decisions for the ensuing six years.⁴³ This means that the Army has a year to figure out its initial concepts for manning, training, and developing the Army of 2020.

The first condition associated with identity corrosion, lack of professional identity among stewards of the profession, should be relatively easy to overcome. The Army already initiated the aforementioned "America's Army—Our Profession" education program of 2013. This program incorporates the concept of identity. When the Army's most senior leaders emphasize the importance of the profession to its emerging stewards, these warfighters will probably internalize the importance of understanding the profession.

One way the Army emphasizes senior leader identity is through the development of a computer-based Virtual Experiential Interactive Learning Simulation (VEILS). The program focuses on senior-leader level ethical decision making.⁴⁴ Each scenario developed provides realistic dilemmas and presents the participant with numerous ethical challenges. The Army should continue to invest in, and rapidly field, the VEILS program. Participation should be a gate for professional certification commensurate with service at the level of colonel and above across the Army. Moreover, the Army should continue to invest in other simulations that will help certify identity within the entire force. The Army recognizes that "future learners will prefer independent learning experiences and have a natural affinity for self-development and lifelong learning, and prefer collaborative learning experiences."⁴⁵ The virtual environment provides a relatively inexpensive venue for producing those experiences.

Recruiting and retaining future leaders will require unique adaptations to traditional Army leader-development models and practices. The Army must invest in its moral-development programs to overcome issues with moral fading and rationalization among its professional stewards and to prevent moral disengagement within the next generation of leaders. In nearly all cases of misconduct, both within and external to the Army, individuals understand the ethical implications of the situations in which they



Soldiers of 4th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, march into Soldiers Field House at Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Wash., 28 July 2013 during a welcome home ceremony. The 4th SBCT soldiers returned from a nine-month deployment to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. (U.S. Army, Pfc. Reese Von Rogatz)

find themselves. They know what should be done, exhibit intent to act ethically, yet fail to do so. They rationalize and disengage morally between intention and action to attain short-term gratification.⁴⁶ Hannah's and Sweeny's research demonstrates that professional identity enhancement occurs through moral jolts attained by immersing leaders in developmental "experiences reflective of the real world, even if they are virtual or vicarious." They go on to point out the importance of shaping such experiences through guided reflection by "capable mentors."⁴⁷

The Army should also invest deeply in how it will shape future generations of leaders to continue to promote professional identity. For example, the Army's capstone document on leadership, ADRP 6-22, *Army Leadership*, should devote more than four paragraphs to the concept of character development.⁴⁸ Fortunately, the Army has a solid basis for understanding moral development in *The U.S. Army Concept for the Human Dimension in Full Spectrum Operations 2015-2024*. It highlights the importance of guiding and preparing "commissioned and noncommissioned leaders in their efforts to develop moral and ethical soldiers."⁴⁹ It dedicates an entire chapter to the moral component of the human dimension. Army senior leadership should make it required reading for every senior noncommissioned officer course and for every officer as part of the Captain's Career Course.

Beyond the trust of the client, leaders and leader development continue to be the lynchpin that holds the Army profession together. As Snider states, "the critical point here is that leadership within the Army, specifically the competence and character of its individual leaders at all levels, uniformed and civilian, is the single most influential factor in the Army being, and remaining, a profession."⁵⁰ As the Army shapes itself for the future, it would do well to pay particular attention to leader-development systems and ensure those programs include certifications and relevant

education about moral reasoning and character development. This is essential as the Army strives to eliminate identity corrosion and bridge gaps in societal values for the future of the profession.

Conclusion

It is clear that the Army faces significant challenges to its status as a profession in the coming decade. One of these challenges is the threat from erosion of trust with the Army's client, the American people. The Army should remain acutely aware of the erosion of trust evidenced in increased oversight by both the legislative and executive branches of the government and act decisively and convincingly to overcome them. Additionally, the Army profession is challenged by the lack of character-developmental systems to close values gaps between the Army and American society. The good news is the Army Profession Campaign, begun in 2010 and resulting in the "America's Army—Our Profession" education program of 2013, has put the Army on the right path to think through the solutions to each of these challenges. Further, these threats are not yet a crisis, and sufficient time to implement solutions to prevent the decline of the profession still exists. However, the Army must act quickly and should not rest on its laurels. It must act now to shape the future, because austere budgets and the pending surge of Millennials within its ranks demand it. If the Army wants to remain a profession, it will find ways in the coming decade to incorporate the recommendations consistent with overcoming the threats from erosion of trust and identity corrosion as this paper suggests. The Army, as the nation's loyal servant, has no choice but to reinforce the principles that make it a profession. America relies on it, as the nation's preeminent source of land power now and in the future, to protect its national security and win its wars. **MR**

NOTES

1. Commanding General, Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC), *An Army White Paper: The Profession of Arms* (West Point, NY: Center for the Army Profession and Ethic, 8 December 2010), Preface.

2. *Ibid.*, 1.

3. Army Doctrinal Reference Publication (ADRP) 1, *The Army Profession* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office [GPO], 14 June 2013), vi-vii.

4. *Ibid.*, ix-x.

5. *Ibid.*, ix.

6. Don M. Snider, "Once Again, the Challenge to the U.S. Army During a Defense Reduction: To Remain a Military Profession" *Strategic Studies Institute Professional Military Ethics Monograph Series 4* (February 2012): 8.

7. ADRP 1, ix.

8. The seven Army Values are comprised of Loyalty, Duty, Respect, Selfless Service, Honor, Integrity, and Personal Courage. For further explanation of how the Army defines each of its values, refer to ADRP 6-22, *Army Leadership* (Washington, DC: GPO, August 2012), 3-1 through 3-3.

9. ADRP 1, ix.

10. Don M. Snider, "The U.S. Army as Profession" in *The Future of the Army Profession Revised and Expanded*, 2nd ed., Don M. Snider, project director, and Lloyd J. Matthews, editor (Boston: McGraw Hill, 2005), 13.

11. *An Army White Paper: The Profession of Arms*, 4.

12. ADRP 1, 2-2 through 2-8.

13. Raymond T. Odierno, *Marching Orders, 38th Chief of Staff, U.S. Army: America's Force of Decisive Action* (Washington, DC: Headquarters, Department of

the Army, January 2012), 2.

14. *Ibid.*, 3.

15. Don M. Snider, "Once Again, the Challenge to the U.S. Army during a Defense Reduction," 19.

16. James Burk, "Expertise, Jurisdiction, and Legitimacy of the Military Profession," in *The Future of the Army Profession Revised and Expanded*, 2nd ed., Don M. Snider, project director and Lloyd J. Matthews, editor (Boston: McGraw Hill, 2005), 51-52.

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19. George E. Reed, "Threats to the Profession of Arms," *Defense Policy Journal*, 28 February 2011, <<http://www.defensepolicy.org/2011/george-reed/threats-to-the-profession-of-arms>> (17 September 2012).

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23. *Ibid.*

24. Sava Hamedy, "Sexual Assaults Taint Military, as Congress Turns up Heat on Pentagon to Deal with Problem," *BU Washington News Service*, July 2012, <<http://buwashingtonnews.com/2012/07/26/sexual-assaults-taint-military-as-congress-turns-up-heat-on-pentagon-to-deal-with-problem/>> (30 October 2012).

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26. Invisible No More, "National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2013 Wrap-Up," 4 January 2013, <http://www.notinvisible.org/ndaa_fy_2013> (22 January 2013).

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28. This particular piece of legislation seeks to standardize programs across each of the military services and is an effort to reduce the alarming rate of military suicides which "has not abated despite major investments in new programs and outreach efforts across the services." This quote and this information comes from: Adam Ashton, "Senate Passes Murray Measure to Reform Defense Suicide Prevention Programs," *The News Tribune*, 5 December 2012, <<http://blog.thenewstribune.com/military/2012/12/05/senate-passes-murray-measure-to-reform-defense-suicide-prevention-programs/>> (13 December 2012).

29. Thom Shanker and Elisabeth Bumiller, "Pentagon to Review Ethical Standards," *New York Times*, 15 November 2012, <www.nytimes.com/2012/11/16/world/panetta-and-general-dempsey-to-review-military-ethics.html?_r=0> (19 December 2012).

30. *Ibid.*

31. Don M. Snider, "Once Again, the Challenge to the U.S. Army During a Defense

Reduction: To Remain a Military Profession," 4.

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33. The "America's Army—Our Profession" quarterly education plan directs that the first quarter of 2013 focus on standards and discipline, doing the right thing in all situations, and those aspects of the profession that set the Army apart from common living. The second quarter addresses Army customs, courtesies, and traditions and sustainment of esprit de corps and stewardship of the profession. The third quarter theme aims at military expertise and what it means to be a certified Army professional. This information comes from: Maj.Gen. Gordon B. "Skip" Davis Jr. and Col. Jeffrey D. Peterson, "America's Army—Our Profession," *Military Review* (January-February 2013): 45-47.

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37. Don M. Snider, "The U.S. Army as Profession," in *The Future of the Army Profession Revised and Expanded*, 3.

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Fighting Alone

The Challenge of Shrinking Social Capital and the Army Profession

Maj. Charlie Lewis, U.S. Army

FORT BLISS WAS recognized “as a promising model for the Army” after a 30 percent drop in suicides this year. To foster trust, support, and connections to lower the suicide rate, the commander, Maj. Gen. Dana J.H. Pittard, opened Fort Bliss to the public, created outdoor spaces, and “reintroduced dayrooms” where soldiers can gather.¹ These actions increased *social capital*, which is the social networks, norms of reciprocity, and social trust among soldiers, units, and the community. The Bliss model demonstrates the strength of such connections among soldiers, their leaders, their families, and their local surroundings. However, the model has not expanded across the Army.

As the military faces large budget and personnel cuts and an end to combat operations, the Army as a profession must enhance the social trust and esprit de corps it requires through *social capital* development. If social capital declines precipitously, the strength of the Army Profession will face a similar drop. Challenges include limited training resources, making what once occurred naturally—the development of social capital and its trustworthiness and pride—hard to find, leaving soldiers to *fight alone*, instead of as a team. Beyond training, other chances to foster the Army’s culture are diminishing.

Unit interactions are limited to the workday because of decreased funding for outside activities. Even living together is changing. Increased communications and social media access allows members of the profession to remain more connected to hometowns, thereby isolating themselves, lowering the value of the Army culture, and increasing the problems, like suicide and sexual assault. Bridges are cut between the Army and society because of fewer bases, fewer Americans serving, and geography sorting the American population from soldiers. Preventing this situation requires leaders and soldiers to incorporate methods aimed at maintaining current levels of social capital. The greatest challenge facing the Army as a profession over the next decade is a collapse of social capital and the associated bonds, reciprocity, and trust upon which the Army Profession thrives.

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PHOTO: A soldier assigned to 2nd Squadron, 2nd Cavalry, provides security during counter-improvised explosive device training in Grafenwoehr Training Area, Germany, 18 April 2013. (U.S. Army, Gertrud Zach)

In defining social capital and its role in the Army Profession, I argue that it has the power to maintain the strength of the profession. By exposing weaknesses in the Army's social capital, I demonstrate how to develop methods to structure both trust and esprit de corps within the Army Profession to address this challenge.

Social Capital Defined

Social capital refers to “social networks, norms of reciprocity, mutual assistance, and trustworthiness.”² Identified first in 1916, social capital's scholarly use has increased since the 1990s with the release of Harvard Professor Robert Putnam's research on the subject.³ Putnam first identifies the power of social capital by highlighting how it improves “the efficiency of society by facilitating coordinated actions.”⁴ Societies high in social capital also see an increased sense of pride, or esprit de corps, which further unites community members. In addition, Putnam identifies “trust as an essential component of social capital.”

Trust arises personally at the local level, and grows to large organizations and communities through *social trust*.⁵ However, social trust is not just trust in an organization but is trust between people who when aggregated, equates to improved outcomes.⁶ If embedded in a group, social trust “enables action” because others anticipate a specific behavior from the actor.⁷

Two sources of social capital exist: norms of reciprocity and networks of civic engagement. Reciprocity increases trust by limiting collective action problems or those situations where group members benefit whether or not they contribute. Norms arise from routine behaviors and expectations. Generalized reciprocity, or when one acts without expecting anything in return, can enhance social capital more than trading favors.⁸ Moreover, networks of civic engagement are an “essential form of social capital” and lead to closer communities.⁹ Such networks come in a variety of forms, for examples the American Legion, schools, families, the workplace, or churches. These communities require “interdependence,” furthering trust development among members.¹⁰

There are two kinds of social capital: *bonding* and *bridging*. Bonding social capital is between groups of similar individuals, like church groups

and ethnic organizations. A group based on bonding results in strong in-group loyalty. However, bridging social capital consists of connections across diverse social groups, like large social movements and youth service groups. These connections are good for information diffusion and linking communities and networks. Bridging social capital benefits those in and outside of the group due to positive externalities. In other words, those outside the group also accrue the benefits provided by social capital.¹¹

Incorporating the economic influence of the word “capital,” social capital also serves as both a private and a public good. As a private or individual good, social capital helps members by reaching out to their network and the associated norms of trust to get ahead.¹² Individuals within the network see improved outcomes economically, physically, socially, and educationally. Further private benefits come from trusting those around you to “lend a helping hand” or offer support during tough times. While those examples assist those within networks, organizations can provide benefits to those outside the network through fund raising, volunteering, or support. Those activities connect group members to people outside it, further providing externalities.¹³



1st Armored Division soldiers receive suicide prevention training during the Army Wide Suicide Safety Stand Down Day on Fort Bliss, Texas, 27 September 2012. (U.S. Army)

Building Social Capital

So how do we build social capital? A variety of communities, organizations, schools, and employers create social capital through policies, structure, and activities. Like-minded individuals can form groups around a variety of interests. Organizations like the Elks, Rotary Club, and Veterans of Foreign Wars provide examples of individuals coming together. In addition, school communities—both public, private, and charter—offer chances to build social capital. All these opportunities require a place to congregate, meet, and build the bonds needed for the trust found in social capital. Beyond the members, the place facilitates gathering to form networks and the associated norms.

The workplace, as the “single most important site of cooperative interaction and sociability among adult citizens outside the family,” also provides a contemporary potential for social capital.¹⁴ While some argue that the forced association and hierarchical leadership of the workplace might limit opportunities for social capital, it is possible to create the bonds needed for social capital. Work also generates a diffusion of opinions, ideas, and beliefs.¹⁵ While the average workplace—because our time is not our own and we involuntarily associate for a paycheck—is not a complete solution to finding social capital, there are opportunities if we can integrate work lives with social lives and the community.¹⁶

Social Capital Measured

Recent data shows that social capital declined throughout the United States over the past half century. Putnam’s *Bowling Alone* addresses this decline through an in-depth diagnosis of declining political participation, civic engagement, church attendance, and general community engagement. Other researchers identified a decline in social trust in American youth, as well, resulting from an increase in materialistic values that erode the virtues necessary for collective action.¹⁷ Putnam also sees this generational decline in trust “accelerating.”¹⁸

Where does this decline come from? Some argue it might be television or computers.¹⁹ Increased television consumption among youth undermines their interaction with others and involvement in activities. While not causal, there is a correlation between television usage and decreased civic engagement because heavy watchers spend time isolated—watch-

ing television instead of conducting civic activities.²⁰ Moreover, studies of social media and mutual support found that online social networkers feel isolated, despite large numbers of “friends.”²¹ In addition, a sorted population limits bridging opportunities. Beyond suburbanization and the opportunity costs of long commutes on families, communities, and activities, clustering of like-minded individuals destroys bridging social capital. In his book *The Big Sort*, Bill Russell found that political segregation from sorting reinforced inequalities.²²

Why does this decline matter? States with increased social capital have less crime. Education improves. Sense of community develops. In addition, social networks provide a safety net through “tangible assistance,” like money, care, and transportation. Moreover, evidence leads to social capital improving health outcomes and norms and inhibiting depression.²³ By understanding the effects of social capital, where it is declining, and how to reverse the drop, we can better organizations by affecting positive changes in a group’s norms.

The Army, the Profession, and Social Capital

Social capital strengthens two of the five essential characteristics of the Army Profession: *trust and esprit de corps*. In addition, the Army Culture spurs the growth of social capital within the Army Profession, breeding opportunities to use the norms of reciprocity, trust, pride, and mutual assistance. By understanding the Army’s social capital, its challenges, and its goals over the next decade, we can fortify the Army Profession.

Trust. Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. Martin Dempsey believes “trust is the cornerstone of our profession.”²⁴ Army Doctrine Reference Publication (ADRP) 1, *The Army Profession*, calls trust the “bedrock” of the profession. Trust creates the bonds necessary to strengthen relations among soldiers; leaders and soldiers; and soldiers, their families, and the Army, and to bridge with the American people. The trust advocated in ADRP 1 is the basis for creating strong units, with expected norms of the Army Ethic enhancing social trust. With each soldier trained under the same value system, others expect a certain behavior at work, at home, and in combat.²⁵ This creates a reliance on each other that supports the unit throughout all of its activities.

Many believe vertical organizations—like the Army’s chain of command—limit development of social capital.²⁶ While similar organizations lose social capital because of the coercion of a boss to employee environment, the Army’s emphasis on trust and mission command constrains this loss. Army leaders build trust through collective experiences requiring a team to overcome challenges together—leadership included.²⁷ If, as Colin Powell said, leaders know they must “accomplish the mission and look after the troops,” trust grows.²⁸ After a decade of war, soldiers do trust their leaders to accomplish the mission and look after them. In fact, 62 percent consider their leaders effective.²⁹ Beyond trust of leaders, mission command and its decentralized operations require a commander to trust subordinates to “perform with responsible initiative in complex, fast-changing, chaotic circumstances.”³⁰ This trust arises through decentralized training in similar environments where soldiers will see the trust placed in them by their leadership. Without this trust, the Army Profession is too vertical and fails to grow.

The Army does not just desire trust within units; it also incorporates families.

The Army does not just desire trust within units; it also incorporates families. The norms of reciprocity are important in Army communities. With bases in smaller towns and isolation, compounded by the nature of the profession and combat, a strong support structure is required for families. Social trust grows between the family and the leadership of the unit through the family readiness groups, which provide “an avenue of mutual support and assistance.” This formal organization facilitates the development of social capital between all levels of a unit through reciprocity and uniting different families through a common bond.³¹ Morale, Welfare, and Recreation (MWR) programs further bridge families and soldiers from different units.³² A recent study demonstrated that use of MWR programs increased the desire to stay in the Army and satisfaction with Army life.³³ These programs enhance trust

because the Army becomes more than a paycheck; it is a family, community, and way of life.

With trust within the walls of Army bases, it is imperative for the profession to bridge with surrounding communities and the American people at large. Trust is “what binds us together—those that wear the uniform and those of you that serve in your communities,” stated Dempsey at the National League of Cities Congressional Cities Conference.³⁴ The American people place trust within the Army to support and defend the Constitution.³⁵ The military trusts their communities to support them and elect officials who decide on their use judiciously. However, building this trust goes beyond justly fighting and winning the nation’s wars; it requires a common understanding of each other through outreach. From the Hopkinsville, Ky., Kiwanis Club recognizing Fort Campbell soldiers to links on the Fort Drum homepage to community activities, bridging between the Army and the surrounding community occurs in a variety of ways.^{36 37} The formation of this social trust as the foundation of the Army Profession fosters the activity needed to create resilient and cohesive units.³⁸

Esprit de corps. Training and equipment only get a unit so far. The stresses of war, missing home, and fatigue wears “on even the most experienced Army professional” over time and requires a support network on top of the intrinsic motivation to continue performing.³⁹ As evidenced in the book *Black Hearts*, the burden of fighting for so long can cause too much strain despite the U.S. Army being among the “most-tested and best-behaved fighting forces in history.”⁴⁰ ADRP 1 emphasizes esprit de corps as a way to further resilience across all levels of the organization. Esprit de corps or “shared sense of purpose, strong bonds of loyalty and pride,” and resolve is necessary to accomplish missions and arises from the basic components of social capital.

Like trust, esprit de corps occurs at every level. Individually, esprit de corps happens through pride, shared values, and an attachment to the Army Profession. For esprit de corps to grow throughout the entire Army Profession, each individual must hold onto their morale. On a unit level, esprit de corps grows with each layer up the organizational chart. A small unit has a common sense of mission, shared experiences, and a set of norms that lead to pride in the organization and Army. The embodiment of this

pride at the team, squad, and platoon level can successfully transition the motivation to further the Army Profession by demonstrating to individuals that they are not alone. Items like call-signs, unit mottos, guidons, and patches all provide something for a soldier and unit to rally around.

Larger units expand upon small ones through open command climates, trust, and commitment. The Center for Army Leadership Annual Survey of Army Leadership (CASAL) demonstrates that 70 percent of the Army is satisfied with the amount of freedom they have in their job because of open command climates. This autonomy equates to increased trust, with 70 percent again viewing their immediate superior as effective in “establishing trusting relationships.”⁴¹ These large units then bridge esprit de corps to the entire Army and its community. Towns outside of military installations take pride in the unit living and training among them. This pride fosters a support network, spurs social capital, and demonstrates a future strength of the Army Profession.

Army culture. As a reflection of the Army Profession, both esprit de corps and trust influence Army Culture. Even with rotations of personnel, leaders, and missions, the Army Culture reflects the norms

informed from the Army Ethic and Profession. Three dimensions constitute culture: a professional identity, a sense of community, and hierarchy. Community here is imperative. Without social capital, there is no community, which is why an understanding of the role the Army Culture plays in the future of the profession is important.⁴²

Community creates a “professional family” and broadens identity beyond just the individual. By joining this group, there is the private good of individual growth while providing a public good to the rest of America.⁴³ The private good results from the basic benefits, like the GI Bill, health care, housing, and pay, along with the support structures one automatically joins when they serve. The public good is both the direct service of defending the nation against all enemies, and the externalities communities near military installations see with the influx of new individuals who broaden perspectives, provide financial benefits, and live among the civilian populace. This community fosters the growth of Army Culture, but if there is a decline in this sense of community among Army professionals, an associated decline in the Army culture will occur, limiting the Army Profession.



The president of Barreto Group, Inc., Rodney Barreto, tries out a mine detector while being advised by Capt. Robert St. Claire, an instructor for the Joint Civilian Orientation Conference, during their visit to Fort Campbell, Ky., 22 September 2010.

The Army Profession requires trust and esprit de corps to develop itself and the Army Culture. Without either, the Army Profession does not exist. Social capital enhancement provides avenues through which units and leaders can foster social trust and pride, resulting in a prospering Army Profession.

The Army, the Profession, and the Impacts of Collapsing Social Capital

ADRP 1 relies heavily on components of social capital to develop the Army Profession. However, the problem is when structures designed to naturally create social capital disappear. Moreover, a decline in social capital nationally leads to a similar decrease in the military. The difference between a decline in the nation and decline in the Army is that the Army Profession relies on social capital to succeed and instill its values. Increasing numbers of suicide, sexual assault, and toxic leaders and decreasing interaction with the civilian population substantiates the Army's loss of social capital.

Limited mutual support and trust between soldiers. The rising number of suicides within the Army shows a breakdown in social capital. In 2012, the Army had 182 suicides, up from 166 in 2011.⁴⁴ These numbers follow a trend of increasing suicides over the past decade.⁴⁵ In spite of awareness and a plethora of prevention programs, this trend line shows that some units lack the norm of mutual support. While there is no definitive interpretation of the rise, social isolation is one plausible explanation. Putnam identifies similar suicide trends nationally, with individualism and a “weakened commitment” to organizations and groups isolating those prone to depression.⁴⁶ Without unit bonds, mutual support disappears. Without mutual support, soldiers must fight alone instead of as a team. Increasing social capital provides the networks and associated norms to create a commitment to organizations larger than oneself. Without social capital, reversing the suicide trend and increasing mutual support is difficult.

Furthering issues of trust at the individual soldier level, the Army reported 1,695 sexual assaults during fiscal year 2011 (combining restricted and unrestricted reports). The majority of these incidents involve junior enlisted soldiers in the

barracks.⁴⁷ With these acts occurring in a soldier and unit's home, it is nearly impossible to develop esprit de corps when individual members fear others at work and home. Any sexual assault is a breach of trust and leads to a diminished valuation of the Army Profession by both those within and those outside of the Army. Unless the trend of both suicides and sexual assault declines and social trust and mutual support increase, the Army Profession will struggle to remain strong.

Increasing numbers of suicide, sexual assault, and toxic leaders and decreasing interaction with the civilian population substantiates the Army's loss of social capital.

Breakdown in Leader Trust and Unit Pride

Another sign of declining social capital is the increase in toxic leaders, who act unethically, foster closed and poor command climates, blame others for their own problems, are overly critical, and avoid interacting with subordinates.⁴⁸ The CASAL found nearly one in five leaders rated as toxic. Most occurrences of toxic leadership are at the small-unit level, with junior officers rated least positively and company-level NCOs with the lowest average scores. In other words, the leaders closest to soldiers, those who interact with families, conduct training, and maintain soldier development, are those most likely to be toxic.⁴⁹

An open command climate of “candor, trust, and respect” is essential for esprit de corps— 20 percent loss of this trust Army wide is frightening.⁵⁰ Toxic leaders hurt organizations. Unit cohesion through training disappears. Mutual support and reciprocity vanishes. The lack of trust and unit bonds limits the ability to accomplish the mission and maintain the standards of the Army Profession.⁵¹



(DOD)

Moreover, training is in jeopardy at the organizational level. Gen. Raymond Odierno testified to the Senate Armed Services Committee that current sequestration cuts will “curtail training for 80 percent of ground forces.” The opportunity to train consistently, become proficient at their mission, and foster norms of trust and mutual assistance in units with both good and bad leaders is disappearing at the same time combat missions are ending. Soldiers, leaders, and entire units will lose the chance to build the bonds required to maintain readiness as “our soldiers, our young men and women, are the ones who will pay the price, potentially with their lives,” according to Odierno.⁵² In addition, limited readiness results in a breach of trust with the American people. According to ADRP 1, social trust begins at the highest level, with the American people trusting that the Army will defend their nation, their values, and their future.⁵³ If the Army and the Army Profession are not ready to fight and defend the nation against all enemies, then the people’s trust of the profession is broken. Social trust makes bonds tighter. Poor leadership and an inability to build esprit de corps causes trust and bonds

to crumble, which challenges the Army Profession to develop the social capital required for its success over the next decade.

Limiting Bridges of Trust

Sequestration cuts further break down social capital bridging the Army Profession and the communities surrounding military installations. The Army is already a small percentage of the population. Social trust arises more from observed actions than personal interaction. As the Army draws down 80,000 troops to reach 490,000 by 2017, there is even less opportunity to interact.⁵⁴ Reports of sexual assaults, murders overseas, and other nefarious activities hurt this social trust. If the Army Profession is dependent on the trust of America’s citizens as its organizing principle, it must also recognize that Americans must interact and view the profession in a positive manner. This could be a challenge for the Army with communities near Army bases. Sequestration does not just affect those in uniform. As General Odierno testified, he has “directed an immediate hiring freeze,” will “furlough up to 251,000 civilians,” and “cuts in

depot maintenance will see 5,000 lose their jobs.”⁵⁵ Each lost job affects a family and diminishes both interaction and mutual support—support necessary to maintain social capital and the Army Profession going forward. Each negative impact on the community weakens the bonds between the Army and the surrounding area. Each broken bond harms trust and the Army Profession.

These challenges are daunting. Attempts to mitigate the rise in suicides and sexual assaults make small improvements, but nothing to stem the lost social capital. Lowered esprit de corps starts to change a unit’s culture. Reversing changes are tough, despite the impact those changes have on the Army Profession. Finally, the Army Profession needs to foster trust with the American people. Limited interaction and job losses hurt trust and the Army Profession. Still, these challenges are far from insurmountable.

Meeting the Challenge of Declining Social Capital

ADRP 1 outlines both requirements for and methods by which the Army Profession can face the challenge of declining social capital. Individual actions alone cannot overcome this loss. However, collective action and policies that foster similar activities can. Groups must come together and work to improve their social networks, norms of reciprocity, and trust by preventing the loss of social capital (See Figure 1). With each challenge identified earlier, the outcome is the same if no changes happen—a weak Army Profession. Addressing each issue that weakens social capital maintains the positive direction of the Army

Profession. The steps and the process to maintain the strength of the Army Profession is what requires creativity in leadership, policy, and individual actors within units.

Create a place. First, creating a place outside of work develops social capital within organizations. At Fort Bliss, spaces for soldiers to interact with others builds bonds within and among units. A typical soldier’s day begins at 0630 and ends 12 hours later. Their home is the barracks and their kitchen is a dining facility, where they share a table with their peers from work. If the Army Profession relies on the workplace to foster social capital, the bonds are shallow if there is no interaction among unit members outside of work. A space or place encourages gathering and additional norms of reciprocity to grow. These places unite soldiers and create interactions away from work, televisions, and social media, improving social trust. The bonds made in these places are voluntary and provide the mutual support that can maintain or improve social capital and thus the Army Profession.

Enduring units. The second recommendation is to build enduring units. While career gates and timelines are important, building unit cohesion takes time. Dissolving leadership and moving jobs immediately following a deployment or long training exercise splinters the bonds that took so long to develop. Social trust erodes, unit pride is hard to find, and support structures lost.⁵⁶ This process has a cost beyond the dollars it takes to retrain new members of the unit. Organizational knowledge disappears. The emotional cost of creating new bonds causes some to struggle.

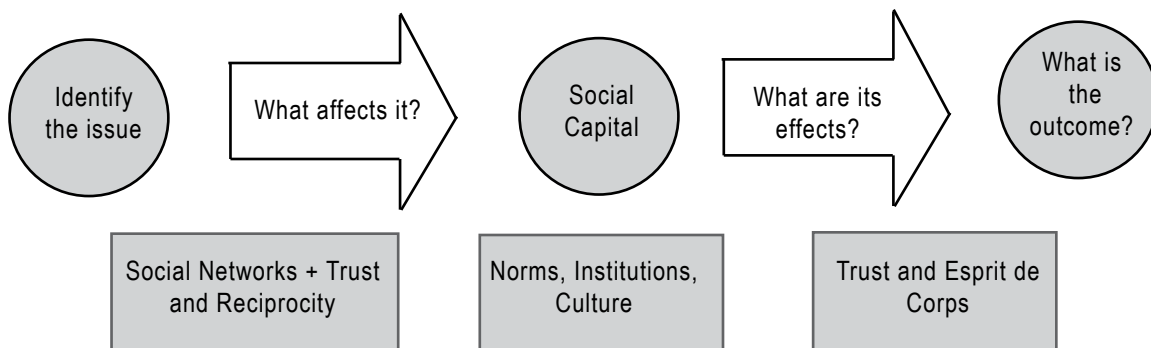


Figure 1



Soldiers of the 4th Battalion, 118th Infantry Regiment, South Carolina Army National Guard, watch television in the battalion's dayroom at Camp Buehring, Kuwait, following the facility's opening on 25 August 2012. (U.S. Army)

Maintaining longevity and the associated norms developed within units matters.⁵⁷ Adjusting career timelines, establishing home stations, and providing predictability to permanent change of station moves builds a culture within the Army Profession that develops social capital. Slowing changes of duty station and leadership preserves bonds and builds more esprit de corps. With longevity in units, families are stable and can develop trust in individual leaders along with the Army as an organization, which strengthens the bonds between the Army Profession and its families. Moreover, units filled with already established esprit de corps counter toxic leaders. Pride and trust between various junior leaders and

soldiers are strong, and long established relationships minimize a toxic leader's impact more than if the unit's bonds were weak and easily broken. By keeping organizations together longer, soldiers, families, and units can continue to build the ties required to cultivate social trust, unit pride, and social capital. In other words, to strengthen the Army Profession, keep people together.

Break down barriers. Bridging social capital requires the Army Profession to break down barriers between it and the nation it serves. Since 9/11, increased force protection measures built up the walls around Army installations. Americans could not get on military installations to interact with soldiers and Army leaders. There was no bridging. There was only isolation. The Army Profession separated itself from whom it served. The citizens who trusted their defense to the Army Profession no longer understood the force. Social networks and norms of reciprocity disappeared.

Through open posts like Fort Bliss and the U.S. Military Academy, along with community wide events hosted by garrison commands and local leaders, bridging occurs. As the social capital increases between society and the Army, the outcome is an enhanced view of the Army Profession by more Americans, along with improved opportunities for support networks for Army professionals.

Social capital will form naturally if the Army Profession sustains its strength over the next decade. However, the challenge is to stem the breaches of trust before social capital, and with it, the Army Profession, erodes. Understanding the factors that hinder social capital and adjusting policies and leadership to cultivate bonds and norms of reciprocity associated with social networks will develop social capital and the Army Profession. **MR**

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Defeating Future Hybrid Threats

The Greatest Challenge to the Army Profession of 2020 and Beyond

Maj. John R. Davis Jr., U.S. Army

I would like to thank my research paper advisor at Air Command and Staff College, Dr. Sterling Pavelec, who continually empowered me to push the cutting edge and challenge conventional thinking when writing this article.

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PHOTO: U.S. soldiers leave their defensive fighting positions while preparing for an attack during a full-spectrum operations exercise at Fort Polk, La., 23 October 2010. The exercise trained the soldiers to defeat a hybrid threat comprised of insurgents and organized military forces. (DOD, D. Myles Cullen, U.S. Army)

“WE ARE AT a similar warfare inflection point; one that eclipses the introduction of nuclear weapons, the introduction of the air domain and the airplane, and the transition from battleship to aircraft carrier.”¹ Gen. Martin Dempsey’s statement captures the current moment in time with respect to changes in warfare facing the U.S. Army. Similar warfare inflection points in the transition to the air and nuclear domains produced lasting changes to the art of warfighting. New debates about warfare focus on how the evolution of the space and cyberspace domains will influence future conflict. Most defense analysts agree that the nature of the future security environment will be multi-polar (regionally focused) with inherent diversity and complexity. The future environment will present formidable challenges to the U.S. Army. One challenge resides in how to identify, understand, and combat the future threat. Defeating a hybrid threat, consisting of regular, irregular, and criminal elements synergistically working for a common end state, poses the greatest threat to the Army Profession of 2020 and beyond. Future hybrid warfare will test the military expertise, trust, and honorable service of the U.S. Army Profession. Furthermore, this form of warfare will evolve into a struggle to quickly learn, adapt, and out-think a changing hybrid threat.

The current Army Profession will endure. The crucible of combat, ground out in the jungles, deserts, mountains, and rolling plains of past battlefields, has forged the Army Profession that exists today. The near future security dilemma will be a continually evolving hybrid threat. The critical challenge facing the Army Profession of the future is determining what professional competencies to add or adapt in relation to the warfare inflection point that the force currently faces. One solution is the transition to a continually learning organization full of warrior-scholars. This will determine the success or failure of the Army Profession in a dynamic, challenging future. Throughout history, the force that learned more quickly maintained the initiative and

kept their adversary off balance. Another variable will be technology that accentuates the capabilities of the human element in warfare and presents an effective combat multiplier in a race to learn and adapt for the future.

Army Training Circular 7-100 describes the hybrid threat as three distinctly different forces working collectively toward a common objective.² The regular forces portion of the hybrid threat consists of national, uniformed military forces that engage in symmetric, conventional warfare. Regular forces will use identifiable military weapons and equipment with capabilities focused on battles reminiscent of high intensity conflict. Paramilitary forces consisting of insurgents, terrorists, and guerrillas represent the “irregulars” of the hybrid threat.³ Tactics including ambushes, terrorism, improvisation, information warfare, and other forms of asymmetric, unconventional warfare characterize their actions.

Hybrid Threat Constructs

Criminal elements, in the hybrid threat construct, create an enabling capability for adversary operations. Moisés Naím, an internationally renowned journalist and former editor in chief of *Foreign Policy* magazine, describes current global criminal acts as tactics criminal elements employ in a war enabled through globalization, including drug and arms smuggling, human trafficking, and money laundering.⁴ Criminal proceeds from these acts create funding for training and equipping hybrid forces. This presents a serious difficulty for the U.S. Army in an operational environment. The actions of criminal elements represent civil problems for a host nation government to address. However, if criminal actions support the combined efforts of regular and irregular forces, they necessitate a military response.

To assess future implications, a realistic future hybrid threat model is continually under development and review. Recent conflicts, like the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, have various elements of hybrid warfare. However, the actions of Hezbollah in the 2006 Second Lebanon War represent one example of a future hybrid threat that encompasses the essence of hybrid warfare. At the start of the conflict, the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) attacked into southern Lebanon in response to Hezbollah

rocket fire into Israel and the kidnapping of two IDF soldiers.⁵ The Israeli government firmly believed that their advanced conventional warfare technology, combined with precision firepower superiority, would quickly overwhelm Hezbollah forces and bring the conflict to a decisive conclusion.⁶ The IDF developed a technology-driven strategy, heavily focused on air power, based on exploiting Hezbollah’s assumed weaknesses and limited warfighting capabilities.⁷

However, Hezbollah’s tactics rapidly transitioned the nature of the conflict from conventional warfare to hybrid warfare, effectively negating the IDF’s technological advancements. Hezbollah developed a strategy that combined conventional warfare tactics and capabilities with guerrilla warfare operations. In one sense, Hezbollah’s actions departed from historical asymmetric, irregular operations and shifted toward conventional tactics. These tactics included defending terrain from fortified defensive positions and maneuvering in formations with conventional warfare weapons and equipment.⁸ On the other hand, Hezbollah personified an “information-age guerrilla force” employing asymmetric military methods atypical of past nonstate actors.⁹ These methods included higher-tech versions of sniping, ambushes, harassing indirect fire, and the use of civilians, including houses, as shields from attack.¹⁰

As the weaker force in the conflict, Hezbollah realized it could not destroy the IDF or break the Israeli will through large force on force engagements. Instead, at the strategic level, Hezbollah employed an approach to the war that aligned with Thomas Schelling’s strategy of coercion and Robert Pape’s strategy of coercion by punishment.¹¹ In contemporary international relations theory, coercion is persuading an adversary to stop or modify their actions by adjusting the cost-benefit analysis of their current campaign.¹² In essence, Hezbollah attempted to coerce the Israeli government by punishing the Israeli population with rocket barrages.¹³ In many ways this was reminiscent of some of the strategic bombing campaigns in previous wars, but with a different means of delivering the actual munitions.¹⁴ Hezbollah’s rockets served as an instrument of coercive pain inflicted to instill fear and break the resolve of the Israeli population.

From an operational framework perspective, Hezbollah used ground forces as an effective shaping operation to set the conditions for their decisive operation of rocket attacks into sovereign Israeli territory. In addition, ground forces prolonged the conflict in time and space, which forced the Israeli population to endure additional rocket volleys.¹⁵ Hezbollah's ground forces established an area defense in depth to protect their rocket launch sites from destruction and to disrupt a perceived IDF ground invasion. Hezbollah constructed complex conventional defensive sectors with fortified defensive positions, underground sustainment facilities, engagement areas, ambush sites, and firing points for Anti-Tank Guided Missiles (ATGMs).¹⁶ Although the main intent of these defensive arrays was to hold ground, at the tactical level irregular ambushes with small arms fire and ATGMs supported an indirect strategy of coercion by inflicting additional pain on the Israeli populace via IDF military casualties.¹⁷

Hezbollah's strategic, operational, and tactical efforts prevented a quick, decisive victory for the Israelis. Coordinated attacks prolonged the campaign long enough to allow a strategy of coercion by punishment through rocket attacks to achieve the desired end state of a stalemate. The Israeli government and populace grew tired of casualties and unsuccessful attempts at neutralizing Hezbollah rockets attacks. Furthermore, media coverage of the conflict publicized images of Lebanese civilian casualties and diluted international support for IDF offensive operations.¹⁸ On 12 August 2006, the United Nations Security Council unanimously accepted a resolution calling for an end to hostilities in southern Lebanon.¹⁹ On 13 August, amid continuing rocket barrages and mounting IDF casualties, Israel came to the bargaining table and eventually accepted the cease-fire agreement.²⁰ The conflict resulted in a deadlock where Hezbollah scored a psychological victory, viewed as a "Divine Victory" in Hezbollah's opinion, by both avoiding defeat and embarrassing the Israelis.²¹ The enduring significance of this conflict is "the combination by Shi'a militia of conventional military tactics with guerilla and terrorist activities appeared to represent a novel approach to war that would revolutionize conflicts in the twenty-first century."²² Hezbollah did not wage a true guerrilla war or a true conven-



U.S. citizens evacuated from Lebanon disembark from a U.S. Air Force C-17 Globemaster III aircraft on the flight line at McGuire Air Force Base, N.J., 23 July 2006. (U.S. Air Force, Kenn Mann)

tional war. Instead, it waged something in between. The hybrid warfare phenomenon, even though it is not a new form of warfare in history, poses a daunting challenge to the U.S. Army of the future.

The game changer associated with the future hybrid threat is that hybrid warfare will likely adopt the best capabilities of both conventional and irregular forces involved to create a new, truly hybrid form. "Future wars will likely entail an increasingly vague distinction between the conventional and the irregular; indeed these forms will meld into one."²³ The hybrid threat will morph into a combination

of regular and irregular forces with the inclusion of criminal elements. The lines between all three elements will blur and they will become indistinguishable. The same unit will be capable of rapidly transitioning between operations and tactics that span the full range of military operations. A hybrid force will utilize conventional warfare capabilities to win symmetric battles at decisive points in a conflict and then quickly dissolve into the population to continue a protracted campaign of asymmetric tactics for steady state operations. In addition to symmetric and asymmetric operations, concurrent criminal activities will pose additional threats. A well-developed and detailed future hybrid threat model is difficult to create because each hybrid war will be unique. The evolution of the threat and its truly “hybrid” nature will always create new enemies for the U.S. Army to fight based on the actors involved.

Future Challenges

Future U.S. Army formations will face significant challenges combating and defeating a hybrid threat. Hybrid warfare will stretch existing capabilities of the U.S. Army in a struggle to continually learn and adapt. Furthermore, these challenges will indirectly stress the current and future Army Profession. The triple nature of hybrid warfare creates the need for complementary, but often exclusive, strategies to defeat a variety of foes. The essence of this dilemma rests in a strategy of mass versus dispersion. In order to effectively defeat a conventional force, an army must engage in a strategy of mass and concentration. In conventional warfare, victory is achieved by concentrating all the available effects of overwhelming combat power in offensive operations or massing all the available effects of overwhelming combat power for defensive operations.²⁴

However, in order to defeat an irregular force, an army must disperse to control and secure the operational environment. One objective for both forces in counterinsurgency warfare is control of the population.²⁵ A major focus in this form of warfare is separating the insurgent from the rest of the population.²⁶ These two strategies create a quandary where an army is vulnerable to conventional attack when it disperses to deal with enemy’s irregular forces, but cedes control of the operational environment and population to the enemy when an army keeps its forces concentrated.²⁷ A similar

condition emerged in the Vietnam War. American commanders found it difficult to fight regular North Vietnamese Army divisions while simultaneously trying to dislodge irregular Viet Cong formations from the South Vietnamese population.²⁸ Attempting to do both creates a case of trying to be strong everywhere that can easily result in being strong nowhere. This will create an ineffective strategy in future hybrid conflicts. Furthermore, neutralizing the criminal element of the hybrid threat will require the formulation of an entirely new strategy that includes close coordination with host nation civilian security forces and police to bring these groups to justice.

Complications with executing operational art and design to develop a coherent strategy for hybrid warfare, and actually implementing that strategy, will test the military expertise of the Army Profession. Army personnel are experts in “the employment of Landpower in a distinctly American military context.”²⁹ As experts, professional knowledge of doctrine, strategy, and tactics guide the use of Landpower to achieve decisive action. This knowledge transforms into a high-level competence in various military operations when coupled with unit and individual training.³⁰ The development of a balanced mass and dispersion strategy, coupled with devising ways to neutralize criminal elements, will be a daunting task for future Army planners, but provides an amazing opportunity for innovation.

The U.S. Army will face challenges in cultivating units that are experts in executing both strategies. In the resource constrained future fiscal environment, the Army will face tough budgetary choices. The allocation of funds to train for multiple mission sets will be a hard budgetary sell; the Army may find itself strained to find innovative ways to train for more, with less resources. Units will face adversity training for both conventional warfare and irregular warfare to be considered experts in both disciplines. The knowledge of doctrine, strategy, and tactics for both forms of warfare will still exist, but the individual and unit training required to convert that knowledge into expertise may not.

The IDF faced a similar situation in the 2006 Second Lebanon War. Prior to the war, Israeli ground forces engaged in years of counterinsurgency operations against bordering Arab nations. These operations significantly degraded conventional, symmetric warfare capabilities within

the IDF.³¹ Although knowledge of conventional warfighting still existed in the IDF, the lack of training in that area created a shortage of military expertise in conventional operations. Israeli ground forces found themselves at a tactical disadvantage when fighting Hezbollah in a hybrid war. Swinging the U.S. Army training pendulum too far to the right (the conventional paradigm) or too far to the left (the irregular paradigm) has the potential to create similar issues for future U.S. Army forces engaging in hybrid warfare. Composite risk management will be critical to identify acceptable risks and well-developed controls to help maintain a high level of military expertise across the range of military operations in the future.

Extended Nature of Conflict

Another challenge to winning a hybrid war is the extended nature of the conflict. Hybrid warfare is inherently protracted. No quick solutions exist in these wars. In most cases, the U.S. Army will possess technological, organizational, and professional military advantages in relation to its adversaries. In order to overcome the U.S. Army's technological advantages, potential adversaries will wage hybrid warfare to extend conflicts in time and space. Also, adversaries will expand wars to include indigenous populations. A hybrid war eventually devolves into a protracted battle of wills to control a population and test the strategic patience of a hybrid threat's opponents.³² Throughout history, numerous technologically superior nations failed to achieve lasting, decisive victory due to the protracted nature of hybrid war.

Temporal and spatial protraction of hybrid conflicts will strain the public's trust in the Army Profession. As regards the importance of trust in the Army Profession, Gen. Robert Cone stated that, "trust can be considered the life blood of our profession."³³ Trust permeates throughout the whole organization and enables the Army to successfully employ Landpower across the globe in response to current and future contingency operations. Trust from soldier to soldier, soldier to officer, civilian leaders to Army leaders, and between citizens and the Army creates mutual bonds of confidence in the actions of the other. As a hybrid conflict protracts, civilians, political leaders, and military personnel in combat begin to question the approach to war as

the achievement of objectives bogs down. The lack of quick and tangible results in a hybrid war raises questions of confidence in the military strategy to the conflict. Measures of effectiveness and timelines for termination of the conflict can be hard to gauge and then explain to the public. Waning popular support for the war inevitably follows.

Skepticism and doubts have the potential to erode the bonds of trust critical for the Army Profession to fully function. In the 2006 Second Lebanon War,

A hybrid war eventually devolves into a protracted battle of wills to control a population ...

broken trust between the IDF and the Israeli people were voiced in the media. Television newscasts "denounced the IDF and what it called idiotic maneuvers."³⁴ Front page stories in newspapers questioned the IDF decision-making process, failing goals in the war, and army performance.³⁵ By the end of the conflict, historical consensus among experts maintains that the Israeli public was demoralized and frustrated. They felt betrayed by pre-war IDF predictions of a quick, decisive victory and the actual outcomes of the conflict.³⁶ Widespread Israeli discontent after the 2006 Second Lebanon War provides a contemporary example of popular unrest similar to Americans in the 1970s after the Vietnam Conflict. This portion of U.S. Army history has become a repressed and overlooked memory tucked away in literature and post-war studies. However, if it has happened before, it can happen again.

Strategic Objectives

In addition to protraction, hybrid warfare requires a detailed understanding of the strategic objectives of the enemy. Sun Tzu proposed the timeless theory, "know the enemy and know yourself; in a hundred battles you will never be in peril."³⁷ In Sun Tzu's view, it was critical to understand the enemy (their strengths, weaknesses, and motivations) as well as yourself to ensure victory. This theory is applicable

to any war, but is critically important to combating a dynamic and evolving hybrid threat. A deep understanding, bordering on empathy, of a hybrid threat will help to develop an effective strategy to combat it. This understanding must include the threat's powers of resistance, ideology, resolve, history, and culture.³⁸ A thorough understanding of the enemy will lead to a clear strategy with significant chances for success.

Attempts to gain intelligence superiority over a hybrid threat will also strain the military expertise of the Army Profession. The U.S. Army currently possesses a significant array of Reconnaissance, Intelligence, Surveillance, and Target Acquisition (RISTA) systems.³⁹ Properly employed RISTA systems can provide Army forces with real time operational data, time sensitive targeting, and a detailed representation of the threat and operational environment. However, this system is based on layers of sensors to gather information. By overwhelming and saturating RISTA system sensors with false information, a hybrid threat can negate

a U.S. Army technological advantage.⁴⁰ From a strategic perspective, this condition represents an A-type military deception where a hybrid threat increases ambiguity surrounding its operations by saturating U.S. RISTA sensors with false and irrelevant information.⁴¹ Intelligence analysts could draw false conclusions from conflicting data and pass incorrect information to Army leaders. Decisions would then be made based on false information and intelligence.

Knowledge and training inculcates Army leaders with military expertise to exercise mission command and required discretionary judgments without close supervision.⁴² An incomplete understanding of a hybrid threat and an operational environment will complicate an Army leader's decision-making cycle. Clausewitz described a state of psychological fog (unpredictability and uncertainty) that clouded the judgment of the military commander.⁴³ RISTA saturation by a hybrid threat aligns with Clausewitz's theory and will create a psychological fog in Army leaders that obstructs military expertise. In



(U.S. Army, D. Myles Cullen)

U.S. Army Gen. George W. Casey Jr., Army chief of staff, participates in an after-action briefing following a full-spectrum operation exercise at Fort Polk, La., 23 October 2010.

the 2006 Second Lebanon War, Israel struggled to execute intelligence collection that assembled a full understanding of conflict and threat characteristics.⁴⁴ This intelligence gap exacerbated Israel's difficulties in developing a comprehensive strategy to defeat Hezbollah in a hybrid conflict.

A vital part of understanding a hybrid threat is grasping the lack of moral or ethical restraint displayed in the execution of adversary operations. Rule of law and Geneva Conventions will not limit a hybrid threat's operations. This adversary fails to acknowledge and abide by both the legal and military concepts. In hybrid warfare, "the enemy does not fight fair and is fighting not only a fight in theater, but also in the living rooms of America."⁴⁵ Hybrid threats will use information warfare to achieve a marked advantage during critical times in a conflict to sway indigenous and international support in their favor.

The U.S. Army dedicates itself to honorable service to the Nation. The Army employs Landpower in a manner that upholds U.S. laws and American values.⁴⁶ Hybrid warfare entails engaging in an unfair fight. The hybrid threat will fight "dirty" in an attempt to draw U.S. Army forces into compromising situations. During the 2006 Second Lebanon War, Hezbollah employed operational shielding to protect key components of its force from IDF attack and interdiction.⁴⁷ On numerous occasions Hezbollah used operatives dressed in traditional Lebanese attire and carrying white flags to redistribute ATGMs among different fighting positions.⁴⁸ For larger resupply operations, Hezbollah used "ambulances and other rescue vehicles for cover in its movements."⁴⁹ "Everything in war is very simple, but the simplest thing is difficult," Clausewitz once espoused in reference to the fog and friction of war.⁵⁰ Hezbollah's resupply operations were no different in regard to this theory. The operational shielding tactics employed by Hezbollah made targeting, disrupting, and interdicting their sustainment operations problematic for the IDF. The psychological fog in war once again challenged Israeli military commanders by forcing them to make moral and ethical decisions on engaging questionable military targets.

Consequences of these decisions surfaced in the international media and degraded the honorable merits of the Israeli campaign. "Throughout the 2006 war, the Lebanese news media reported, and the international news media largely repeated, that

Israel was attacking hospitals, health care facilities, and ambulances; schools, mosques, and churches."⁵¹ By broadcasting attacks on Lebanon's infrastructure and inadvertent civilian casualties, the media swayed international opinion away from Israel and helped to foster a UN resolution for a cease-fire.⁵² In this conflict, Israel viewed itself as an honorable nation with high moral and ethical standards. However, the negative strategic communication narrative that Hezbollah, who openly committed war crimes by attacking Israeli civilians and using their own population for operational shielding, crafted against the IDF brought Israeli's honorable intentions under significant scrutiny.⁵³ Historians argue that Israel did not lose the information war and honorable cause case because they had poor strategic communication techniques. Instead, the Israelis lost because "they had to tell the truth while Hezbollah told lies."⁵⁴ These Hezbollah lies created a public bias against the IDF.

Lt. Gen. Robert Caslen stated that "today's hybrid threats seek complex environments, where the actions of leaders at all levels could and do have strategic consequences."⁵⁵ Actions (both positive and negative) at the tactical level can have an immediate, overarching impact. Through technological advancements, media sources and individuals can instantaneously transmit unvetted military actions, with strategic implications, to the world. A hybrid threat will exploit this condition *by utilizing information warfare. Isolated cases of a lack in judgment (Abu Ghraib, a kill team in Afghanistan) and collateral damage from justified military action will have far reaching second and third order effects felt around the world. Similar cases, like the aforementioned IDF and U.S. Army examples, have the potential to degrade the future honorable service of the U.S. Army.*

Warrior-Scholars

The ambiguous future security environment may challenge the Army Profession, but its core attributes will endure. However, is the Army Profession, in its current form, strong enough to defeat the future hybrid threat and achieve victory in future hybrid warfare? To ensure success, the U.S. Army Profession will need to adapt. One possible shift is the transition to a continually learning organization full of warrior scholars. Peter Senge describes a learning

organization as one where “people continually expand their capacity to create the results they truly desire, where new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured, where collective aspiration is set free, and where people are continually learning how to learn together.”⁵⁶

This construct fits well with the U.S. Army. Every member of the Army Profession—the Army soldier, NCO, officer, and civilian—possesses a strong sense of pride in the service they provide to the Nation. In addition, as Army professionals, their focus is always toward finding new and innovative ways to solve problems and improve the organization. Some scholars argue that recent operational challenges in OEF and OIF forced the U.S. Army to learn and adapt to achieve success in counterinsurgency operations.⁵⁷ In this regard, the U.S. Army may already exhibit some characteristics of a learning organization.⁵⁸ However, this concept may only be superficial; the Army has not yet fully embraced the idea. Influential leaders like Maj. Gen. H.R. McMaster and Maj. Gen. Sean MacFarland are examples of warrior-scholars who transitioned their commands into learning organizations focused on thinking and adaptation.⁵⁹ Internalizing the idea of a learning organization in the Army Profession will help to reduce barriers to learn and adapt for the future. Establishing an environment focused on learning will create a climate that promotes scholarly study, critical analysis, and reflection. In this environment, individual learners can flourish and thrive for the greater benefit of the organization.

Another important idea in Senge’s book is the principle of personal mastery.⁶⁰ This principle forms “the essential cornerstone of the learning organization.”⁶¹ In this construct, people commit to their own life-long learning, expand their ability to recognize problems, and then develop plans for success. Over time, individuals increase their work performance as they become vested in achieving goals they helped to shape. This logic incorporates the concept of the warrior-scholar into the Army Profession and increases the collective military and leader expertise of the U.S. Army.

In a recent *Joint Force Quarterly* magazine, Gen. Martin Dempsey introduced concepts on adapting the force. He highlights that military power in the last century focused on measures of weapons and munitions.⁶² However, the future will focus on adapting smartly, and ranking people, in agile organizations, over platforms.⁶³ Gen. Dempsey goes on to highlight that

adapting smartly really means “we have to out-learn and out-think our adversaries.”⁶⁴ The warrior-scholar concept directly aligns with the CJCS’s argument. By investing in the scholarly aspect of the soldier and leader, the U.S. Army can begin to emphasize and invest in human capital instead of platforms. Promotion of life-long learning throughout a soldier’s career from an institutional, experiential, and personal level will pay dividends in an uncertain future. Combating a hybrid threat in a fluid future operational environment will require soldiers and officers who are comfortable in the uncomfortable. Soldiers and leaders who can out-learn and out-think the adversary and adapt more quickly, will prove decisive in hybrid warfare for the U.S. Army.

In a race to adapt smartly, technology presents an effective combat and learning multiplier. Integration of technology into initial entry training, professional military education, and unit level training exercises will greatly enhance the overall learning continuum. Gen. Dempsey, while serving as the TRADOC commander,

Combating a hybrid threat in a fluid future operational environment will require soldiers and officers who are comfortable in the uncomfortable.

commented that “we must make the scrimmage as hard as the game in both the institutional schoolhouse and at home station.”⁶⁵ In an effort to create realistic, future combat conditions for training, technology may well be the key. Within the last few years, TRADOC created the Training Brain Operations Center (TBOC) with this purpose in mind. This center uses technology to gather real world data from current theaters of operations, declassify it, and then manipulate it to replicate the current operational environment to support home station training for units throughout the Army.⁶⁶ In addition, TBOC can use the flexible capabilities of technology to create virtual realities of real-world scenarios from current operations.⁶⁷ This will enable and empower soldiers through training in realistic combat-like environments. Actual, real world scenarios developed with technology can help a warrior-scholar internalize concepts introduced in a traditional classroom environment. The U.S. Army

Engineer School is currently working to push the technology envelope by integrating Virtual Battlespace 2 scenarios and TBOC products into the Engineer Officer Basic and Captains Career Courses. As technology, TBOC, and other organizations like TBOC continue to evolve into the future, the U.S. Army may realize it is just scratching the surface for integrating technology into military education.

What does the future hold? This question is a common one organizations and individuals regularly use for reflection to develop a shared vision for the future. The U.S. Army is no different when it contemplates what is the greatest threat to the Army Profession of 2020 and beyond. The current U.S. security environment is full of uncertainty and unpredictability, with no foreseeable shift in the future. Combating future adversaries will prove

to be the greatest threat to the Army Profession as warfare evolves into a more lethal and aggressive hybrid form. Defeating a hybrid threat and waging hybrid warfare will stretch and strain the *U.S. Army Profession's essential characteristics of military expertise, trust, and honorable service* into a thinking man's war. The experience of the IDF fighting Hezbollah in the 2006 Second Lebanon War serves as an ominous example of how hybrid warfare can test the fundamentals of a professional military. In a race to adapt smartly, the U.S. Army should transition to a learning organization full of warrior-scholars to ensure the vigilant employment of Landpower in the future. The vast possibilities of technology can also provide flexible options to challenge the future generation of U.S. Army Professionals in preparation for the next conflict. **MR**

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Character Development of U.S. Army Leaders

The Laissez-Faire Approach

*Leadership is a potent combination of strategy and character.
But if you must be without one, be without the strategy.¹*

Col. Brian M. Michelson, U.S. Army

— General H. Norman Schwarzkopf Jr.

THE DESIGN, GENERATION, support, and ethical application of land-power often presents military leaders with moral dilemmas that are unique to the profession of arms. In this morally and ethically volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous environment, the quality of a leader's character, who they are morally and ethically as a person, has a direct impact on their ability to make the correct discretionary judgments required by the profession. As the Army moves toward full implementation of the doctrines of both mission command and The Army Profession, the Army will require even more from its leaders at all levels, especially its junior ones.² These requirements fall in two primary areas: first, the Army will grant its leaders additional autonomy in order to "enable disciplined initiative within the commander's intent," and second, the Army will expect leaders to display an even higher level of character in the use of this autonomy.³ Given the importance that the Army places on the character of its leaders, an important question quickly emerges: Will the Army's current approach to developing the personal character of its leaders meet this challenge of its increased expectations? To examine this question, we must consider how the Army defines character, how it develops it, and whether or not its current methods are meeting the challenges facing the Army both today and in the future. We will begin by looking at how the Army approaches character in its current leadership doctrine.

The Army's Doctrinal View of Character: An Institutional Overview

The Army currently defines leadership as "the process of influencing people by providing purpose, direction, and motivation to accomplish the mission and improve the organization."⁴ An Army Leader is simply "anyone who by virtue of assumed role or assigned responsibility inspires and influences people to accomplish organizational goals."⁵ The Army uses

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PHOTO: U.S. Army Gen. H. Norman Schwarzkopf, commander of U.S. Central Command, emerges from a camouflaged trench in the desert while visiting with troops from other countries during Operation Desert Shield, 1 April 1992. (DOD)

a leadership-requirements model to describe its expectations of its leaders in two broad categories: attributes and competencies. Attributes are primarily internal traits and consist of character, presence, and intellect, while competencies are primarily related to actions and skills that consist of leading, developing, and achieving.⁶ While all of these attributes and competencies are important, the only one that the Army views as an inseparable component of successful leadership is character.⁷

As an attribute, the Army defines character as the sum total of an individual's moral and ethical qualities,⁸ the essence of "who a person is, what a person believes, and how a person acts."⁹ The Army defines the four component parts of character as—

- The internalization of the Army Values.
- Empathy.
- Commitment to the Warrior Ethos/Service Ethos.
- Discipline.

In further describing character, the Army identifies two central components of character: values and beliefs.¹⁰ Beliefs are defined as closely held convictions accepted as true, while values are beliefs that shape an individual's actions.¹¹ While personal beliefs and values are central to a leader's identity, it is an individual's personal "understanding of oneself . . . [that] . . . ultimately determines a leader's character."¹² The logical flow of this doctrine is itself weak as it travels from the four component parts of character (Army Values, Empathy, Commitment, and Discipline) to two central components (individual values and beliefs), and ultimately to self awareness.

In summary, the Army clearly states that character is "essential to effective leadership" and that it is based on personal values, beliefs, and ultimately self-understanding.¹³ As essential as character is to leader effectiveness, it is important to understand how the Army approaches character development within the context of its doctrine on leader development, a subordinate component of its leadership doctrine.

Unlike the development of the other five attributes and competencies of the Army leadership-requirements model, Army doctrine identifies character development as primarily an individual responsibility.¹⁴ This key conceptual principle is a hold-over from previous doctrine.¹⁵ It has effectively resulted in a "hands-off," or *laissez-faire*,¹⁶ institutional

approach to the development of personal character in Army leaders.

While the Army clearly describes the character expectations of its leaders in ADRP 1-0, *The Army Profession*, it offers little more than a limited number of sweeping generalities regarding the

...the Army clearly states that character is "essential to effective leadership" and that it is based on personal values, beliefs, and ultimately self-understanding.

behaviors and actions it would like to see at the individual, leader, and unit levels of character development.¹⁷ Furthermore, and most importantly, the Army's collective doctrine is virtually silent regarding the actual process of how individuals should assess and develop their own personal character.¹⁸ This approach, while initially puzzling, makes more sense when we consider the three key assumptions upon which the doctrine is based.

Assumptions Underlying the Army's Doctrine on Character Development

The Army's *laissez-faire* approach to personal character development is based on three important doctrinal assumptions about how soldiers, and specifically leaders, develop personal character:

- Army soldiers and leaders *inherently* know what is right and want to live ethically.¹⁹
- Consistent ethical conduct develops strong character.²⁰
- Leaders will develop personal character commensurate to their increasing responsibilities through self-guided study, reflection, experience, and feedback.²¹

These assumptions serve as a foundation for the Army's doctrinal viewpoint and explain why the Army believes that its *laissez-faire* approach will produce the desired institutional results. These three core assumptions invite two critical questions: Why did the Army make these assumptions about character, and, more importantly, are they

valid? While answering the first question aids in understanding the reasoning behind these assumptions, the far more important question involves their actual validity.

Analysis

In examining why the Army may have made these assumptions, we must consider whether or not the Army has a broadly understood and agreed upon causal theory for how it can assess and develop the personal character of its leaders. If it does, then the selection of assumptions would logically flow from this theory. If, however, the Army does not have a reasonable theoretical foundation, then the acceptance of its assumptions likely resulted from either an accrual of conventional wisdom that lacked critical examination, or the Army simply not realizing that it is making major assumptions in this area.

Unfortunately, a recent study by the Army's Center for the Army Professional Ethic indicates that the latter two possibilities (accrual of unexamined conventional wisdom and/or a lack of awareness of its assumptions) are the more likely expla-

nations. The study indicates that the "policies and governing documents for Army leader development are disjointed and dated. Roles and responsibilities for leader development are not clearly defined and are sometimes conflicting."²² Yet, in its efforts to meet this challenge, "the Army still lacks an integrated Human Development effort . . . [and] . . . internal subject matter expertise in the behavioral, social, and other Human Development sciences," and must therefore "overly rely on external experts to implement crucial programs."²³ In summary, the evidence indicates that the Army lacks a broadly understood and agreed upon causal theory for how it can assess and develop the personal character of its leaders. While this is important, the second critical question remains: "Are these three assumptions about character development valid?"

Assumption: Army soldiers and leaders *inherently* know what is right and want to live ethically. The assumption that soldiers and leaders inherently know what is right and want to live ethically can be challenged both quantitatively and qualitatively. Quantitative data are available from many sources,



U.S. Air Force, Senior Airman Christopher Gross

U.S. Army Sgt. 1st Class Kyle Silvernale, a platoon sergeant with Comanche Company, 1st Battalion, 501st Infantry Regiment (Airborne), yells out commands to his unit while on an air assault in the Chugach Range, Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska, 12 May 2011.

and four in particular provide an objective and broad description of current trends:

- The Army's 2012 report entitled, "Generating Health and Discipline in the Force Ahead of the Strategic Reset," otherwise known as the "Army Gold Book."

- Technical Report 2012-1: The 2011 Center for Army Leadership Annual Survey of Army Leadership (CASAL): Main Findings.

- Technical Report 2011-1: The 2010 Center for Army Leadership Annual Survey of Army Leadership (CASAL): Volume 2, Main Findings.

- Technical Report 2011-3: Antecedents and consequences of toxic leadership in the U.S. Army: A two year review and recommended solutions (Toxic Leadership Report).

Two important caveats must be acknowledged. First, statistics are primarily descriptive and can only be as accurate as the underlying reporting. Many offenses are handled under the Uniformed Code of Military Justice rather than criminal proceedings, and in some cases, offenses simply go unreported. Second, general officer data were not included in either CASAL report referenced above. Even accounting for these mitigating factors, the documented trends are concerning and cast significant doubt on the validity of this first assumption, that Army soldiers and leaders inherently know what is right and want to live ethically.

The Army *Gold Book* indicates that in 2011, 6 percent of the active duty population (42,698 soldiers) committed over 78,000 offenses, including:²⁴

- 2,811 violent felonies.
- 28,289 nonviolent felonies.
- 47,162 misdemeanors.²⁵

In looking at the raw crime statistics reported in the Army *Gold Book* and doing some preliminary analysis, some interesting trends emerge. By comparing the number of offenses relative to their specific segment of the Army population, one can draw two important data points.

First, as rank increases, criminal misconduct decreases. While this could be accounted for in many ways, the causation for this drop is not adequately explained either by the study or by the Army's leader-development model. This drop could be caused by a number of factors, such as the elimination of offenders from the service at lower levels, the maturing effects of age and family responsibilities, and the

results of the Army's past developmental construct for character development. Second, and most importantly, 31 percent of the documented, non-UCMJ, criminal acts in the Army are committed by leaders, specifically NCOs and commissioned officers. This statistic alone casts doubt on the validity of the Army's assumption that "Army soldiers and leaders know what is right and want to live ethically." While these statistics provide a useful starting point, we can gain additional insights to further test the validity of this assumption by considering the two most recent CASAL reports.

The 2010 and 2011 CASAL reports provide rich data regarding the views leaders have on the character attributes (as defined by doctrine) and ethics of other leaders. Time series data from the 2011 CASAL report initially offers some encouraging statistics, especially regarding the improved perception subordinates have of their superior's core competencies.

However, a closer look also indicates that these perceptions have plateaued, in some cases begun to decline. More importantly, nearly a third of subordinates (30 percent) do not believe that their superiors either create a positive environment or lead by example.²⁶ Additional survey data regarding three of the four attributes of an Army leader's character (Army Values, Warrior Ethos, and Empathy) indicates that the respondents still view approximately one fifth of their leaders as marginal or poor in one or more

These disappointing findings highlight the developmental challenge the Army faces...

of these most critical leadership attributes.²⁷ These disappointing findings highlight the developmental challenge the Army faces in getting the actions and conduct of its collective leadership to match espoused values.

The 2010 CASAL report offers interesting insights into the perceived ethics of the Army's leadership. This section was not surveyed in the 2011 report so recent trends are not available, but the 2010 data still provides useful insights. First, over a third (37 percent) of leaders surveyed in 2010 believed that "senior leaders are more concerned



Gen. George C. Marshall, U.S. Army chief of staff, and Gen. Henry “Hap” Arnold, commanding general, U.S. Army Air Forces, arrive at the residence of Prime Minister Winston Churchill for a dinner given by the British prime minister for President Truman and Soviet leader Josef Stalin during the Potsdam Conference, 23 July 1945.

that subordinates achieve results rather than the methods used.”²⁸ Additionally, respondents indicated that while 83 percent believed that their immediate superior demonstrated the Army values, only 72 percent believed that the leaders they interacted with displayed good ethical behavior.²⁹ The perception that over a quarter of Army leaders do not display good ethical behavior runs contrary to the Army’s assumption that “Army soldiers and leaders know what is right and want to live ethically.” While these data provide valuable insights into the current perceptions of Army leaders, an assessment of the validity of this assumption would be premature without examining actual leadership practices as documented in the Army’s 2011 report on toxic leadership.

The 2011 Toxic Leadership Report was the Army’s first exclusive report on toxic leadership and relied heavily on the CASAL reporting data sets from both 2009 and 2010 as well as other academic studies. The report documented several dangerous trends within Army leadership. The report broadly defines toxic leaders as those who “work to promote themselves at the expense of their subordinates, and usually do so without considering long-term ramifications to their subordinates, their unit, and the Army profession.”³⁰

The report frames the corrosive effects of toxic leadership in its impact on “soldier well-being, retention, and mission accomplishment” and clearly states that “the best soldiers are the ones who are most likely to be affected by toxic leaders.”³¹ Paradoxically, toxic leaders are often viewed as effective and reasonably likely to achieve increased responsibilities.³² Perhaps their greatest damage to the Army as a profession comes from the ability of toxic leaders to produce a disturbing and self-replicating legacy whereby 18 percent of subordinates admit to emulating them.³³ As this would be an unflattering self admission, one can only wonder if the actual number of emulators is higher.

In assessing just how much toxic leadership exists in the Army, the survey data are not encouraging. The report documents that “not only is toxic leadership prevalent, but the majority of leaders considered it a problem,” to include:

- 55 percent of field grade officers.
- 61 percent of company grade officers.
- 60 percent of warrant officers.
- 60 percent of senior NCOs.
- 66 percent of junior NCOs.³⁴

While the report clarifies perceptions of toxic leaders and attempts to separate them from “derailed” leaders, “the vast majority of U.S. Army leaders observed a toxic leader in the last year, and over a third indicated that they had first-hand experience with three or more toxic leaders.”³⁵ The study closely links toxic leadership to ethics, which perhaps helps to explain why 12 percent of respondents in a 2011 Army survey stated that “they had been pressured to cover up issues or act unethically.” Eighteen percent “agreed that it would be hazardous to their career to speak up about ethical violations.”³⁶

In examining the data describing the number of toxic leaders as well as the number of “derailed leaders,” one must naturally ask a difficult, but simple question: why does toxic leadership exist to the extent that it does in the force? Answering this question quickly becomes uncomfortable when we consider the possibilities. Perhaps individuals have failed to develop themselves properly and the Army as an institution has failed to properly assess, evaluate and eliminate them, or, alternatively, perhaps that a significant number of Army leaders are simply unprepared and unable to serve in a profession whose “values and standards are too high for just anyone to live by.”³⁷

In considering the evidence provided by leader criminal behavior, the survey data on perceptions of other leader character and ethics, and the degree of toxic leadership in the Army, one cannot help but conclude that the Army’s assumption that soldiers and leaders as a group inherently know what is right and want to live ethically is seriously in question if not conceptually flawed.

Assumption: Consistent ethical conduct develops strong character. The second assumption the Army makes is that individuals develop strong character by engaging in consistently ethical behavior, or more simply, they become good by doing good. This is a reversal of the “Be, Know, Do” pattern in which the “Be,” or character, in conjunction with the “Know,” drives the “Do,” or action. Army doctrine appears to contradict itself when it states that “ethical conduct must reflect genuine values and beliefs.”³⁸ In effect, the Army proposes that actions must be in accordance with our values and beliefs (character), and that character is developed by correct conduct and proper actions. This circular logic produces an

obvious “chicken or the egg” argument; one that Army doctrine neither adequately addresses nor resolves.

While no group of individuals can be expected to be entirely without the moral failings common to humanity, the number of senior leaders felled annually by unethical conduct requires us to at least consider whether the cause in each case was either a brief lapse in judgment, a change in the nature of an individual’s character for the worse, or whether the leader’s true character may have been hidden at lower ranks through pragmatic adherence to rules at the expense of genuine character development. If the latter case is true in some situations, then the implication is that skillful rule following at lower levels can potentially cover character flaws. These individuals were able to provide the appearance, or “presence” in terms of Army leadership doctrine, of character until such time as they were promoted to a higher level of responsibility than their character could handle. This, in effect, could be interpreted as the “Peter Principle” as applied to character in which people are “promoted beyond the level of [their] ability.”³⁹ The weaknesses pointed out by both the beliefs/actions argument (circular logic) along with the Peter



U.S. soldiers and counterparts of the Afghan National Army halt while marching during Operation Saguaro in Bargay valley, Kunar Province, Afghanistan, 27 February 2012. (U.S. Army, Sgt. Trey Harvey)

Principle (promotion beyond ability) as applied to character serve to cast serious doubt on the adequacy of the assumption that actions develop character.

Assumption: Leaders will develop personal character commensurate to their increasing responsibilities through self-guided study, reflection, experience, and feedback. The assumption that leaders will develop personal character commensurate to their increasing responsibilities through self-guided study, reflection, experience, and feedback not only raises some tricky questions that are not adequately answered, but also conflicts with current Army survey data. Even assuming that leaders will find adequate time to effectively develop their character as the Army expects, several important questions need to be addressed:

- How does a leader objectively assess his/her own character and then meet the Army's expectation for developing it appropriately?
- Does what an individual studies and reflects upon actually matter? To wit, is studying the philosophical or religious teachings of Buddha, Mohammed, Ayman al-Zawahiri, Plato, Immanuel Kant, Jesus Christ, Nietzsche, or Confucius of equal benefit and value?
- Is unguided reflection useful without the application of adequate critical thinking skills and mentorship?

Does what an individual studies and reflects upon actually matter? To wit, is studying the philosophical or religious teachings of Buddha, Mohammed, Ayman al-Zawahiri, Plato, Immanuel Kant, Jesus Christ, Nietzsche, or Confucius of equal benefit and value?

- What should commanders be doing to ensure leaders have the correct experiential learning opportunities to develop their personal character?

Army doctrine is nearly silent on what to study and offers remarkably little insight or assistance for

self development to either leaders or to the commanders charged with assisting them. While some commanders publish recommended reading lists, there is little evidence that the lists are actually helpful. The 2011 CASAL report documents that 33 percent of Army leaders do not know “specifically what they need to do to develop as a leader.” That statistic includes 44 percent of company grade officers.⁴⁰ This finding is rather surprising as it directly contradicts respondent data indicating a strong belief among leaders in the effectiveness of their own self development efforts.⁴¹ This set of statistics is compounded by data indicating that the leader attribute of “develops others” continues to be the lowest rated core competency across all levels [of leadership]” and leads one to wonder if the Army is not, in fact, expecting the “blind to lead the blind.”⁴² Survey data reinforces this conclusion indicating that only 40 percent of leaders believe that the development efforts sponsored by their units have had a positive impact on their development. Sixty percent believe that the unit does not make time for self-development, and nearly half believe that there is little “support for leader development at the unit level.”⁴³ Only 59 percent of respondents believe that their superiors deliberately identify and place them in experiential leader development opportunities. In summation, only 61 percent of Army leaders are perceived as effective at developing the next generation of leaders.⁴⁴ Formal counseling and informal mentoring are clearly Army weaknesses that limit the ability of Army leaders to reach their full potential in all areas, to include their personal character.

Three other factors warrant mention. First, the Army's thinking on this assumption suffers from the same inadequacy discussed earlier regarding the apparent lack of an accepted and understood causal theory of *how* leaders develop character. Second, whose paradigm should a young leader accept and model regarding personal character? In the competing marketplace of useful developmental approaches, which one, or ones, does the Army accept? Which ones does it reject, and why? Third, survey data from the 2012 CASAL study indicates that “Prepares Self” is among the top three highest rated leadership competencies.⁴⁵ This initially seems to contradict the previous negative data offered on criminal activity, views on leader character and ethics, and the exercise

of toxic leadership. These seemingly disparate statistics make far more sense if one considers the probability that respondents associated preparing themselves for increased responsibility with tactical and technical skills only, while perhaps not adequately considering their personal character as an area that should be, or even needed to be, improved.

The potential for the “blind leading the blind,” the lack of a causal theory for character development, and the disconnect between survey data regarding “develops self” and actual character-related behaviors, all cast serious doubt on the validity of the assumption that leaders will adequately develop themselves to a level commensurate with their responsibilities.

Some Conclusions

This paper began by asking whether or not the Army’s approach to developing the personal character of its leaders would meet the challenges posed by implementing the new doctrines of mission command and The Army Profession. While the Army clearly describes what it wants in terms of leader character and behavior, the actual approach it uses to assess and develop the personal character of its leaders is best described as *laissez-faire* in practice.

The primary conclusion of this paper is that the Army’s current *laissez-faire* approach is insufficient to effectively meet the challenges posed by implementation of either mission command or the principles presented in ADRP 1-0, *The Army Profession*. While the topic of character development is often emotionally charged and exceptionally complex, the Army’s own data and statistics point to several serious inconsistencies between what the Army’s doctrine maintains and the documented results it is producing. While many specific observations could be drawn from this research, the following four conclusions emerge as the most compelling and most urgently in need of both attention and action.

Conclusion one. *The Army does not have a broadly understood, and agreed upon, causal theory for how it can assess and develop the personal character of its leaders.*

The Army has neither an agreed upon method to assess and develop the personal character of

its leaders (vice merely enforcing behaviors) nor an adequate framework to empower leaders in guiding either their own or their subordinate’s character development.

Conclusion two. *The Army’s three primary assumptions about the development of personal character are questionable at best, are potentially seriously flawed, and should be immediately re-examined.* In light of current behavioral and cultural trends within society toward moral diversity and ethical relativism, the Army should immediately re-evaluate both its base assumptions and its approach to character development. If these assumptions are found not to be valid, as suggested here, the Army will have to adjust its doctrinal approach to character development to achieve the desired leader developmental goals.

Conclusion three. *The Army does not know, and cannot know with confidence, if the current method of character development will achieve its desired institutional goals.* The lack of a broadly understood and agreed upon framework for how to assess and develop personal character reduces the Army’s ability to evaluate its own efforts in this regard to little more than conjecture. Even the findings of its most recent CASAL report are hotly contested. The quantitative data cited in this paper points to troubling trends. Without a well reasoned framework and means for the assessment and development of personal character, +it seems implausible that the Army will ever know with confidence whether or not its current approach to character development is effective.

Conclusion four. *The Army is assuming excessive operational and institutional risk if it does not meet the challenge of developing the personal character of its leaders.* The Army does an exceptional job in developing the technical and tactical abilities of its leaders. And yet, despite character being an inseparable component of successful leadership, the Army seemingly believes that individuals will somehow develop their personal character to the level desired by the Army with little or no clear guidance. This approach carries with it exceptional and largely unarticulated risk to the institution in two primary areas. First, service members at all levels have watched in dismay as far too many senior leaders have failed their own tests of character. In every case, there was an

immediate and significant impact to the mission at hand. Second, in the age of mass media, breaches of character by all ranks will be highlighted evermore widely, clearly, and severely to the citizens we serve. The corrosive effects of these breaches of character strike at the very heart of the Army as a profession and the trust relationships that are so vital both internally to the military and externally with the nation.

A Clear and Direct Challenge

These observations and conclusions coupled with the prevailing laissez-faire approach to character development document a clear and direct challenge to the Army. But they also provide the Army with an exceptional opportunity to shape its younger generation of leaders if it acts soon. Given that the Millennial Generation is “open to change”⁴⁶ and the U.S. military is one of the most respected institutions in America,⁴⁷ the Army would likely find a receptive audience to

a fresh and more involved role in the character development of military leaders. A statement from the recent U.S. Army Profession Campaign Annual Report acknowledges this opportunity well: “Army Professionals are looking for the Army to refocus on professional values. Army Professionals voiced broad support for developing, training, and educating specific institutional characteristics that define the Army as a profession, as well as listing the individual attributes that identify Army personnel as professionals.”⁴⁸

The Army will do the profession and the nation a great service by taking a hard and sober look at the role the Army should play in the development of the personal character of its leaders. If the Army does not meet this challenge, it will accept additional risk to mission accomplishment and its professional credibility. Yet within this challenge lies a great opportunity to shape the coming generation of young leaders who may be far more willing to grow than some might think. **MR**

NOTES

1. Kevin Kruse, “Norman Schwarzkopf: 10 Quotes on Leadership and War,” *Forbes*, 27 December 2012. <http://www.forbes.com/sites/kevinkruse/2012/12/27/norman-schwarzkopf-quotes/> (accessed 17 June 2013).

2. Mission command is the exercise of authority and direction by the commander using mission orders to enable disciplined initiative within the commander’s intent to empower agile and adaptive leaders in the conduct of unified land operations.” U.S. Army Doctrinal Reference Publication (ADRP) 6-0, *Mission Command* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office [GPO], May 2012), 1.

3. *Ibid.*, 1.

4. U.S. Army Doctrinal Publication (ADP) 6-22, *Army Leadership* (Washington, DC: GPO, September 2012), 1.

5. *Ibid.*

6. *Ibid.*, 5-6.

7. ADRP 6-22, *Army Leadership* (Washington, DC: GPO, August 2012), 3-1.

8. *Ibid.*, 3-1.

9. ADP 6-22, 5.

10. ADRP 6-22, 3-6. Note: Army doctrine is somewhat confusing on this topic as it tends to use character and integrity interchangeably and clearly emphasizes that integrity, defined as the ability to do what is right, legally and morally, is also a critical part of a leader’s character. See ADP 6-22, 6.

11. *Ibid.*, 3-6.

12. *Ibid.*, 3-5 through 3-6.

13. ADRP 6-22, 3-1.

14. *Ibid.*

15. U.S. Army Field Manual 6-22, *Army Leadership* (Washington, DC: GPO, October 2006), 4-12.

16. Merriam-Webster, *laissez-faire*: “A philosophy or practice characterized by a usually deliberate abstention from direction or interference especially with individual freedom of choice and action.” <<http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/laissez-faire>> (4 March 2013).

17. Per ADRP 6-22, Army doctrine describes character development as occurring at three levels: individual, leader, and organizational/unit.

At the individual level, the process of building character involves “day-to-day experience, education, self-development, developmental counseling, coaching and mentoring” in which individuals develop themselves through “continual study, reflection, experience, and feedback.” Adoption of “good values and making ethical choices” is a critical part of this process.

At the second level, leaders are expected to “encourage, support, and assess the efforts of their people,” serve as the organization’s “ethical standard bearer,” and set a proper ethical climate. In building a proper climate, leaders are assisted by “the chaplain, staff judge advocate, inspector general, and equal opportunity specialist.”

At the organizational level, units contribute to character development when their “ethical climate nurtures ethical behavior.” This ethical environment will cause soldiers to “think, feel and act ethically,” and thereby “internalize the aspects of sound character.” Army doctrine states that “consistently doing the right thing forges strong character.” While all these aspects of character development are important, the Army is committed to the view that the ultimate determinant of a leader’s character remains founded on an understanding of oneself.

18. ADRP 1, *The Army Profession*, and ADP 6-22, *Army Leadership*, do not specifically discuss the issue of character development. ADRP 6-22 says virtually nothing on the subject beyond the importance of “continual study, reflection, experience, and feedback.” The chapter discussing the leader competency of “Develops,” and more specifically, the sub-section on “Develops Self” provides no further guidance. Additional clarification is not offered in ADP 7-0, *Training Units and Leaders*, its companion document ADRP 7-0, *The Commander’s Handbook for Unit Leader Development*, or the *Virtual Improvement Center Catalog on Leader Development*.

19. ADP 6-22, 3-6.

20. *Ibid.*

21. *Ibid.*, 3-5.

22. U.S. Army, *US Army Profession Campaign Annual Report, April 2, 2012*, 12.

23. *Ibid.*, 16.

24. This number appears to include Reserve Component soldiers who served on active duty during the year as otherwise the 6 percent figure would indicate active duty end strength of over 700,000.

25. U.S. Department of the Army, *Generating Health and Discipline in the Force Ahead of the Strategic Reset* (Washington, DC: GPO, January 2012), 97.

26. U.S. Department of the Army, *Technical Report 2012-1: The 2011 Center for Army Leadership Annual Survey of Army Leadership* (CASAL): Main Findings (Washington, DC: GPO, May 2012), 8.

27. *Ibid.*, 12.

28. U.S. Department of the Army, *Technical Report 2011-1: The 2010 Center for Army Leadership Annual Survey of Army Leadership* (CASAL): Volume 2, Main Findings (Washington, DC: GPO, May 2012), 41.

29. *Ibid.*, 40.

30. *Ibid.*, 2.

31. U.S. Department of the Army, *Technical Report 2011-3: Antecedents and Consequences of Toxic Leadership in the U.S. Army: A Two Year Review and Recommended Solutions* (Washington, DC: GPO, June 2011), 2.

32. *Ibid.*, 20.

33. *Ibid.*

34. *Ibid.*, 21.

35. *Ibid.*, 35.

36. Ibid., 23.
37. Don M. Snider, "The Moral Corrosion within Our Military Professions," 27 November 2012, <<http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/index.cfm/articles/The-Moral-Corrosion-within-Our-Military-Professions/2012/11/27>> (13 December 2012).
38. ADRP 6-22, 3-6.
39. Wikipedia, Peter Principle: The Peter Principle is a belief that, in an organization where promotion is based on achievement, success, and merit, that organization's members will eventually be promoted beyond their level of ability. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peter_Principle> (22 February 2013).
40. U.S. Army, *Technical Report 2012-1*, 59.
41. Ibid.
42. U.S. Army, *Technical Report 2011-1*, iii.
43. U.S. Army, *Special Report 2011-1*, 2.
44. Ibid., 1.
45. U.S. Army, *Technical Report 2012-1*, iv.
46. The Pew Research Center, "Millennials: Confident. Connected. Open to Change," 24 February 2010, <<http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2010/02/24/millennials-confident-connected-open-to-change/>> (January 15, 2013).
47. The Pew Research Center, "War and Sacrifice in the Post-9/11 Era," 5 October 2011, <<http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2011/10/05/war-and-sacrifice-in-the-post-911-era/6/#chapter-5-the-public-and-the-military>> (15 January 2013).
48. U.S. Army, *US Army Profession Campaign Annual Report, April 2, 2012*, 6.



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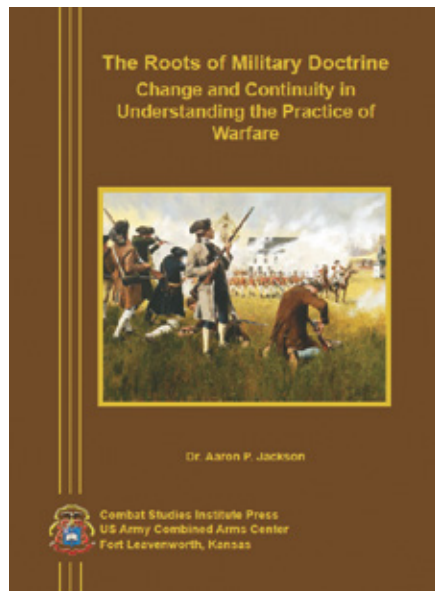
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The Trust Lapse

How Our Profession's Bedrock is Being Undermined

Maj. Joshua Glonek, U.S. Army

WHEN AMERICAN GROUND forces' direct involvement in Vietnam ended in 1973, some soldiers returned home to be disparaged and forgotten by their fellow citizens. Many of the soldiers who were denigrated for their involvement in the war were compelled into service because of the draft. Public trust in the Army was at a low, with many blaming the military for the war as much as they blamed the civilian policymakers whose orders the military was carrying out.¹ Racial divisions among soldiers, rampant drug use, and poor leadership persisted in the Army even after completion of the war. Recognizing the need for major changes, the Army became an all-volunteer force and made major modifications to its training methods, weapons systems, and doctrine.

Then chief of staff of the Army Gen. William Westmoreland began the task of repairing the troubled Army of the Vietnam era. The focus of his reforms was what he termed "professionalism" which involved making improvements in training, education, and individual and organizational competence.² Over the next two decades the Army worked hard to improve its professionalism, and by the 1990s, the Army had established itself as one of the country's most respected professions. Fundamental to this rise in the Army profession was the establishment of trust—trust between the Army and the American people, and trust within the Army between soldiers and their leaders. As we contemplate the future of the Army profession into 2020 and beyond, we must examine the current state of trust that exists in our profession. I argue that the trust our Army has worked so hard to build has been diminished over the past dozen years of war, and we must stop that erosion before it undermines the force.

Numerous Army leaders have recognized the need to refocus and retrain our force in what it means to be a member of the Army Profession. The Profession of Arms Campaign conducted by Gen. Martin Dempsey in 2011, formally began this discussion.³ With the war in Iraq now complete, and the war in Afghanistan seemingly coming to an end, now is the time to resolve our professional shortcomings before it is too late. There is nowhere better to start than with the bedrock of our profession—trust.

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PHOTO: President Lyndon B. Johnson, accompanied by Gen. William Westmoreland, decorates a soldier, at Cam Rahn Bay, Vietnam, 26 October 1966. (National Archives, 2987665)

The Importance of Trust

The chief of staff of the Army, Gen. Raymond Odierno, refers to trust as the *sine qua non*, or the essential component, of our Profession of Arms.⁴ Army doctrine defines trust as “assured reliance on the character, ability, strength, or truth of someone or something.”⁵ In order for our profession to be effective, trust must exist between soldiers, between soldiers and their leaders, and between the Army and the nation. This trust is not simply given to us by virtue of putting on a uniform, but rather it is earned by becoming experts in our profession and demonstrating the moral courage that appropriately reflects the values of the American people. The trust our Army Profession has earned is not something we take for granted. Our history allows us to reflect upon times when our profession was not in high regard. We do not want to return to those times, nor do I think we are necessarily in danger of that, but as professionals we should aspire to obtain the

highest levels of trust possible, both internal and external to our Army. Any degradation of this trust, no matter how small, can be harmful. Although marginal changes due to what might be considered “isolated incidents” may seem insignificant, over time the cumulative effect will take its toll.

A decline in the trust between soldiers and their leaders diminishes the Army’s effectiveness. As Gen. Robert Cone has written, “If our trust as leaders is lost with our subordinates, we cannot effectively lead and will ultimately fail in our mission.”⁶ Soldiers who do not trust their leaders are primarily compelled to follow orders because of fear of consequences. This is dangerous for any organization, particularly one that is in the business of fighting wars. Soldiers motivated only by the threat of punishment, will weigh the penalty of refusal against the consequences of following an order.

If the soldier believes there is a great personal risk to following the order, then he might conclude



(U.S. Army)

U.S. Army 2nd Lt. Omar Vasquez, 2nd Squadron, 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment, points out where targets are going to be set up for Iraqi Army troop training to U.S. soldiers with 2nd Squadron, 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment, in Wasit, Iraq, 20 October 2010.

it is better to accept disciplinary action than to follow the order and risk being wounded or killed.⁷ However, soldiers who have developed a strong trust in their leaders take actions directed at accomplishment of the mission regardless of the personal danger they face. They trust that their leaders are competent, that the mission is essential, and that their leaders have taken all available measures to minimize risk to their soldiers.

A lack of trust between the Army and the American people can be just as harmful. The existence of an effective all-volunteer force is only possible if Americans are confident that joining the Army profession allows them to be part of a calling that cares for its members while providing for the defense of the nation. The president and Congress must trust in our ethic and our effectiveness to allow us the autonomy and the resources we require to maintain the readiness necessary to fight and win.⁸ If we lose that trust with the American people then we will also lose the support of our civilian leaders, making it more difficult for us to fulfill our obligation of defending the nation and the Constitution as we have sworn to do.

Civil-Military Relations

Civilian leaders, duly elected by the people, have ultimate authority over the Army.⁹ This concept of civilian control of the military is derived from our Constitution and is essential to maintaining an effective relationship between the Army and the nation. As experts in military operations, we have an obligation to advise our civilian leaders in matters relevant to national security. However, as Army leaders, we must understand the bounds of the political process in which we operate. As Samuel Huntington asserts in his theory of civil-military relations, objective civilian control of the military allows for this relationship to exist by creating a highly professional officer corps that stands ready to carry out the wishes of any civilian group that secures legitimate authority within the state.¹⁰ Military professionals must understand and respect this relationship. Failure to support the civilian leadership or establishing a climate of insolence toward elected officials is insubordination and is contrary to our professional norms.

The most prominent and recent case of a breakdown in our norms for civil-military relations

resulted in Gen. Stanley McChrystal, the commander of the International Security and Assistance Forces in Afghanistan, stepping down from his position. A 2010 *Rolling Stone* article anonymously quoted McChrystal's aides as criticizing President Barack Obama and his team.¹¹ The article portrays a climate in which McChrystal and his staff displayed contempt toward the Obama administration, which they doubted as being competent enough to effec-

...as Army leaders, we must understand the bounds of the political process in which we operate.

tively manage the war in Afghanistan. Although the accuracy of the story has been called into question, McChrystal has stated that "regardless of how I judged the story for fairness or accuracy, responsibility was mine."¹² Within hours of the article being publically released, Gen. McChrystal was on a plane back to Washington to deliver his resignation to the president.

Regardless of how out of context some of the statements made by McChrystal's staff may have been taken, the *Rolling Stone* article highlighted a tension that existed between the Army and its civilian authorities as to how best execute a war that was becoming increasingly unpopular with the American people. These types of public disagreements are harmful to civil-military relations and degrade the trust between the Army and the nation.

Less overt insubordination toward civilian authority can also damage civil-military relations. Failing to offer civilian leadership with a sufficient range of options is one way military leaders can promote their desired course of action. In 2009, it became evident that a wedge existed between some military leadership and the Obama administration. A number of leaks to the media, which revealed the military's position that larger numbers of troops were needed in Afghanistan to be successful, made some in the administration claim the military was attempting to box-in the president during the strategy review process.¹³ Although the input from

military professionals is vital to the development of effective national security policy, military leaders must ultimately understand the final decision rests in the hands of the president. Any action that creates the appearance that the military is trying to manipulate this process dilutes the credibility of the advice given by military officials and degrades the trust between civilian and military leaders.

As military professionals, we possess a unique set of expertise of value to policymakers who formulate and execute defense policy, but we must prevent ourselves from taking action that is inconsistent or contrary to the decisions that are ultimately made by our civilian leadership. A 2010 Army White Paper elaborated on this concept stating “Military Professionals . . . must also develop the judgment to recognize when the bounds of the policy making process might be breached. When acts of dissent take them beyond representation and advice into policy advocacy or even public dissent, they must recognize that they have gone beyond the limits of their uniformed role and have exhibited behaviors that potentially undermine the authority of those elected officials responsible for policy formulation and execution.”¹⁴ Then Secretary of Defense Robert Gates also addressed this topic in a speech to the Association of the U.S. Army, stating “it is imperative that all of us taking part in these deliberations—civilian and military alike—provide our best advice to the president candidly but privately.”¹⁵ If we as military leaders fail to live up to this civil-military norm, we foolishly challenge the civilian control of our military and further diminish the trust in our profession.

Military leaders believe their expertise and competence allows them to provide the best advice to civilian policy makers in matters of national security. They may even think their expertise in an area is superior to civilian policymakers who are empowered with the responsibility to make the final decisions. When decisions are made that are contrary to the military professionals’ advice, they may conclude that a poor national security decision has been made and in some cases they may be correct. However, as scholar Marybeth Ulrich points out, “military institutions in service to democratic societies should espouse as a fundamental norm of civil-military relations that the profession’s first obligation is to do no harm to the state’s democratic

institutions.”¹⁶ In other words, military professionals in a democratic society are obligated to tolerate poor policy making outcomes to preserve the more important relationship that exists between the military and society. This is what Secretary Gates was alluding to when he warned military officials to offer candid, but private advice. Failing to do so hurts the credibility of our profession and degrades civil-military relations.

Aside from the tension that has been created in recent years between military and civilian leadership, there is another aspect of the civil-military relationship that is a growing cause for concern. Representative Ike Skelton said the following in 2010: “My greatest concern is that a chasm will develop between those who protect our freedoms and those who are being protected. I’ve often talked about what I perceive to be a civil-military gap, a lack of understanding between civilians and the military that has grown in the era of an all-volunteer force.”¹⁷ A growing separation between the military and civilian populations can be harmful for an all-volunteer force that derives its legitimacy from being a subset of the general population.



1st Lt. Donald Maloy, Company D, 1st Battalion, 8th Infantry Regiment, from Fort Carson, Colo., talks with Iraqi Army Cpt. Zature Molood Hasaal, commander of 1st Company, 4th Battalion, 2nd Division, during an IA-led raid on a Mosul, Iraq, neighborhood, 1 April 2008. (U.S. Army)

A recent study from the Pew Research Center looked to further investigate if a separation between the military and society really does exist to the extent Ike Skelton claims. The study finds that during the past decade, as the military has been engaged in the longest period of sustained conflict in the nation's history, just one-half of one percent of American adults have served on active duty at any given time.¹⁸

This represents a massive change from previous wars our nation fought where the burden of war-time service was distributed much more evenly across the country. As the average American becomes increasingly separated from the military, personal connections between civilians and soldiers are lost, and the military is viewed more as a tool of the government than as an organization of fathers, mothers, sons, and daughters who have volunteered to serve their country.

Just as the American population has seen a decline in military participation, so has the U.S. Congress. The recently convened 113th Congress contains the least amount of veterans serving since World War II. In 1977, shortly after the Vietnam War, 412 veterans were sworn into Congress, but in today's Congress only 106 members have any military experience.¹⁹ Less representation in Congress, particularly during a time of inevitable budgetary reductions, can foster an attitude among the armed forces that the dozen years of war fighting the military has done on behalf of the country is under-appreciated by our elected representatives.

A report by the Triangle Institute for Security Studies found that less than half of the civilian population believes military leaders can be relied upon to respect civilian control of the military.²⁰ Furthermore, only one-third of civilians believe the military shares the same values as the American people. More than 20 percent report they would be disappointed if their children joined the military.²¹

Army doctrine states that the trust between the Army and the American people is based upon a mutual confidence; soldiers swear an oath to the Constitution to serve the nation before all other considerations, and in return soldiers ask that fellow citizens remember their sacrifice.²² The majority of Americans do still support the military, but the growing separation between the military and society is dwindling this support. As sociologist David

Segal has stated, "The military is at war, but the country is not . . . and the military resents that."²³

Former Secretary of Defense Gates in a 2010 speech at Duke University echoed many of these sentiments. He stated that although veterans from Iraq and Afghanistan have been supported when they came home, "for most Americans the wars remain an abstraction—a distant and unpleasant series of news items that do not affect them personally."²⁴ Even after the tragic events of 9/11, which highlighted the importance of having an effective and prepared military, Secretary Gates said, "in the absence of a draft, for a growing number of Americans, service in the military, no matter how laudable, has become something for other people to do."²⁵

Trust within the Force

Our Army has been given great autonomy by our civilian leadership because of the high moral standards we have set for ourselves. We understand this independence in policing our organization can be quickly taken away if we fail to live up to the expectations we have established. The past dozen years of war have provided a number of examples of situations in which members of our Army have acted in ways completely contradictory to our professional norms. The abuse of detainees at Abu Ghraib, the rape-murders in Mahmudiyah, Iraq, and the "sport" killings of three Afghan civilians are just some of the examples of the severe moral failings of some who serve within our ranks.

In an Army where over a million soldiers have deployed to combat, some multiple times, it is naïve to think there will not be instances where individual soldiers take actions that bring discredit upon our country. In today's world where the media is regularly embedded with military units and has the capability of quickly disseminating information, any unethical act committed by American soldiers is likely to be shared with the rest of the world in a matter of hours. In most instances our civilian leadership is quick to condemn the actions of U.S. service members who have committed atrocities and point out their conduct is not representative of the values instilled in our fighting men and women.

As unacceptable as these tragic events may be, our society does seem to recognize there are some who are unable to emotionally and psychologically manage the stress of war. Unlike the My Lai

Massacre of 1968, where U.S. soldiers killed over 300 Vietnamese civilians, the tragic failings some of our soldiers have made during the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan are seen more as individual shortcomings than as a collective military failing. However, the Army does face a more institutionally prevalent problem in the declining “health of the force” that has occurred over the past several years.

Forefront in these problems is the escalation in suicides among the military. In 2012, 182 soldiers in the Army committed suicide, outpacing the 176 soldiers who were killed in combat while serving in Operation Enduring Freedom.²⁶ Former Vice Chief of Staff of the Army Gen. Lloyd Austin III, who became personally involved in finding ways to reduce Army suicide rates, has stressed the importance of recognizing this is an Army-wide problem that requires involvement from commanders at all levels.²⁷ Many attribute this rise in suicides to the stresses being endured by soldiers who are deployed to war. Research has shown the connection between combat stress and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and the adverse consequences on the mental health of returning veterans.²⁸ While the connection between combat and PTSD is clear, the link between combat and suicide is not. A recently published study that sought to understand the contributing factors to suicide found that military related variables, such as whether or not a soldier had been deployed or exposed to combat, showed no significant relationship to suicide.²⁹ In fact, of all the soldiers who took their own lives last year, over a third were never deployed.³⁰

Although it is not clear as to what exactly is causing the increased rates of suicide in the Army, this phenomenon may reflect the moral erosion of our profession by indicating a decline in trust between soldiers and their leaders. The Army offers countless resources to soldiers to help counsel them through difficult situations. So why are so many soldiers choosing to end their own lives rather than accept this help and work through their problems? By trying to understand the suicidal soldier’s situation, one can imagine that trust issues, especially violations of trust would play a part. If a suicidal soldier trusted that their peers and leaders would provide them the support they needed to resolve their problems (most often associated with relationships gone bad), perhaps suicidal ideation would not drive them to act.

Rather than appear weak or undesirable to the team, they take what they perceive to be the easy way out.

Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Gen. Martin Dempsey, has identified the importance of regaining trust within our profession as a way to solve the Army’s suicide problem stating, “If we get to the point . . . where young men and women trust each other enough that if they feel these impulses, that they will approach a battle buddy . . . with their fears, their anxieties, their stresses and that the battle buddy cares enough about them to trust the chain of command to deal with them, then I think we’ll make a difference.”³¹ Regaining the trust between soldiers and their leaders is the first step in finding a solution to this problem.

The decline in the health of our force is also evident in the unprofessional levels of sexual harassment and sexual assault that is occurring within the ranks. Since 2006, reports of sex crimes in the Army have increased by 28 percent.³² While some of this rise may be due to an increased willingness to report these crimes, the current levels of sexual harassment and sexual assault indicate a severe lack of professional conduct in our Army. These types of crimes, particularly those that go unpunished, have a corrosive effect on Army units. Sexual crimes destroy unit cohesion and therefore readiness. A 2012 study by the Department of Veterans Affairs found

These types of crimes, particularly those that go unpunished, have a corrosive effect on Army units.

the vast majority of soldiers who reported being sexually harassed or assaulted stated their offenders were fellow service members, nearly half of whom held a higher rank.³³

Intolerably high levels of suicide and sex crimes are just two contributing factors to what Don Snider, a scholar on professional military ethics, calls a “Moral Corrosion” within our military profession. Snider’s explanation for this decline is that the Armed Forces focused too much on developing individual and unit military competence at the expense of developing moral character.³⁴

Perhaps the most surprising indication of the decline in morality that has occurred throughout our Army reflects in the extremely disturbing trend of moral and ethical failures of senior leaders. Those individuals promoted to the highest ranks have an obligation to hold themselves to the highest standards. Actions contrary to the values of our organization have the effect of undermining the professional norms. Misconduct from the top sends a signal to the entire force that our personal wants and desires can come before our loyalty to our professional military ethic. They demonstrate that the moral code we so frequently tout is more of a facade than a foundation, form over substance.

Recent offenses committed by senior Army officers such as sexual misconduct, inappropriate use of government resources, fraud, and bigamy have contributed to an increasing cynicism among soldiers. Although the vast majority of senior officers hold themselves to high standards, the recent rash of inappropriate conduct has fostered a perception that our senior officer corps suffers from a sense of entitlement.

Even David Petraeus, the man who so many pointed to as one of the greatest military leaders of this generation, succumbed to temptations by engaging in an extramarital affair. All across the Army, soldiers, NCOs and officers were left wondering why someone who has commanded at the highest levels of the Army would allow himself to be put into such a situation and violate the moral code he advocated throughout his career in the Army. Col. Mike Meese, who served as a top staff member for Petraeus, best described the sentiment felt among the military community upon learning of Petraeus's affair saying, "It was a punch in the gut for those of us who know him."³⁵ Much has been written in recent years criticizing America's general officers as careerists, incompetents, and mediocrities who are unwilling to provide our civilian leaders with an accurate assessment of the wars.³⁶ The proponents of these views claim there is a systematic problem in the way our military promotes and educates senior level officers, which has resulted in junior and mid-grade officers losing confidence in their general officers.

Don Snider refers to this as a "trust gap" that has developed where junior leaders feel they have been let-down by their superiors.³⁷ If this gap already

exists, then it is only widened by the recent string of immoral and unethical conduct by some of our senior leaders. For our senior Army officers to be described as "incompetent" is bad enough, but much worse is for them to be characterized as hypocritical and unwilling to abide by the same professional standards soldiers are expected to live by.

A Threat to Our Profession

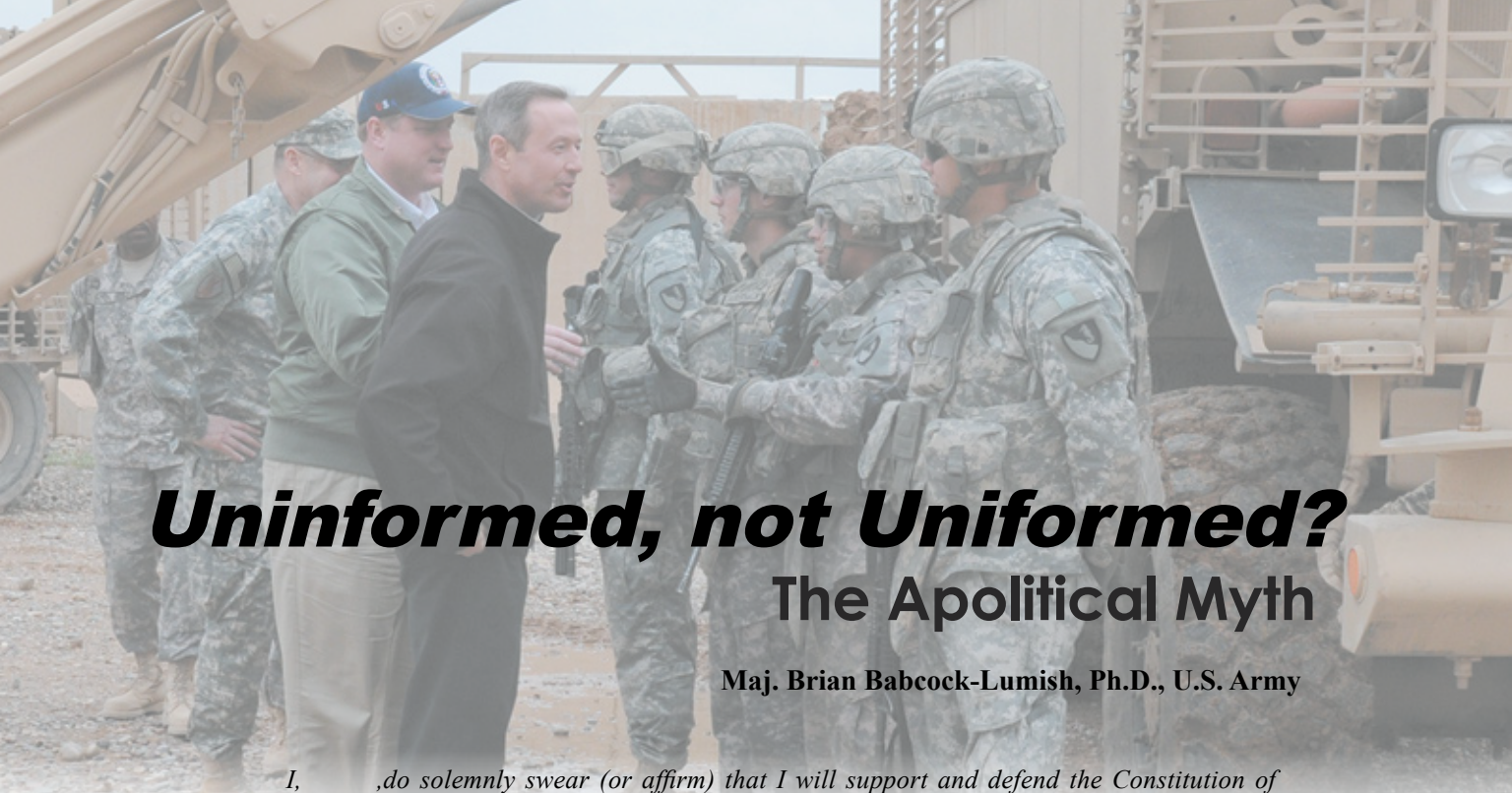
As we look forward to the Army of 2020 and beyond, it is important for our Army to recognize these areas where we have fallen short of our professional expectations and ultimately lost some of the trust our Army Profession has worked so hard to obtain. If we claim our ethos is built upon a foundation of trust, then we must take action to correct our deficiencies that have started to undermine the bedrock of our profession.

Our civil-military relations need to be repaired to restore the trust between the Army and the American people. Military leaders must provide candid advice to civilian officials without overstepping their bounds. When decisions are made, they should be faithfully supported. To maintain a healthy all-volunteer force, we should also find ways to reach out to our neighboring communities to reverse the separation between soldiers and civilians that has been occurring.

Additionally, we need to reflect on the state of morality in our Army and find ways to improve the present situation. The high levels of suicide in the Army are unacceptable for a profession that prides itself on esprit de corps, discipline, and pride. Escalating rates of sexual harassment and sexual assault continue to diminish the trust between soldiers, which is vital to developing cohesive and effective units. The conduct of our senior officer corps must change if we hope for soldiers to take the Army Values seriously. Our best leaders understand the importance of our Army being a learning organization. Steps are already being taken to try to rectify some of these issues, but we must start by underscoring to the Army the importance of trust to our profession. As we continue to reeducate our units on the fundamental importance of the Profession of Arms, we must ensure all leaders are directly involved and accountable. Now is the time to address these challenges. Ultimately, the bedrock of our profession is at stake. **MR**

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Uninformed, not Uniformed? **The Apolitical Myth**

Maj. Brian Babcock-Lumish, Ph.D., U.S. Army

*I, _____, do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; that I take this obligation freely, without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion; and that I will well and faithfully discharge the duties of the office on which I am about to enter. So help me God.*¹

The Federal Officer's Oath

The views expressed in this article are those of the author and not of the Department of Defense.

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PHOTO: Governors Chet Culver, from Iowa, and Martin O'Malley, from Maryland, greet soldiers from the 573rd Clearance Company, 1st Engineer Battalion, from White Sands, N.M., at Contingency Operating Base Speicher, Iraq, 27 February 2010. (U.S. Army, Spec. Jessica Zullig)

FOR SERVING U.S. military officers in particular, the distinction between political *understanding* and political *involvement* is crucial to fulfillment of their professional obligations embodied in the oath. According to Army Doctrine Publication (ADP) 1, *The Army*:

Through this oath, soldiers affirm subordination to the Nation's elected civilian leadership and *abstain from* public political involvement. Soldiers voluntarily give up freedoms fellow citizens take for granted and become subject to military discipline and regulations. Soldiers accept unlimited liability in the service of our Nation. This becomes the foundation of our profession.²

While accepting the necessity of U.S. Army soldiers' abstention from "public political involvement," or partisanship, this essay argues for more nuanced understanding of what it means to be *political* while serving in uniform and suggests that the current aversion to "politics," broadly conceived, creates a paradox that threatens the effectiveness of the Army in the decades to come.

We conflate "political" and "partisan" at our Nation's peril. As ADP 1 notes:

The land domain is the most complex of the domains, because it addresses humanity—its cultures, ethnicities, religions, and politics . . . Soldiers . . . accomplish missions face-to-face with people, in the midst of environmental, societal, religious, and political tumult. Winning battles and engagements is usually insufficient to produce lasting change in the conditions that spawned conflict.³

Rather than seeking to remain aloof from politics in a quixotic quest for ill-defined “professionalism,” American soldiers have an obligation to seek greater understanding of the political context in which they operate, whether domestic, multinational, or host-nation. As Army Doctrine Reference Publication (ADRP) 6-22, *Army Leadership*, notes, “In today’s politically and culturally charged operational environments, even direct leaders may work closely with unified action partners, the media, local civilians, political leaders, police forces, and nongovernmental agencies.”⁴

The Army must remain both professional and nonpartisan, because we are in danger of being politically uninformed professionals, not uniformed professionals. The Army’s reticence to acknowledge the political dimension within which strategy, operations, and tactics nest is a significant contributing factor to our shortcomings in Iraq and Afghanistan, a mistake we can ill-afford to repeat should we find ourselves in Syria or other emerging hotspots in the coming decades.

The “Apolitical” Myth

To a large degree, the modern myth of the American military’s “apoliticism” is rooted in Samuel Huntington’s thesis from *The Soldier and the State*: the more “professional” an army, the less likely it is to intervene in domestic politics. His thesis includes a corollary: political intervention in the military’s professional sphere jeopardizes its apoliticism by treating it as merely another political interest group, while respect for a distinct area of professional competence ensures an “apolitical,” noninterventionist military.⁵ If the politicians only stay out of the military’s affairs, the military will not meddle in the domestic politics of deciding who ought to rule.

Huntington’s justification for an inviolate military sphere stems from a selective quotation of Clausewitz. Huntington writes, “The political objective is the goal, but in Clausewitz’s words, it ‘is not on that account a despotic lawgiver; it must adapt itself to the nature of the means at its disposal. . . .’”⁶ This quotation from Huntington is in the context of a discussion about the imperative for politicians to set achievable goals for the military, but it fails to capture the ultimate point Clausewitz was making, as the full quotation demonstrates:

If we keep in mind that war springs from some political purpose, it is natural that the prime cause of its existence will remain the supreme consideration in conducting it. That, however, does not imply that the political aim is a tyrant. It must adapt itself to its chosen means, a process which can radically change it; yet the political aim remains the first consideration. Policy, then, will permeate all military operations, and, in so far as their violent nature will admit, it will have a continuous influence on them.⁷

Rather than justifying a military sphere devoid of political or policy interference, Clausewitz is arguing quite the opposite, despite Huntington’s attempt

Huntington’s ... ideas continue to influence many practitioners on both sides of the civil-military divide...

to demonstrate otherwise. However, the military has fully embraced the Huntingtonian myth, and used it as a justification for a “membrane” between the political and military in order to create an autonomous professional sphere, contrary to Clausewitz. The result has been the U.S. Army’s obsession with tactics and the operational arts, arguably to the detriment of strategy, “A prudent idea or set of ideas for employing the instruments of national power in a synchronized and integrated fashion to achieve theater, national, and/or multinational objectives.”⁸

In the academic literature, Huntington’s normative thesis has been roundly criticized for its theoretical and empirical shortcomings.⁹ Despite this, his ideas continue to influence many practitioners on both sides of the civil-military divide in America, such as during the first Gulf War, when President George H.W. Bush remarked: “I did not want to repeat the problems of the Vietnam War (or numerous other wars throughout history), where the political leadership meddled with military operations. I would avoid micromanaging the military.”¹⁰

In contrast, then-chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Colin Powell lamented the lack of guidance from Bush in response to the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait.¹¹ While the military as an institution might prefer latitude to constraining guidance, as Powell recognized, it creates the danger of military operations becoming divorced from the strategic and policy objectives of our civilian masters, which is arguably what happened when the first Gulf War failed to unseat Saddam, the implicit policy goal of the first Bush administration.¹² There are similar critiques of U.S. policy objectives in Iraq and Afghanistan.¹³

Contrary to this conventional wisdom on professional, apolitical armies, the author of this essay accepts Hew Strachan's thesis "that armies are inherently political institutions only restrained from intervention by the political environment in which they find themselves," irrespective of their level of professionalism.¹⁴ Theo Farrell likewise notes it is possible to have a "professional" military that does not adopt "norms of civilian supremacy as part of its professional identity and

practice," depending upon "circumstances . . . peculiar to the state in question."¹⁵ The institutional construct and norms internal to the military may reduce its propensity to intervene in domestic politics, but more important are the institutions of the wider polity.

In the context of the United States, the danger of the most explicit form of military involvement in domestic politics—a coup—is unthinkable. However, this is because of the health of democracy and its institutions and not because of an inherent unwillingness of the state's military to intervene (though the military itself continues to cultivate the "apolitical" myth).¹⁶

Thus, so long as the domestic political structure maintains its legitimacy in the eyes of the electorate, efforts to increase the political understanding of the military should not threaten democracy in America. Rather, it should be possible for the military to be political, but nonpartisan.

Whether by Huntingtonian professionalization or other means, attempts to depoliticize the military jeopardize the ultimate effectiveness of the



(U.S. Army, Sgt. Victor Ayala)

President Barack Obama and First Lady Michelle Obama applaud U.S. service members and their families at Pope Field at Fort Bragg, N.C., 14 December 2011, during a speech about the end of the war in Iraq and military families' sacrifices.

fighting force. At some level, all armies are ideological. The superior's exhortation to more junior soldiers that they must be "above," "outside," or "aloof from" politics might be well intended, but it fails to acknowledge the fact that defense of a regime by force of arms is inherently political and grounded in the political ideology of the state.

American soldiers and officers do not take an oath to their government. Rather, the oath is to the Constitution. Thus, from enlistment or commissioning onward, a soldier is engaging in politics by defending the state and the ultimate authority on which the state rests. Such allegiance therefore cannot be "apolitical." However, it is possible to engage in the political act of defending the state "against all enemies, foreign and domestic" without engaging in the partisanship that undermines civilian control of the military.

Being called "political" by one's military peers is almost universally considered a slur on one's character in the American military, though it seldom refers to the partisanship ADP 1 cautions against. Given the widely held suspicions of the media and its perceived liberal bias among many American service members, the slur was likely reinforced when *The New York Times* used the term as a form of praise when discussing General David Petraeus during his command of Multi-National Force-Iraq (MNF-I).¹⁷ From the other side of the domestic political spectrum, *The Wall Street Journal* editorial page roundly criticized the current chairman of Joint Chiefs of Staff for his endorsement of his then likely future boss, former Senator Chuck Hagel, on the Sunday morning shows not long before his successful nomination as secretary of defense.¹⁸

The difficulty is that the term "political" has many meanings. The understandable desire to avoid a *politically involved* armed hierarchy—a potential genuine threat to a democratic government—has meant that those in uniform who express *political understanding* are suspect in the eyes of their peers (and, often also, their civilian masters). Both of these terms might be described in short hand as "political," despite the difference in meaning. The lack of nuance when lumped together under the catch-all term has catastrophic potential in three spheres: domestic, multinational, and host nation.

The Domestic Context

In the domestic sphere, the risk of an "apolitical" military is that it will produce senior military officers willfully unaware of the political context in which they operate, thereby enabling them to give "purely military" advice to their civilian masters that may be wholly inappropriate to achieving a given policy objective. However, in some cases this is the fault of politicians because of requests for such "purely military" advice. Often though, it is because senior officers hide behind "professionalism" in refusing to consider the politics of a situation when offering counsel to civilian leadership. In the American context, one of the most damning examples of this was the failure of the Joint Chiefs of Staff during Vietnam to provide the secretary of defense and the president with the candid advice they needed to formulate successful policies.¹⁹ Likewise, Paul Yingling's critique several years ago about the general officer corps in the modern era suggests this might not be a uniquely historical problem.²⁰

Particularly in "limited" or "small" wars, the successful conduct of the campaign rests on the government's ability to sustain political will and popular support at home; in comparison, it is relatively straightforward to maintain political will and



U.S. Army captains, Nathan Dyer, left, and Jonathan Dyer, twin brothers, take the oath of office 2 July 2011, at Forward Operating Base Salerno, Afghanistan (U.S. Air Force, 1st Lt. Bart Lomont)

popular support in a war of survival. This is the second domestic component of political understanding required of those in uniform. Service men and women at all levels must understand that anything they do or fail to do during operations in the field or in garrison could in some way affect this delicate balance.

At the end of the 20th century, the commandant of the United States Marine Corps, Gen. Charles C. Krulak, coined the term “strategic corporal” to capture the idea that those in the lowest tactical-level unit had the potential to affect outcomes at the highest strategic level, disproportionate to the rank on their sleeve.²¹ While the term would be anathema to the U.S. military, perhaps more accurate than “strategic corporal” might be “political corporal,” because the ultimate level—and ultimate commander—is not strategic, but political. Military hierarchies incorporate the need to understand “commander’s intent” down to the lowest levels, yet fail to recognize that the ultimate commander—the president of the United States—likewise has his or her own political “commander’s intent” that must be understood in order to ensure success of a military mission. Political ignorance may result in tactical success yet strategic failure—winning battles, but losing the war. A service member unaware of the political context in which he or she operates is in danger of inadvertently damaging the domestic political consensus upon which a mission is based, just as subordinates might undermine a “purely military” objective if they fail to understand the higher commander’s intent. Contrary to the conventional wisdom, however, casualties *per se* are not what undermine domestic political support for operations. Rather, it is the American public’s assessment of the likelihood of success.²²

The Multinational Context

The danger of politically ignorant service members is only compounded in a multinational context.²³ Contemporary operations require military personnel to interact with the multinational partners at all levels of command, whether the American Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR) and his British deputy SACEUR, or British and American forces fighting side-by-side for Musa Qala during Operation Snakebite in December 2007.²⁴ As the former deputy commanding general

of MNF-I, Lt. Gen. Sir John Kiszely, notes, “in a coalition the commander, particularly the force commander, has a job that is significantly more complex, arguably more demanding, *certainly more political*, requires the commander to exercise command in a very different way, and places considerable additional demands on his time.”²⁵

The commander who has been inculcated with a “we don’t do politics” mantra from entry into the service will be ill prepared to face the challenges of consensual leadership and political bargaining required by multinational command.

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At the most senior ranks, an example of the apolitical myth mindset in action is Gen. David McKiernan’s interview with *Der Spiegel* in August 2008, when he was then double-hatted as the commander of NATO International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) and U.S. Forces-Afghanistan. When asked about the national caveats on German forces under his command, McKiernan responded:

If there is something the German military cannot do that the American military can do, then the decision has been a legal and political decision back in Germany, and I accept that. But as a soldier, I don’t understand it. I don’t understand ever putting your men and women in harm’s way without their having the full ability to protect themselves. That also means operating on actionable intelligence to defeat insurgents and protect your forces. That’s how you keep your soldiers alive.²⁶

Despite being the most senior strategic commander of all alliance and coalition forces in the field, McKiernan continued to operate under the false premise that domestic politics in the capitals of the troop contributing nations might somehow not intrude into his headquarters. Moreover, he was willing to publicly doubt German tactical limitations “as a soldier,” to a German publication, no less, failing to recognize the constitutional limitations on the Bundeswehr’s ability to deploy to “wars,” owing to the country’s complicated relationship with the legacy of Nazi aggression and the institutional checks the United States helped install during post-World War II occupation.²⁷

While the potential impact is generally less at the lower ranks, Krulak’s “strategic corporal” waits in the wings. Better that the corporal is cognizant of the potential strategic—or, as this essay would argue, political—impact of his or her actions and interactions with multinational partners. In the author’s experience serving alongside coalition partners in Multi-National Force-Iraq, it was vital that even company grade officers and soldiers understand the domestic political constraints of other troop contributing nations. The ability of particular contingents to travel outside the wire might be more limited in the run-up to an election in the contingent’s home capital, for instance. If American service members were unaware of the context of such limitations, it could lead to friction when one coalition partner had unrealistic expectations of what another contingent could offer tactically at a particular point in time.

If the “apolitical” service members of each state are ignorant of the political context in their own capitals, what is the likelihood they will understand the political context in the capitals of their alliance or coalition partners? This is not to suggest that service members should take a normative position about domestic politics, whether in their own capital or those of a coalition partner. This is long-standing advice, as even the *Instructions for American Servicemen in Britain* cautioned in 1942 against criticizing the English King.²⁸ In a modern context that is the partisanship to be avoided in the interest of good order and discipline. Instead, what is required is political awareness and understanding.

The Host-Nation Context

Operationally, contemporary conflicts in which America has been engaged in the post-Cold War era have frequently been with the government of the state in which they are operating as an ally rather than enemy, most obviously MNF-I in Iraq and NATO ISAF in Afghanistan with the Maliki and Karzai governments, respectively. As the British chief of the General Staff, Gen. Sir David Richards, emphasized when he was the commander, ISAF—

The close Political/Military interaction with the Government of Afghanistan [GOA] . . . [is a] defining factor of NATO’s operations in Afghanistan . . . the multinational force in Afghanistan has to listen to civil partners, both from the international community and, more importantly, the Afghan Government and people themselves, for without their buy-in we will never have a lasting solution.²⁹

Richards went on to assert, “this is where NATO will, in the final analysis be judged . . . Did we work tirelessly, *in partnership with the GOA* and Afghan people, for culturally acceptable solutions to Afghan problems?”³⁰ The implication of Richards’ observations is that political ignorance within the ranks may be a serious complicating factor in the accomplishment of the alliance’s mission on the battlefield. Just as service members at all levels need to understand the political context of their own country and of their multinational military partners, understanding is required of the political context of the host government on whose behalf those in uniform are fighting, bleeding, and dying.

Soldiers advising in the establishment of ministerial-level security forces who are politically ignorant are likely in danger of replicating the creation of “professional” but politically involved armed forces, such as those of Pakistan, owing to the weakness of Pakistani civilian political institutions into which the professional army was introduced following the division of the British Indian Army.³¹ The same could be said of Mali, where the “professional” troops trained by American Special Forces were instrumental in the coup overthrowing the civilian government and contributing to the deteriorating security situation that ultimately led to the French-led intervention and eventual UN peacekeeping mission.³²

Likewise, the U.S. military's ability to devote resources to capacity building of a host-nation military dwarfs that of our civilian counterparts, and could actually be working at cross-purposes to the wider mission of creating political stability. In the author's experience advising within the Iraqi Ministry of Defense, our ability to train intelligence officers far exceeded the wider U.S. government's ability to assist the Iraqi government with creating the necessary democratic institutions to exert civilian control over the Ministry of Defense. Contrary to Huntington, our implicit assumption that the way to ensure the Iraqi military's nonintervention in domestic politics was through the creation of a "professional" Iraqi military may have laid the seeds for Iraqi democracy's eventual demise by creating a relatively cohesive organization that could ultimately usurp power from elected civilians leading weak institutions.

Moving Forward

While apoliticism is arguably one method of ensuring military aloofness in domestic politics, the

result, particularly in highly politicized "small" or "limited" wars fought by multinational forces, is an increased likelihood that service members—whether generals, majors, sergeants, or privates—will misunderstand their domestic, multinational, and host-nation environment out of political ignorance. Returning to Clausewitz, "The less involved the population and the less serious the strains within states and between them, the more political requirements in themselves will dominate and tend to be decisive."³³ Service members might inadvertently engage in activities that are tactically appropriate but damaging at the strategic and political levels in their home capitals, those of the other multinational forces, and the capital of the state in which they are waging the campaign. In the words of Gen. Sir Rupert Smith, the former UN commander in Bosnia and later NATO deputy Supreme Allied Commander, Europe, force will lack utility.³⁴

To ensure political understanding, particularly in the officer corps, the U.S. Army ought to expand interagency and multinational broadening



U.S. Army

Participants of the 2013 Army Congressional Fellowship Program receive a familiarization briefing from Egon F. Hawrylak, deputy commander of the Joint Force Headquarters-National Capital Region and the U.S. Army Military District of Washington, about the command's vast roles and responsibilities within the National Capital Region, 26 November 2012.

opportunities. Just as a select few captains and majors immerse themselves in the American legislative process on Capitol Hill through the Army Congressional Fellowship Program, so too ought we send such liaisons to the legislatures of our closest allies, certainly to the Australian, British, Canadian, and New Zealand Parliaments. The same could be done at the state level with National Guard officers completing fellowships in a state legislature or governor's office. Likewise, the Army should expand its Interagency Fellowship and create similar programs with allies' counterpart civilian agencies. Just as a U.S. Army interagency fellow at the U.S. Agency for International Development gains a greater appreciation for the complexities of working across departments, so too would a multinational fellow learn the difficulties of working across national boundaries in the British government's Stabilisation Unit or Department for International Development. Finally, for regionally aligned brigades, senior noncommissioned officers (NCOs) and officers should habitually rotate and embed as one-year liaisons in the units of the countries alongside which those brigades would likely deploy on contingency operations, developing an understanding of the domestic context in which those troops serve and bringing such expertise back to the liaisons' home-station brigades.

This exhortation for political understanding must come with caveats. "To reject Huntington's ideas of sequestering issues of policy from those of military administration and operations is to open the way to a military that is politicized and, by virtue of its size and discipline, a potentially

dominant actor in the conduct of foreign and international affairs."³⁵ Cohen's warning, though, returns to the term "political," and this is where the distinction between political *understanding* and political *involvement* is crucial. In no way does this essay argue for anything that undermines the norm of civilian control of the military inherent in the American political system. The legal limits on free speech for service members have been upheld in courts of law and the degree of permissible participation in domestic politics must remain sacrosanct if elected civilian leaders are to be able to trust the military as an institution following a change of administration.

Just as a subordinate officer salutes and follows orders once a decision has been made regardless of personal opinion about the order (so long as it is a legal order), so too must the military salute and obey its civilian leadership, regardless of the outcome of an election. But equally, just as a commander must understand the higher commander's intent, the military must understand civilian intent; doing so requires political understanding, not partisanship. According to ADP 1, *the political-cultural field* [of professional knowledge] prescribes how personnel and units operate effectively across and outside the Army's institutional boundaries. Land operations require cooperation with other Armed Forces, foreign militaries, other government agencies (our own and those of other countries), and all manner of human societies."³⁶ Our neglect of *the political-cultural field* of professional knowledge is the greatest threat the U.S. Army faces in 2020 and beyond. **MR**

NOTES

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3. *Ibid.*, 1-1. Emphasis added.

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5. Samuel P. Huntington, *The Soldier and the State: The Theory and Politics of Civil-Military Relations* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1957).

6. *Ibid.*, 68.

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The Myths We Soldiers Tell Ourselves

*(and the Harm
These Myths Do)*

**Lt. Col. Peter Fromm, U.S. Army, Retired; Lt. Col. Douglas Pryer, U.S. Army; and
Lt. Col. Kevin Cutright, U.S. Army**

When a man has so far corrupted and prostituted the chastity of his mind as to subscribe his professional belief to things he does not believe, he has prepared himself for the commission of every other crime. Can we conceive of anything more destructive to morality than this?¹

Thomas Paine, *The Age of Reason*

A man who lies to himself, and believes his own lies, becomes unable to recognize truth, either in himself or in anyone else.²

Fyodor Dostoevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov*

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PHOTO: Muleskinner Jack Crabb (Dustin Hoffman) confronts Gen. George Armstrong Custer (Richard Mulligan) before the Battle of Little Big Horn in the film *Little Big Man*. (National General Pictures, 1970/Paramount, 2003).

THE ARMY ESPOUSES admirable values, and it is justifiably proud of its traditions of service. Today, America's Army is arguably the best-trained, most disciplined force in the nation's history, one that strives to fight effectively, legally, and ethically. However, while this self-image is certainly something we strive to fulfill, we have not always been as successful as we might wish. Regrettably, dishonesty and related trust problems plague the American Profession of Arms, human endeavor that it is. In the authors' 70-plus years of military experience, the root of this dishonesty is self-deception, something in which everyone indulges.

Illustrative of this malady was the Vietnam War, where self-deception and disillusionment watered America's loss of will at home and contributed to eventual defeat.³ In *Dereliction of Duty*, H.R. McMaster describes the lies from the National Command Authority that led to the war.⁴ The Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) supported these machinations with their silence. As McMaster describes it—

The president was lying, and he expected the Chiefs to lie as well or, at least to withhold the whole truth. Although the president should not have placed the Chiefs in that position, the flag officers should not have tolerated it when he had.⁵

Such lies set the conditions. In December 1964, Gen. William Westmoreland directed optimistic outlooks from senior military advisors, telling them: "As advisors we must accentuate the positive and bring best thought to bear to work out solutions to problems in a dynamic way."⁶ Consequently, reports

rarely reflected reality.⁷ Lt. Gen. William Peers, the lead investigator for the My Lai atrocity, reported a massive cover-up: “Efforts were made at every level of command from company to division to withhold and suppress information.”⁸ In a 1974 report that surveyed officers from six service schools, close to half admitted they had submitted false reports to higher, including inaccurate officer efficiency reports, body counts, and numbers of soldiers going absent without leave.⁹

When in command, Westmoreland not only believed he could control the media’s message but also fell victim to the upbeat propaganda he had directed: “The stubborn commitment of the high command to error defies belief,” the historian John Gates later said, referring to Westmoreland and other Vietnam War generals, “but the evidence of it would seem to be overwhelming.”¹⁰ Those leaders who lied to investigators about what had happened at My Lai or who, serving on juries, refused

Our institution’s unwitting promotion of self-deception remains...the biggest obstacle to meaningfully professionalizing our military...

to punish the indicted had convinced themselves they were doing the right thing, protecting good Americans driven temporarily insane by the horrors of war.

To military leaders serving today, this analysis of the Vietnam War may strike uncomfortably close to home. A decade ago, the nation went to war in Iraq, ostensibly over weapons of mass destruction that the administration had convinced themselves were there. For media engagements in Iraq and Afghanistan, commanders have typically directed their subordinates to adhere to scripted talking points that may ignore some facts on the ground. There has also been little accountability exercised in the cases of officers and soldiers who have abused—or contributed to the abuse of—civilians and prisoners.

As before, there remains a huge gap between who we soldiers say we are and who we actually are, and

this gap is often due to institutionally reinforced self-deception.¹¹

The worst aspect of indulging in inaccurate self-assessments is the erosion of trust that accompanies it. When an institution adopts false beliefs about itself, it corrodes itself. Our institution’s unwitting promotion of self-deception remains not only the biggest obstacle to meaningfully professionalizing our military, but also remains a significant impediment to our Army’s fulfilling its core mission—defending the nation by winning favorable, enduring outcomes from our nation’s wars.

The Siren Song of Self-Deception

The impulse to self-deception calls to mind Nietzsche’s claim that the will to untruth is stronger than the will to truth.¹² Perhaps more accurately, we are sometimes driven by a “will to limited truth” to meet our selfish aims. People honestly calculate and, with good intentions, recalculate what reality is until they find a place where they are comfortable with their moral myths, where they can sit complacent. Soldiers cannot afford moral complacency.

The problem of “American exceptionalism.”

A prevalent form of this complacency involves rationalizing one’s own superiority above others. The myth of American exceptionalism permeating the U.S. military’s ranks is an example. It usually occurs when Americans apprehend the empirical fact that they enjoy remarkable freedoms and prosperity and transfer those accomplishments of their forebears into feelings of personal superiority. Instead of perceiving their heritage as a lucky accident, they irrationally perceive it as a personal virtue and a sign of their own superiority.

We can use the imagined racial superiority of the anti-Semite as a straw man to evaluate this sense of exceptionalism. Using this approach is not the same as saying that self-deceived soldiers dehumanize others to the degree that, say, German Nazis dehumanized Jews. Instead, it illuminates the psychological process underlying our own forms of exceptionalism by stretching this process to its logical extreme.

In *Anti-Semite and Jew*, Jean Paul Sartre says that by localizing all the evil in the world in the Jew, the anti-Semite objectifies himself as the Jew’s virtuous antagonist. He objectifies the Jew as the embodiment of evil and sees himself as an

elite human being.¹³ The anti-Semite is perhaps at first conscious of his fallibility, but finally rejects it through his hatreds. He lifts himself up by simply “being,” in this case by being non-Jew, rather than by “doing,” by acting in a manner that would in fact elevate himself.

As Sartre points out, if the Jew did not exist, the anti-Semite would create him. Sartre concludes, “Anti-Semitism is thus seen to be at bottom a form of Manichaeism.”¹⁴ By this he means the extreme, dehumanizing black-and-white outlook that led to pogroms against Jews and the Holocaust of World War II. Such attitudes are not entirely unfamiliar to some American service members. There is, for example, the American soldier in Iraq who said, “A lot of guys really supported the whole concept that if they don’t speak English and they have darker skin, they’re not as human as us, so we can do what we want.”¹⁵ There is the soldier at Abu Ghraib who, while forcing a detainee to masturbate above the face of another detainee, remarked, “Look at what these animals do when you leave them alone for two seconds.”¹⁶ And then there is the Army chief

of staff who compared Fallujah to “a huge rat’s nest” that was “festering” and needed to be “dealt with”—a metaphor that may be more unconsidered machismo than willful dehumanization, but that is still unsettlingly reminiscent of the depiction of Jews as a scurrying horde of rats in the infamous Nazi propaganda film, “The Eternal Jew.”¹⁷

Such extreme, dehumanizing words about the “other” is today the exception rather than the rule within our ranks. More commonly, this form of self-deception asserts itself as half-hearted applications of *the ethic of reciprocity* (what is more commonly known as “The Golden Rule”). That is, to some American “exceptionalists,” a restriction that applies to other nations and militaries does not necessarily or fully apply to the United States if, by applying it, an apparent American advantage is taken away.

The slippery slope of dehumanization. Failure to fully consider the ethic of reciprocity is apparent in the ongoing debate on torture. Nearly all American service members would call it “torture” if they were subjected to waterboarding, forced nudity, water



U.S. Army official SHARP poster. The Army’s problems with sexual harassment illustrate the efforts to overcome objectification of others.

dousing, extreme hot and cold temperatures, sleep deprivation, or any one of the so-called “enhanced interrogation techniques” (EITs). After all, the goal of these EITs is to inflict suffering so great that it overcomes the subject’s will to resist without physically marking or injuring the subject. Many of these same service members, though, become offended when any description of Americans applying these techniques refers to “torture.”¹⁸

Hazing, sexual harassment, sadistic “corrective training,” detainee abuse, torture, and murder usually derive from the similar delusion that other people are commodities and that it is okay to treat them as such. The difference is one of degree, rather than quality. This is why serious crimes often have small beginnings, and people refer to a “slippery moral slope” when discussing right and wrong. For the soldier at war, objectifying oneself as superior and the “other” as inferior can rapidly transform even minor abuses into very serious crimes.

At the heart of this delusion is self-interested self-deception. There is not only the desire to feel superior, but also there is the wish to make one’s core task—the killing of one’s enemies—as easy as possible. Soldiers tell themselves that the enemy is an inhuman “kraut,” “Jap,” “gook,” “dink,” or “rag-head,” and, by doing so, hope to remove all natural empathy toward those they aim to kill.

Leaders often condone this self-deception because they believe they are helping themselves and their troops to do what “must be done.” Unfortunately, while attempts at dehumanizing the enemy may make killing easier for some (at least in the short-term), these attempts can be the first steps on the road toward atrocities—acts that cannot occur without such dehumanization. Such attitudes cause unjustifiable harm to others, inspire the enemy to fight while hurting morale at home, and often inflict upon the perpetrators cognitive dissonance, deep regret, and “moral injury” (a condition that can lead to severe psychiatric problems and even suicide).¹⁹

An abundance of absolute princes. Reinforcing and strengthening self-deception within the ranks is what John Stuart Mill termed the “unlimited deference” accorded the powerful:

[W]hile everyone well knows himself to be fallible, few think it necessary to take any precautions against their own fallibility, or admit the supposition that any opinion, of



U.S. Army Values Tag. In the view of the authors, the implementation of Army values needs a review.

which they feel very certain, may be one of the examples of the error to which they acknowledge themselves to be liable. Absolute princes, or others who are accustomed to unlimited deference, usually feel this complete confidence in their own opinions on nearly all subjects. . . .²⁰

The U.S. military often suffers from virtual “absolute princes” in the form of command authority gone awry. Though not a general condition, it remains common enough among senior military leaders and commanders. Even popular culture makes fun of this tendency at the Army’s expense. In the satirical film *Little Big Man*, there is a scene where Lt. Col. George Armstrong Custer (played by Richard Mulligan) announces his ability to tell a man’s profession just by his appearance.²¹ All of his subordinates assent to the truth of his special perceptive power. When he pronounces Dustin Hoffman’s character, Jack Crabb, to be “a muleskinner”—contrary to fact—even Jack himself assents to it so that he can get a job with the Army. Custer rides off satisfied with his powers of perspicuity. Such self-deception of course catches up with him at the Little Big Horn. The satire is funny because it evokes a truth we all recognize.

Those who assent to everything the “prince” says encourage further erosion of his ability to see error. The cycle toward incoherence becomes ever more pernicious as blind spots become entrenched. Leader and led immerse themselves in self-deception. The authors call this the “unlimited deference syndrome,” a condition that leads to real problems with managing agreement toward the best outcomes.

Even in the formal process of studying operational options, anticipating what will please the boss (via doctrine and built-in assumptions) is often the main shaper of proposed courses of action. In the authors’ experience, the courses of action a staff presents the commander are usually just shades of the anticipated. In going through formal motions of “analysis,” everyone loses track of the fact that foregone, unacknowledged conclusions are driving the process. Thus, flawed discourse yields flawed options. The rise of “design” in U.S. military planning is a tacit acknowledgement that this problem exists. Design methodology is an attempt to correct an institutional inability to properly frame problems, but it probably will not change the underlying problem of unlimited deference.²²

Enshrining self-deception. Military doctrine encourages self-deception via key articulations within each service’s codified ethos. Consider the Army’s well-worn leadership rubric “Be—Know—Do,” which was recently revamped as “attributes” (who leaders are and what they know) and “competencies” (what leaders do, because of their attributes).²³ The sequence of concepts in both of these frameworks leads people to think that “being” something precedes “doing” anything to achieve it. It reverses Aristotle’s virtue ethics, from which this approach was originally derived.²⁴ Aristotle wrote: “The virtues arise in us neither by nature nor against nature, but we are by nature able to acquire them, and reach our complete perfection through habit.”²⁵ Acquiring virtues is how character develops. Only when one develops the knowing habit of right action, does one become good. One learns, one does, and one becomes. Habit eventually forms the person one has educated oneself to become. So, for instance, one cannot simply pronounce oneself a “warrior” or “professional” and reasonably believe it must thus be so. Whether one is a philosopher, mason, physician, muleskinner, or machinist, only

training and habit lead to the realization of what one becomes, to being.

One expression of the pervasive be-do philosophy is the Army Values rubric. This rubric contributes to self-deception by convincing people that they are good, an ethical member of a values-based organization, even though it does very little to actually encourage right action. For example, before the Detainee Treatment Act of 2005 made “enhanced interrogation” illegal, one could employ Army Values to endorse harsh treatment of detainees. Those who used torture could argue they displayed

One expression of the pervasive be-do philosophy is the Army Values rubric.

“loyalty” to their nation and fellow troops by helping extract intelligence that might save lives. They could display “duty” to country and “selfless service” by their hard, dirty work for good ends. They could show proper “respect” for detainees, since they treated detainees like evil terrorists should be treated (meaning, with no respect). They could show “integrity” through the use of only approved techniques. They could embody “honor” by fulfilling the other Army values, especially the “personal courage” needed to deliberately agitate dangerous detainees.²⁶ Indeed, it is difficult to think of any tough ethical problem that this paradigm could help a soldier solve. For example, does one lie in service to one’s country? To protect one’s fellow soldiers?

The biggest problem with the Army Values is how they are sloganeered. By simply saying them, we soldiers frequently delude ourselves into thinking they make us more ethical, like they are a talisman. Indeed, they can actually set the stage for unethical action by inspiring moral complacency and allowing us to justify nearly any action that appears legal.²⁷

Another expression of the be-do philosophy is the enshrinement of key policies and programs, thereby stymieing honest debate. Such stultification is fairly common in large institutions, where the tendency is

to create a narrative that makes assent to form fashionable, demonizes the naysayers, and then enforces buy-in with rewards and punishments. Those who possess the proper faith are righteous, those who do not are unrighteous. The result is groupthink rather than a helpful, continuous, living dialectic concerning the problem at hand. Thanks to the unlimited deference associated with rank and command authority, the U.S. military is especially prone to this tendency.

Some examples of Army projects that have been susceptible to this dynamic include worthy endeavors like counterinsurgency, mission command, the “warrior project,” and the Profession of Arms campaign. All of these programs have suffered from various degrees of debilitating dogmatism, of which some advocates and participants may be blissfully unaware. The recent fall from grace of counterinsurgency, for instance, seems to have stemmed primarily from its over-zealous execution as the new religion.²⁸

Self-Deception Goes to War

Recent wars have brought moral issues into focus, which is a normal outcome. Acknowledging the good with the bad, we can gauge the force’s professionalism by how openly it addresses failures and takes steps to limit them.

Valuing form over substance. Unfortunately, our Army has suffered from mediocre, narcissistic, appearance-obsessed leaders too frequently. As an extreme instance, the book *Black Hearts* by Jim Frederick documents the downward spiral of one platoon in Iraq, its members so distraught by the deaths of comrades that they became increasingly abusive of Iraqis. Meanwhile, its brigade and battalion leadership remained completely ignorant of the moral cancer spreading within this platoon, focusing its attention instead on soldier appearances and by-the-book solutions to tactical problems. For example:

A lieutenant colonel down from brigade headquarters asked the platoon leader, Lieutenant Paul Fisher, why none of his men had shaved. Fisher, after the Alamo bridge incident, after all of the work and all of the loss, couldn’t hide his exasperation. “We drink all the water we have, sir, so that we don’t dehydrate,” he said. “We have been running nonstop since our guys got abducted. We are not really concerned

about our looks right now.” “I am just trying to keep the heat off of you, Lieutenant,” the lieutenant colonel said. “You guys are not looked upon too favorably these days.”²⁹

Members of this platoon eventually gang-raped a young Iraqi girl, then shot and immolated her, her little sister, and her parents. Months later, senior leaders were shocked at the revelations. However, the reader is left questioning whether this horrendous crime could even have occurred if these leaders and their subordinates had cared less about haircuts and shaves and more about what was really going on inside their soldiers’ heads.

Manipulating and ignoring the truth. Probably the most futile, quixotic endeavor in an age of the Internet and ubiquitous hand-held information devices are the attempts by many commanders to control what the media reports. In the authors’ experience, “controlling the narrative” has emerged as the hallmark of Army public relations. Via talking points and feel-good, often unsustainable public relations projects, commanders and their staffs vainly expend energy trying to convince everyone (sometimes themselves included) that, thanks to their efforts, progress is being made. They appear to believe that, if they trumpet something as “true” loudly and frequently enough, this thing will actually become reality. Leading the way in this regard, former Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld vehemently denied there was an insurgency in Iraq, something he maintained for more than three years as he called insurgents everything but insurgents.³⁰ In such cases, the leader thinks he is right, and if he has a momentary moral epiphany that he is being dishonest, he tells himself how complicated things are and that the end justifies the means. If he has to manipulate appearances of reality to make his narrative “true,” so be it. Of course, such manipulation nearly always backfires, taking away the leader’s credibility and whatever strategic or tactical benefit that may have been at stake.

Frustrated by the media’s tendency to emphasize “bad news” rather than “good news” stories (“good news is no news,” we soldiers like to say), we tend in turn to dismiss all media and nongovernmental organization reporting as biased and unworthy of consideration. This is a grossly counterproductive

response: just because the media may have a bias to focus on sensational “bad news” does not make such news untrue.

The soldier and torture. As discussed above, objectifying others and treating them as commodities, as less than human, can lead to serious abuse. Compounding this problem is another delusion—the belief of leaders that such dehumanization can be controlled.

Consider the role that “enhanced interrogation techniques” and military Survival, Escape, Resistance, and Evasion (SERE) schools played in the abuse of prisoners in Iraq and Afghanistan. When EITs were formally promulgated via policy memoranda, one assumption was that they would be used only under strict supervision. After Rumsfeld approved EITs for use at Guantanamo Bay (“Gitmo”) in December 2002, this assumption largely held true at that location. There, the relatively high interrogator-to-detainee ratio and the presence of supervisory psychologists and, even more importantly, of large numbers of law enforcement personnel all helped limit occurrences of EITs evolving into worse crimes.

Tragically, this was far from the whole story. Soon after their approval at Gitmo, EITs migrated via formal policy memoranda to Afghanistan and then, shortly after, to Iraq.³¹ At places like Bagram, Abu Ghraib, Mosul, and al Qaim, relatively minor detainee abuse turned into horrific crimes that shocked the world.

However, more widespread and just as damaging was the informal, unsanctioned promulgation of harsh detainee treatment that grew from the set conditions. This occurred via the transfer of interrogators from one facility to another. Also, service members applied tactics they had learned or heard about at SERE schools.³² Most commonly, soldiers applied the same physical “corrective training” they themselves sometimes received to their prisoners.³³ Such informal promulgation occurred despite SERE cadre regularly briefing their trainees that they were not to treat detainees like they themselves were being treated and despite the assumption of some noncommissioned officers that their subordinates would realize that corrective training was only intended as a disciplinary measure for soldiers, not prisoners.

It seems that, once the impulse to dehumanize and degrade the other is set free, putting the genie

back in the bottle is nearly impossible. The result in the ongoing conflicts has been a steady boon for recruiters of America’s enemies.³⁴ Thus it is that another form of self-deception—the idea that we can control how, where, and when we dehumanize others—has greatly damaged our nation’s recent war efforts. Better to completely avoid the self-deception and insist detainees and adversaries be considered the human beings that they are.

A failure of accountability. The scale at which detainee abuse took place during the first few

It seems that, once the impulse to dehumanize and degrade the other is set free, putting the genie back in the bottle is nearly impossible.

years of our conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq is disturbing. The military’s abject failure to hold offenders accountable for their crimes is almost as bad. Of the 100 detainees who died in U.S. custody between 2002 and 2006, 45 are confirmed or suspected murder victims.³⁵ Of these, eight are known to have been tortured to death.³⁶ Only half of these eight cases resulted in punishment for U.S. service members, with five months in jail being the harshest punishment meted out.³⁷

This is only a summary of the most extreme cases. During the last decade, the military opened hundreds of investigations concerning detainee abuse. Investigators closed most of these quickly, not because there was nothing to them, but because investigators lacked the resources, command support, or willpower to meaningfully investigate them.³⁸ Even in those cases where investigators found criminal negligence, military juries and commanders consistently chose not to punish wrongdoers. Of the hundreds of cases of alleged abuse the under-resourced “Detainee Abuse Task Force” investigated in Iraq, not one went to court martial: “It didn’t accomplish anything,” John Renaud, the warrant officer who led the task force later said. “It was a whitewash.”³⁹

A 2006 report by three human rights organizations found, “Of the hundreds of personnel implicated in detainee abuse, only ten people have been

sentenced to a year or more in prison”—four of these as a result of the highly publicized crimes they had committed at Abu Ghraib.⁴⁰ More worrying still, strong anecdotal evidence suggests that reported crimes were only the small, visible portion of the massive iceberg of detainee abuse, the vast bulk of which is impossible to accurately measure because it went unreported.⁴¹

Mental Health Advisory Teams conducted two surveys in Iraq and Afghanistan that support this conclusion. At the request of Gen. David Petraeus, the Multinational Forces-Iraq commander, the fourth iteration of their survey included questions pertaining to battlefield conduct—the first time since World War II the ethics of service members had been systematically surveyed during combat.⁴² The results of this 2006 survey were distressing:

The survey found that only 47 percent of soldiers and 38 percent of marines agreed that noncombatants should be treated with dignity and respect. More than one-third of all soldiers and marines reported that torture should be allowed to save the life of a fellow soldier or marine, and less than half of marines said they would report a team member for unethical behavior. Also, 10 percent of soldiers and marines reported mistreating noncombatants or damaging property when it was not necessary.⁴³

A fifth survey reported a similar percentage of service members saying they had mistreated non-combatants and unnecessarily damaged locals' property.⁴⁴ However, for this 2007 survey, the particularly troublesome, previously highly publicized attitudinal questions were not asked.⁴⁵ Worse, although this 2007 report concluded that “soldiers who screened positive for mental health problems of depression, anxiety, or acute stress were significantly more likely to report engaging in unethical behaviors,” subsequent surveys did not pose any questions pertaining to U.S. battlefield conduct—thus avoiding potentially problematic findings.⁴⁶

Likely underlying much of this dismal, self-deceptive lack of accountability is the aforementioned myth of exceptionalism. A sense of American superiority makes it easier to tolerate and forgive offenses that we would decry if committed by the enemy. How can we hope to curtail such abuse

when we systematically fail to punish it? How can we hope to be trusted by local nationals and the international community when we so grossly fail to live up to our own proclaimed principles? The obvious answer to non-Americans is that Americans cannot be counted upon to curtail this abuse in the future, nor can we be trusted to keep any population's best interests in mind but our own.⁴⁷

What is also obvious is that the mistrust stemming from our failure to punish criminals in our ranks works against the legitimacy of U.S. military actions abroad. For instance, U.S. forces withdrew from Iraq earlier than desired because the Iraqi government insisted on jurisdiction over major crimes committed by American service members.⁴⁸ After the previous ten years, most Iraqi leaders had concluded that the American system of accountability was unjust.

Poor stewardship. One of the authors recently served in Afghanistan as the chief of intelligence for Task Force 2010, a joint, interagency unit consisting largely of law enforcement, intelligence, forensic accounting, and contract specialists. This unit is charged with reducing the flow of American taxpayer dollars via pilferage and U.S.-contracted insurgent front companies to the enemy.

During his deployment, the task force uncovered a massive criminal enterprise that, over the previous year, had stolen tens of millions of dollars of U.S. goods. Task Force 2010 needed the help of two tactical units to shut this operation down. The author and two of his analysts briefed a small group of staff officers from these units, hoping to persuade them to help. He prefaced this brief by saying, “I know counter-pilferage isn't sexy, but we'll get to the sexy stuff shortly.” One of his analysts gave the background to the investigation, then his other analyst described how profits from the sale of these stolen goods were supporting transnational terrorist and insurgent groups operating out of Pakistan.

The brief finished, one of the officers in the small audience said, “Ok, now where is the sexy stuff?” The author's jaw dropped: “What do you mean? The American taxpayer is giving millions of dollars to bad guys who are killing our troops. What's not important about that?” The officer asked, “Where are the guys planting IEDs? Where are the suicide bombers?” The author responded, “These guys provide bad guys with enough funding to buy tens

of thousands of IEDs, not to mention pay the salary of thousands of recruits. That's a helluva lot more important than killing someone planting an IED every night." Despite his impassioned plea, the staff officers ultimately left the brief unconvinced, promising to provide only limited support.

These staff officers clearly had a blind spot. Even if convinced that stopping this criminal enterprise would impact the insurgency far more than, say, removing 10 Taliban foot soldiers, they would not have cared. The root cause of their shortsightedness lay, not in ignorance or a lack of common sense, but in the lies we soldiers tell ourselves. We idealize ourselves as warriors, as noble killers, and we produce metrics of success to reinforce this objectification. For combat troops, preventing an IED network from receiving the support it needs to operate may seem unimportant—even if this support is indirectly, unknowingly, and shamefully provided by American taxpayers.⁴⁹

Although "body count" fell from favor long ago as an acceptable measure of effectiveness, our military is not all that far removed from this metric culturally. Most daily command briefs in combat zones begin with a roll-up of "SIGACTS" (significant acts) tallying friendly versus enemy casualties, and much reporting is likewise dominated by such SIGACTS—text that implicitly evaluates only friendly and enemy casualties as "significant." Combat support troops suffer from similarly flawed metrics. Logisticians, for example, love to report that supported combat troops are "green" on ammo, fuel, and food, but they rarely report or reliably track how many supplies were stolen enroute to the troops (even when these stolen supplies support the enemy). Losses of 10, 20, or a much higher percentage are acceptable, as long as combat troops are "green" on all supplies.

Becoming Who We Say We Are

We reap the fruits of our actions in ways too many military leaders simply fail to see, let alone acknowledge. This strategic sowing and harvesting is a pattern the Army has to break.

For example, when we fail to hold adequately accountable those soldiers who have abused locals, we are repeating a pattern within the history of expeditionary warfare. The Roman Empire's troubled experience in the Middle East illustrated

this problem. In Palestine, the lack of soldier accountability contributed heavily to the revolts the Romans suppressed there. Roman satirist Juvenal complained that Roman military courts in the provinces would rarely serve justice to soldiers abusing the inhabitants:

Military law: no soldier, it's stated, may sue or be tried except in camp, by court-martial. "But still, when an officer's trying a guardsman, surely the proceedings must be conducted with exemplary Justice? So if my complaint is legitimate I'm sure to get satisfaction." . . . Easier [to] find a witness to perjure himself against a civilian than one who'll tell the truth, if the truth's against a soldier's honor or interest . . . And it's in any commander's interest to see the bravest soldiers obtain the best recompense . . .⁵⁰

The U.S. military has to learn this lesson if we expect to achieve any success in the future from counterinsurgencies.

The authors argued in a previous essay, "War is a Moral Force," that the most critical considerations of human conflict are moral ones.⁵¹ These considerations were as important to the Romans as they are now to us, not something new to modern war. However, the information age has amplified the effects. There may have been a time when self-mythologizing served a useful purpose in war, but only ignorance could make it work. Today, in an age in which information flies around the world at the speed of light, immediately bringing great coherency and power to moral opinion, we can no longer assume such ignorance will last. We cannot long hope to be allowed to say we are one thing while actually being something else. Our spoken words (and values) must be indicative of our actions.

Within war's "moral domain," especially critical are judgments of right and wrong actions and the impact such judgments have on the fighting spirit of nations, communities, and warfighters. Self-deception, however, encourages an orientation toward the world that is antithetical to success in this domain. Believing the myth that we are *prima facie* better than others leaves us vulnerable to committing acts of strategically grave moral error that sustains our enemies' will to fight



Carrying off the Menorah from the Temple in Jerusalem depicted on a frieze on the Arch of Titus in the Forum Romanum, Via Sacra, Rome, Roman Forum, c. 82 C.E. Roman insensitivity to Jewish religious customs and abuse of civilians led to the Great Revolt that ended in 70 A.D. The ramifications of the war caused much political turmoil for Rome.

while sapping the fighting spirit of Americans and America’s allies.

Today, getting out of the self-mythologizing business as much as we humanly can has become a mission essential task. All human beings deceive themselves about why they do the things they do. The difference is one of degree. Officers and soldiers who practice real moral leadership are those who resist their own self-deceptive tendencies toward superiority, who genuinely care about others and their opinions, who judge people (themselves included) in accordance with their actions, and who actively search for ways that they could be wrong in order to correct their own courses. In John Stuart Mill’s words, these leaders treat their own fallibility seriously. Humility needs to be an Army Value.

Specifics. The following are some steps the modern Army should take to become a true, more effective profession:

- Transform the “be-do” misapprehension at the heart of Army doctrine to “Learn-Do-Become.”
- Give more serious attention to virtue education, to include reidentifying and redefining our selected values. Is it really necessary that we confine ourselves to virtues that fit the “LDRSHP” rubric? Should we not instead choose virtues based on meaning and mutual compatibility?⁵²
- Actively seek, and frankly acknowledge, truth from subordinates and external, disinterested sources (such as journalists), even when it contradicts earnestly desired narratives about events and ourselves.
- Actively fight the impulse to dehumanize our enemies and the populations in which they hide via doctrine, education, and leader-exemplars. Real honor comes from honoring humanity.
- Educate soldiers more thoroughly on the circumstances under which killing is justified and hold leaders more accountable than their subordinates.

- Develop a written professional ethic reinforced with a robust education and training program that actually prepares soldiers for tough ethical choices.
- Make leader efficiency reports more honest by ensuring text from 360-degree feedback is incorporated into these reports (especially critical for the evaluations of senior leaders).
- Make indicators that a unit is a learning organization an important element of leader evaluations.
- Always integrate moral with operational concerns when teaching military leaders how to successfully “manage violence.”⁵³ Simply avoiding what is clearly illegal should not be the point; striving to do what warring parties and allies will deem “the most just alternative” should be the point.
- Make operational leaders the moral “subject matter experts.”

What the Army values. Answering these issues of unlimited deference, self-serving idealizations, exceptionalism, valuing form over substance, manipulative communication, and

poor accountability must grow out of leadership. Serious accountability among the leadership and more honesty at the top could go a long way to shoring up self-deception in the force at large. Gauging the force’s opinions on these matters through data may help, but the stewards of the Army Profession should have the wisdom to see further than those they lead. They should seek a better integrity for the force at large.

In an organization as large as our military, one expects the institution to be vulnerable to myth making and to moral errors. The fact that these errors have already contributed to gross and counterproductive outrages at home and abroad, while greatly disturbing, is not what is most troubling. What is most troubling is that we can do far better than we have been doing but remain too blind, complacent, and self-deceived. Earning lasting success in war and the full trust of all will be impossible to achieve until we soldiers challenge, head on, the myths we tell ourselves. **MR**

NOTES

1. Thomas Paine, *The Age of Reason*, available at <<http://www.deism.com/images/theageofreason1794.pdf>> (15 January 2013).

2. Fyodor Dostoevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov*, translated by Andrew R. MacAndrew (New York: Bantam Books, 1970).

3. The literature regarding U.S. military and political deception during the Vietnam War and its profoundly disillusioning effect on veterans and the American public is voluminous. Three of the best books are Neil Sheehan, *A Bright Shining Lie: John Paul Vann and America in Vietnam* (New York: Vintage Books, 1988), Arnold Isaacs’s *Vietnam Shadows: the War, Its Ghosts, and Its Legacy* (New York: Modern Library, 2009); and H.R. McMaster, *Dereliction of Duty* (New York: HarperCollins, 1998). The treatment of this subject in movies is also vast, of which Francis Ford Coppola’s *Apocalypse Now* is probably the best known.

4. McMaster, 329-31.

5. *Ibid.*, 331.

6. Lewis Sorley, *Westmoreland: The General Who Lost Vietnam* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2011), 74.

7. *Ibid.*

8. William R. Peers, “Summary of Peers Report,” The University of Missouri-Kansas City, March 1970, <http://law2.umkc.edu/faculty/projects/frtrial/mylai/summary_rpt.html> (16 February 2013).

9. Thomas E. Ricks, *The Generals* (New York: The Penguin Press, 2012), 312; U.S. Army War College, *Study on Military Professionalism*, 30 June 1970, B-31 through B-34.

10. John Gates, “American Military Leadership in the Vietnam War,” in *Military Leadership and Command: The John Biggs Cincinnati Lectures, 1987*, edited by Henry S. Bausum, 185-209, Lexington, VA: The VMI Foundation, Inc., 1987, 198.

11. This statement, which is this essay’s thesis, is supported by the 16 December 2011, “Army Profession Campaign Overview,” <<http://cape.army.mil/Army%20Profession/AP%20Campaign%20Briefing.pdf>>. The Center for the Army Profession and Ethic (CAPE) produced this brief, slide 8 of which says that “corrosive effects [exist] of [our] not always practicing what we espouse.”

12. Friedrich Nietzsche, Aphorism no. 4 in “Prejudices of Philosophers,” *Beyond Good and Evil* (Project Gutenberg: *The Complete Works of Friedrich Nietzsche*), available at: <<http://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/nietzsche/1886/beyond-good-evil/index.htm>> (10 October 2012).

13. Jean-Paul Sartre, *Anti-Semite and Jew* (New York: Schocken Books, 1965), 40.

14. *Ibid.*, 15. Leonard Doyle, “A Dead Iraqi is Just Another Dead Iraqi: You Know, So What?” *The Independent*, 12 July 2007.

15. Seymour M. Hersh, “Torture at Abu Ghraib,” *New York Times*, 10 May 2004.

16. Richard Myers, “Perspectives,” *Newsweek*, 3 May 2004; David Livingstone Smith, *Less Than Human: Why We Demean, Enslave, and Exterminate Others* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 2011), 254-55.

18. A completely different problem is the number of service members who would precisely call it torture and consider it legitimate. This essay addresses only the problem of soldiers who consider torture wrong but deceive themselves about American instances of it.

19. Moral injury is the cognitive dissonance that occurs when people see or do things that conflict with their own deeply held values: when a transgression is great enough to lead to serious inner conflict, it is the source of the moral injury. The notion that moral injury can lead to suicide is anecdotally but compellingly and poignantly explored in two recent books by journalists, Joshua E.S. Phillips, *None of Us Were Like This Before: American Soldiers and Torture* (New York: Verso, 2012) and Justine Sharrock, *Tortured: When Good Soldiers Do Bad Things* (New York: Verso, 2012).

20. John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty*, available at <<http://www.constitution.org/jsm/liberty.htm>> (17 September 2012).

21. *Little Big Man*, available at <<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0065988/>> (14 February 2013).

22. Design methodology is the Army’s version of Systemic Operational Design developed by the Israeli Defense Forces under Brig Gen. Shimon Naveh as a means for developing better analysis of emergent conditions in framing complex situations. See U.S. Army Field Manual (FM) 5-0, *The Operations Process* (Washington DC: U.S. Government Printing Office [GPO], 26 March 2010), 3-1.

23. U.S. Army, Army Doctrine Reference Publication (ADRP) 6-22, *Leadership* (Washington DC: GPO, August 2012), 1-5; FM 6-22, *Leadership* (Washington DC: GPO, October 2006) 2. In the Foreword to FM 6-22, GEN Peter Schoomaker, the Chief of the Staff of the Army at the time of publication, describes Be-Know-Do as the doctrine’s foundation, stating that the rubric expresses “what is required of leaders.”

24. FM 22-100, *Leadership* (Washington DC: GPO, August 1999) 1-6. This statement is testament to Aristotelian virtue ethics at the foundation of the Be-Know-Do rubric: “Character describes a person’s inner strength.”

25. Aristotle, “Habit and Virtue,” in *Nicomachean Ethics*, translated by Terence Irwin (Indianapolis, Hackett, 1985), 33-40.

26. Both ADRP 6-22, *Leadership*, and the field manual it recently replaced, FM 6-22, *Leadership*, define the Army Value of “respect” as treating someone as they deserve. This definition does little to promote the humane treatment of prisoners, when captors believe that prisoners are “evil terrorists” and deserve to be treated like inhuman monsters or animals.

27. James R. Schlesinger, Harold Brown, Tillie K. Fowler, Charles A. Horner, James A. Blackwell Jr., “Final Report of the Independent Panel to Review DOD Detention Operations,” *FindLaw*, August 2004, <<http://news.findlaw.com/wp/docs/dod/abughraibrpt.pdf>> (16 February 2012), 124-5. The Schlesinger Panel’s independent investigation into the scale and causes of U.S. detainee abuse recognized that core values programs like the Army Values do more to promote self-deception than ethical behavior, concluding: “Core-values programs are grounded in organizational

efficacy rather than the moral good. They do not address humane treatment of the enemy and noncombatants, leaving military leaders and educators an incomplete tool box with which to deal with 'real-world' ethical problems. A professional ethics program addressing these situations would help equip them with a sharper moral compass for guidance in situations often riven with conflicting moral obligations."

28. T.X. Hammes, for example, states: "Counterinsurgency is not a strategy but rather a range of possible ways in the ends, ways, and means formulation of strategy. Furthermore, population-centric counterinsurgency, as documented in Field Manual 3-24, *Counterinsurgency*, is only one possible approach to counterinsurgency." From "Counterinsurgency: Not a Strategy, but a Necessary Capability," *Joint Force Quarterly* 65 (April 2012): 49.

29. Jim Frederick, *Black Hearts: One Platoon's Descent into Madness in Iraq's Triangle of Death* (New York: Random House, 2010), 323-24.

30. Paul Richter, "Rumsfeld Hasn't Hit a Dead End in Forging Terms for Foe in Iraq," *Los Angeles Times*, 30 November 2005. Rather than call insurgents what they were, Rumsfeld used such terms as "Former Regime Loyalists," "Former Regime Elements," "Anti-Iraq Forces," "Deadenders," and "Enemies of the Legitimate Iraqi Government." He also denied there even was an insurgency.

31. Carl Levin, U.S. Senator Michigan, Senate Armed Services Committee, "Inquiry into the Treatment of Detainees in U.S. Custody," 2009, <<http://www.levin.senate.gov/issues/treatment-of-detainees-in-us-custody>> (16 November 2012), xvii-xxiv.

32. Douglas A. Pryer, *The Fight for the High Ground: The U.S. Army and Interrogation During Operation Iraqi Freedom, May 2003-April 2004* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Command and General Staff College Foundation Press, 2009), 27, 54, 58-60. As described in these cited pages, key leaders and/or other personnel of at least four of the facilities most notorious for employing torture during the first year of Operation Iraqi Freedom had previously attended Survival, Escape, Resistance, and Evasion (SERE) school. One interrogation chief had even been a SERE instructor.

33. Phillips, 58-62; Scott Ewing, "Discipline, Punishment, and Counterinsurgency," *Military Review* (Special Edition, Center for the Army Profession and Ethic) (September 2010): 27-37.

34. Matthew Alexander, "I'm Still Tortured by What I Saw in Iraq," *The Washington Post*, 30 November 2008, <<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/11/28/AR2008112802242.html>> (22 April 2009). The interrogator Matthew Alexander is one of many who have testified to the recruitment boon that detainee abuse scandals provided anti-U.S. jihadist groups. During his in-brief at a special operations interrogation facility in Iraq, he was told that "the number one reason foreign fighters flocked there to fight were the abuses carried out at Abu Ghraib and Guantanamo."

35. Hina Shamsi, "Command's Responsibility: Detainee Deaths in U.S. Custody in Iraq and Afghanistan," *Human Rights First*, edited by Deborah Pearlstein, February 2006, <<http://www.humanrightsfirst.org/wp-content/uploads/pdf/06221-etn-hrf-dic-rep-web.pdf>> (16 February 2012), 1.

36. *Ibid.*

37. *Ibid.*

38. Phillips, *None of Us Were Like This Before*, 110-29. This chapter ("Crimes of Omission") is a well-researched summary of both the inadequacies of U.S. military investigations into detainee abuse and the causes of these inadequacies.

39. Phillips, "Inside the Detainee Abuse Task Force," *The Nation*, May 2011, 26-31, 26.

40. Center for Human Rights and Global Justice, Human Rights First, Human Rights Watch, "By the Numbers: Findings of the Detainee Abuse and Accountability Project," *Human Rights First*, 22 February 2006, <<http://www.humanrightsfirst.org/wp-content/uploads/pdf/06425-etn-by-the-numbers.pdf>> (16 November 2012), 2.

41. Phillips, *None of Us Were Like This Before*, 50-67, 179-201; Tony Lagouranis and Allen Mikaelian, *Fear Up Harsh: An Army Interrogator's Dark Journey through Iraq* (New York: New American Library, 2008), 57-140. Phillips describes waterboarding and other tortures at a facility run by an armor battalion that was never investigated for abuse. Tony Lagouranis describes abuse at a facility that was investigated and that an investigator confirmed as abusive of detainees. However, despite the investigator's recommending punishment, no punishment was delivered, and when Lagouranis later interrogated at this facility, the abuse seems to have gotten even worse—abuse which subsequently went uninvestigated. See also Jim Frederick's *Black Hearts: One Platoon's Descent into Madness in Iraq's Triangle of Death* (UK: Pan MacMillan, 2010), which describes abuses of both locals and detainees that went uninvestigated. Such evidence, while anecdotal rather than conclusive, indicates that publicized detainee abuse may have only been the tip of the iceberg of what actually occurred.

42. Office of the Surgeon Multinational Force-Iraq and Office of the Surgeon United States Army Medical Command, "Mental Health Advisory Team (MHAT) IV, Operation Iraqi Freedom 05-07, Final Report," *Army Medicine*, 7 November 2006, <http://www.armymedicine.army.mil/reports/mhat/mhat_iv/MHAT_IV_Report_17NOV06.pdf> (3 June 2013).

43. Sara Wood, "Petraeus Urges Troops to Adhere to Ethical Standards," *U.S. Department of Defense News*, 11 May 2007, <<http://www.defense.gov/News/NewsArticle.aspx?ID=45983>> (3 June 2013).

44. Office of the Surgeon Multinational Force-Iraq and Office of the Command Surgeon and Office of the Surgeon General United States Army Medical Command, "Mental Health Advisory Team (MHAT) V, Operation Iraqi Freedom 06-08: Iraq; Operation Enduring Freedom 8: Afghanistan," *Army Medicine*, February 2008, 14, <http://www.armymedicine.army.mil/reports/mhat/mhat_v/mhat-v.cfm> (3 June 2013).

45. *Ibid.*

46. The 2008 and 2009 surveys can be found at <<http://www.armymedicine.army.mil/reports/reports.html>>.

47. A 2008 Pew Report based on a survey of 23 countries described growing anti-Americanism across the world, concluding, "In the view of much of the world, the United States has played the role of bully in the school yard, throwing its weight around with little regard for others' interests," <<http://www.pewglobal.org/2008/12/18/global-public-opinion-in-the-bush-years-2001-2008/>>.

48. Tim Arango and Michael S. Schmidt, "Iraq Denies Legal Immunity to U.S. Troops After 2011," 4 October 2011, <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/10/05/world/middleeast/iraqis-say-no-to-immunity-for-remaining-american-troops.html?_r=1&partner=rss&emc=rss> (15 October 2011).

49. Douglas A. Wissing, *Funding the Enemy: How US Taxpayers Bankroll the Taliban* (Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 2012). Wissing's book is probably the best researched, most comprehensive open-source account of the extent to which American taxpayers unknowingly fund Afghanistan's insurgents.

50. Juvenal, XVI, translated by P. Green, quoted in Michael Grant's *The Army of the Caesars* (New York: M. Evans and Company, 1974), xxv.

51. Peter Fromm, Douglas Pryer, and Kevin Cutright, "War is a Moral Force," *Joint Force Quarterly* 64 (1st Quarter 2012).

52. For a philosopher's deconstruction of the Army Values and a more rational alternative, see Timothy Challans, *Awakening Warrior: Revolution in the Ethics of Warfare* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press), 2007, 85-91.

53. Samuel P. Huntington, *The Soldier and the State: The Theory and Politics of Civil-Military Relations* (Cambridge: Harvard College, 1957). Samuel Huntington famously described the peculiar skill of the military officer as being the successful "management of violence."



The Greatest Threat Facing the Army Profession

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IT'S ABOUT THE men next to you. That's it. That's all it is." This is the closing note of the movie *Blackhawk Down*, delivered by Sgt. 1st Class Norm "Hoot" Gibson (Eric Bana's Special Forces role). The line encompasses an idea with which most Americans—and all service members—are familiar. He's talking about loyalty.

Framing loyalty as the bonds between soldiers facing conflict together is a common way for us to think about loyalty in the military—particularly when we are applying it to the Army. It is a conception of loyalty that has been explored to explain why American soldiers fight, or the need for esprit de corps, or the strength of traumatic combat experiences.

Often, though, the loyalty felt between comrades is just the loyalty most easily understood and communicated—and we, as the Army Profession, *must* communicate loyalty. It is an Army Value, first in the mnemonic acronym LDRSHIP. The definition we officially provide is—

Bear true faith and allegiance to the U.S. Constitution, the Army, your unit and other soldiers. Bearing true faith and allegiance is a matter of believing in and devoting yourself to something or someone. A loyal soldier is one who supports the leadership and stands up for fellow soldiers. By wearing the uniform of the U.S. Army you are expressing your loyalty. And by doing your share, you show your loyalty to your unit.¹

This explanation states what the Army Profession expects of new members. It gives them a structure by which to arrange their loyalties. Yet, too many American soldiers come away from the Army Values with the wrong ideas about loyalty. Not understanding, and not living by, the values we profess is the greatest danger facing the Army Profession in the next decade.

As human beings, we naturally feel the strongest emotional bonds—we *feel* loyal—to those closest to us. Our emotional ties evoke a strong sense

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PHOTO: Pfc. Kevin March, an armored crewman assigned to 1st Battalion, 66th Armored Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, stands atop a cliff overlooking the Arghandab River valley, 31 January 2011.

of loyalty to family, to the team on the field, to the local gang, or to the military unit.² This loyalty is the default setting—the one our American culture reinforces with movies like *Saving Private Ryan*, with television like *Band of Brothers*, and with the endless echo chamber of the media. Military scholars often revert to the same default.

In “Why They Fight,” Dr. Leonard Wong, et al., agree heartily with historian S.L.A. Marshall’s observations about loyalty. In *Men Against Fire*, Marshall wrote, “I hold it to be one of the simplest truths of war that the thing which enables an infantry soldier to keep going with his weapons is the near presence or the presumed presence of a comrade. . . . He is sustained by his fellows primarily and by his weapons secondarily.” When Marshall observed that “Men do not fight for a cause but because they do not want to let their comrades down,” the Army War College authors went further. They argued that, in this modern era, American soldiers often “go to war” for larger reasons of ideology: patriotism, altruism, and the like. These men and women put their trust in the larger Army to frame the strategic direction of the war, but they place their loyalty with their comrades.³

So? What’s Wrong With This?

The problem is that we give credence, throughout the Army Profession, to the notion of a “conflict of loyalties.” Drill, small group, and platform instructors have spent so much energy hammering home to aspiring professionals the credo of loyalty to the men and women “next to you” that, in the hierarchy created by the Army’s official definition, the last “level” of loyalty has gained primacy in our minds.⁴

Couple that primacy developed from training and instruction with our emotional tendencies and, all too often, this small-unit loyalty becomes *the* value. Capt. Walter Sowden and Sgt. Maj. David Stewart take note of this in their paper “The Dilemma of Competing Loyalties in the Profession of Arms.” In the past decade, the Army Profession has suffered through a serious public infraction of the Army Ethic on average once a year—and the decision or action occurred in a small, cohesive, *loyal* unit.⁵

The tolerance American men and women have for toxic leaders within the profession evinces the dynamic of competing loyalties: men and women who bide their time and hold their tongues in the face of incredible disrespect because they do not want to

appear *disloyal*. That desire influenced subordinates to tolerate Lt. Gen. Patrick O’Reilly’s common threats to “choke” those around him and Col. Frank Zachar’s oft-voiced threats to stick an ice pick in the eye of the disloyal.⁶ Army professionals *feel* the need to be loyal, Lt. Gen. Walter Ulmer writes. “Subordinates are reluctant to identify their boss as toxic. They feel a loyalty and do not want to embarrass their unit.”⁷ All too often Army professionals choose not to speak—when a superior is wrong, when a superior is unethical, when a superior is toxic—because of the cultural power of loyalty.⁸

Our training and education system reinforces this conception of loyalty so often as men and women enter the profession that it becomes an active part of their identity. It becomes part of the culture, a given element of an Army professional’s emotional composition—he or she is loyal to their comrades, their battle buddies, their unit, first, last, always.⁹

This is important. It’s great for cohesion, for fighting spirit, for esprit de corps. It is terrible for ensuring that the Army Profession is stewarded into the next decade. This all-important loyalty to the small group can be in conflict to loyalty to the Army, to true faith and allegiance to the U.S. Constitution.

Because identity and emotional ties will easily overwhelm the intangible idea of allegiance to ideals,



Army Staff Sgt. Richard Grimsley greets an Iraqi girl at a checkpoint in the Madain region outside eastern Baghdad, 19 August 2009. (U.S. Army, Pvt. Jared Gehmann)

this conflict is rarely resolved. Behavior economist Dan Ariely in *The Upside of Irrationality* discussed something called “self-herding”; we make decisions based upon the actions we have taken and the decisions we made in the past—based on our ideas about who we are.¹⁰ To consult the high ideals embodied in the Constitution is too hard, and as psychologist Daniel Kahneman’s “law of least effort” observes, “Laziness is built deep into our nature.”¹¹ Too few Americans have read the Constitution, and digested the values and principles expressed, for the power of their oath to override the emotional tie to their ranger-buddy.

However, loyalty is not an expression only of emotion. It is also a function of identity. In his *Sociology of Loyalty*, James Connor wrote, “Our loyalties furnish identity.”¹² We are loyal to the things most closely tied to our identity. The problem is that, today, too much of the *identity* of an Army professional is built around the emotional bond of loyalty between fighting men on the field of battle, until it has power far from the battlefield. While we need that emotional connection for esprit de corps, we also need to step away from it and carefully reinforce an identity that venerates the Constitution.

We are loyal to the things most closely tied to our identity. The problem is that, today, too much of the identity of an Army professional is built around the emotional bond of loyalty between fighting men on the field of battle, until it has power far from the battlefield.

Constructing this identity is a career-long process. Dr. Pauline M. Kaurin delivered a paper at the Joint Services Conference on Professional Ethics in 2006, saying, “Rather than seeing identity as a possession, identity [even for the most senior Army professionals] “is something one is in the process of cultivating, leaving open the possibility of changing, evolving and altering one’s identity in response to either individual or social influences and concerns (or both.)”¹³

As Army professionals, we must recognize that the key element of our identity is our sworn oath to support and defend, to bear true faith and allegiance to, the Constitution of the United States of America. Sharing an identity centered on the Constitution builds more expansive ties than the insular, yet tight-knit bonds of combat. Bonds forged to support an ideal rather than forged in shared hardship or firefights allow for an institutional trust that suffers otherwise. As Michael Wheeler wrote for the *Air University Review*—

[This] is a different view of how loyalty can be inspired, in a manner such that the military goal of discipline can be achieved along with the social goal of having soldiers who are also reflective, morally sensitive men. This conception of loyalty is one of loyalty inspired by trust, where that trust resides in the moral integrity of the commander.¹⁴

That trust is the foundation of the Army Profession. If we purposefully build and continuously refine identities centered upon a desire to “establish Justice, insure [sic] domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity.”¹⁵

- We will have no more conflicts of loyalty. Either a decision, an action, will reflect our true faith and allegiance, or it will not. If our smaller groups take action counter to the Constitution, it is that group that is disloyal.

- We will more clearly understand our duty to strive for excellence in supporting and defending the Constitution and the mission defined within it.

- We will not wonder how to treat people with respect, but recognize that every person has intrinsic worth and we must recognize their dignity.

- We will not wonder what it means to offer selfless service, but recognize we derive fulfillment and worth from *servicing* the American people in a unique profession with individual expertise.

- We will not debate honor, but know that it is a reverence for honesty, candor, and the truth.

- We will strive every day for enough courage to live these values openly, with integrity, admitting our shortcomings, but striving.

We are working toward an achievable goal. Striving to be Army professionals, worthy of trust and sworn to support and defend the Constitution of the United States of America. **MR**

NOTES

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8. Fred Kaplan, *The Insurgents: David Petraeus and the Plot to Change the American Way of War* (Simon and Schuster: New York, 2013), 190. Kaplan illustrates this point when he records that "[Maj. Gen. Peter] Chiarelli wasn't the protesting or resigning type. He'd signed on to this assignment, to this war. He valued the Army's hierarchy and its ethos of loyalty. He gnashed his teeth over Casey nearly every day, but always spoke up on his behalf and never—at least at the time—spoke out against him."
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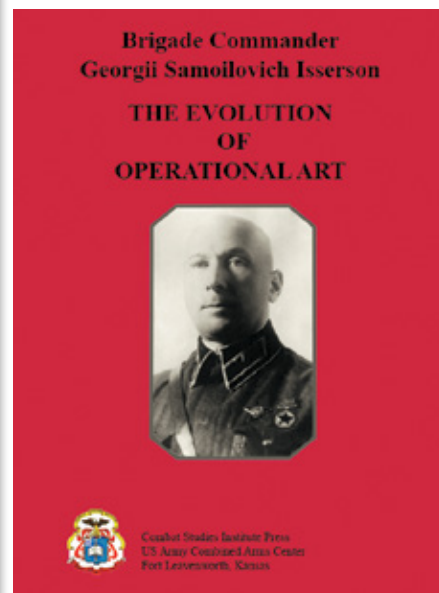
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TRUST

Implications for the Army Profession



This manuscript was initially prepared for and presented at a conference for the International Society for Military Ethics (ISME), 24-27 January 2012, San Diego, CA.

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PHOTO: U.S. Army Lt. Gen. Ray Odierno, commander of Multi-National Corps - Iraq, center, is flanked by Lt. Col. Kenneth Adgie, commander of the 1st Battalion, 30th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team (BCT), 3rd Infantry Division (ID), left, and Col. Terry Ferrell, commander of the 2nd BCT, 3rd ID, at Patrol Base Hawkes in Arab Jabour, Iraq, 21 October 2007. (U.S. Army, Staff Sgt. Curt Cashour)

TRUST IS AT the heart of the Army Profession. As the Army transitions from an era of substantial operational deployments to an era characterized by training and preparing the force for the next series of conflicts, it will face several threats to trust. An environment of reduced force structure and fiscal austerity will accompany the transition. How the Army profession fares in the coming decade will be based on the trust the institution engenders among its members (uniformed and civilian) and with the American people.

The Department of the Army-directed Profession of Arms (PoA) campaign reemphasized trust as an essential characteristic of the Army Profession along with military expertise, honorable service, esprit de corps, and stewardship of the profession.¹ The PoA campaign had its official kickoff in January 2011 under the leadership of Gen. Martin Dempsey, commander of Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC), and was later renamed the Army Profession (AP) Campaign. When Dempsey subsequently became the 37th chief of staff of the Army, his initial guidance to the force stressed Trust, Discipline, and Fitness as the three areas that he would discuss with commanders during visits around the Army. His successor, Gen. Ray Odierno, in his “Initial Thoughts” and “Marching Orders” communications, appropriately called trust “the bedrock of our honored Profession.”²

Trust is manifested in two interrelated but distinct realms. The campaign focused much of its effort on trust internal to the Army Profession. The other domain is external public trust, which is the trust held between the Army profession and the American people. The maintenance of internal trust among members of the profession, and between members and institution, is critical to the effectiveness of the Army. Maintenance of trust between the Army profession and the American people is critical to its legitimacy within our democratic society. While the Army profession currently enjoys a high level of public trust, that trust relationship is intensely fragile. The loss of either internal or public trust would constitute a major threat to the profession.

This paper examines three fundamental threats to the Army profession related to trust. The first threat to the profession is that leaders are not familiar enough with the frameworks to understand trust and do not have the language to discuss it effectively. The lack of understanding is most acute when examining differences in the nature of trust at the interpersonal, organizational, and public trust levels. Exploring the nature of trust and enabling Army senior leaders to guide professional dialogue about trust are among the principal purposes of this paper. The second threat to the Army profession is represented by the interpersonal trust findings identified during the 2011 Army Profession campaign. The campaign study effort included two Army-wide surveys, a survey of senior leaders, focus groups of Army personnel, and multiple senior leadership forums. The paper will present study findings about trust among various cohorts within the profession, and between members and the Army as an institution. The paper then examines the third threat to the profession, posed by perceived violations of

public trust. The public trust section of the paper will explore the nature of public trust, sources of public trust violations, and offer recommendations to address damage posed by various forms of public trust violations.

The Army Profession Campaign

Following the publication of The Profession of Arms White Paper that identified trust as “clearly the most important attribute we seek for the Army,”³ researchers identified five essential characteristics of the Army profession to represent the basis for establishing and sustaining trust. The themes depicted in Figure 1 give the impression that each is independent and distinct. In reality, these characteristics are overlapping, complementary, and interrelated

A critical omission of the original PoA White Paper was a taxonomy that included a definition of trust. A frequently cited definition of trust in literature is a “willingness to be vulnerable,” based on the “expectation that an exchange partner will

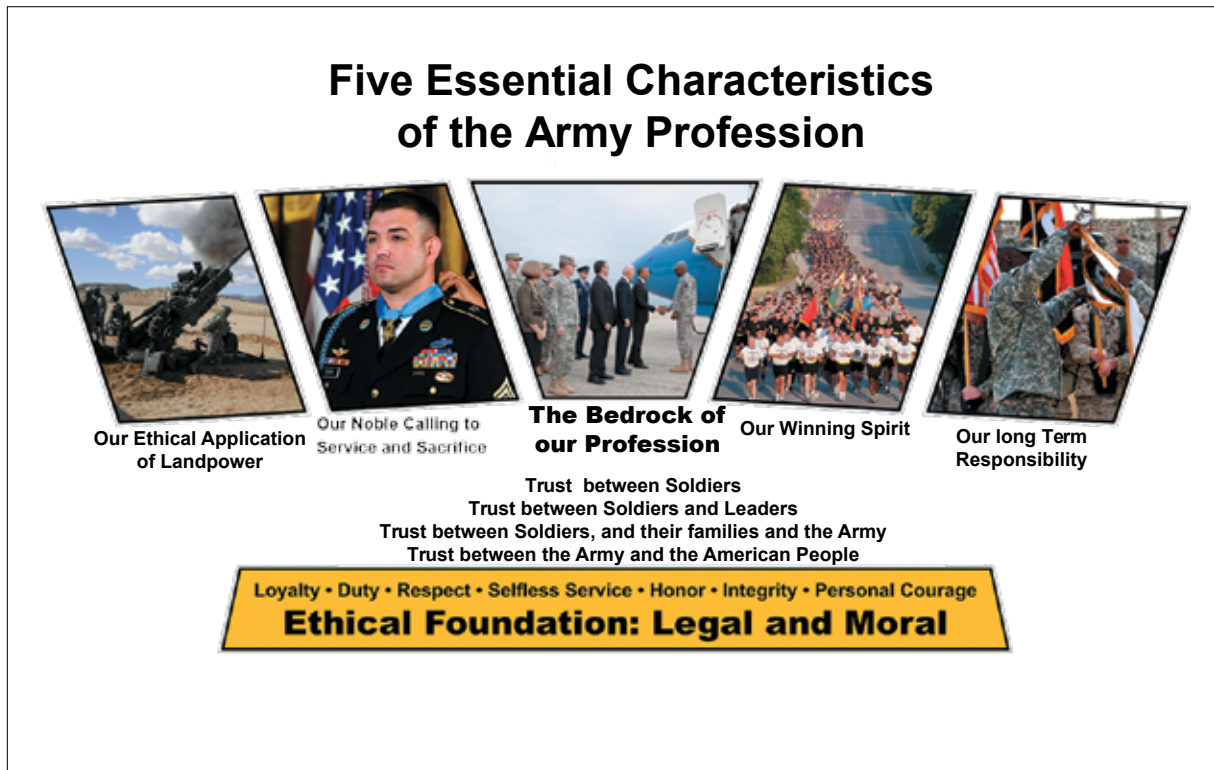


Figure 1
The Army Profession

not behave opportunistically.⁷⁴ This definition is consistent with the PoA White Paper since trust is considered a multilevel concept existing between individuals and within groups, organizations, and institutions as well as among institutions. Exchange relationships are part of everyday life. As organizational researchers assert, “[t]rust is a psychological state comprising the intention to accept vulnerability based upon positive expectations of intentions and behaviors of another.”⁷⁵

The concept of trust is most easily grasped at the interpersonal level—internal to the profession—the trust between leaders and followers and between soldiers within units, which are perhaps the most important for unit cohesion and effectiveness. Another important contributor to cohesion and effectiveness is the trust that exists between members of the Army profession and the bureaucracy, which should serve the Profession. These relationships help refine the definition to one more appropriate for the Army Profession (AP), so we adopt: “trust leads to a set of behavioral expectations among people [uniformed and civilian], allowing them to manage the uncertainty or risk associated with their interactions so that they can jointly optimize the gains that will result from cooperative behavior.”⁷⁶ Stated plainly, interpersonal trust is based on predictable behavior resulting in an individual’s perception and feeling that the gains associated with cooperation outweigh the uncertainty and risk inherent in the relationship.

Trust In and Of the Profession

Consistent with a 2011 U.S. Army Center for Army Leadership report which concluded, “Trust is currently a strategic advantage” for the Army,⁷ further analysis and deliberation over the course of the campaign established trust as an essential characteristic of the Army Profession. To achieve trust in the profession by its members requires a sustained relationship of trust among the members of the profession and its cohorts. Member trust in the Army as an institution is based on the relationship between members and the profession’s senior strategic leaders, as well as perceptions of the organizational bureaucracy that operationalizes those senior leaders’ choices.

The PoA/AP campaign surveys assessed trust across three dimensions: Trust Climate (within

units and organizations; trust in Army leaders), Institutional Trust, and Public Trust (of the American public, civilian authorities, and the media). The campaign findings reported members’ perceptions of trust toward internal constituents and external groups. Trust Climate is generally positive within organizations and at one level up or down, but not necessarily with respect to Army senior leaders. Institutional Trust findings are consistent with past studies conducted in the 1970s and 1990s, when the Army faced eras of transition and the attendant uncertainties.⁸ Then as now, soldier and civilian members of the Profession have a degree of skepticism (i.e., questionable trust) in Army-level decisions affecting them.

Recent fiscal requirements of the Budget Control Act of 2011 and the 2012 Defense Strategic Guidance have driven senior leaders to reduce end-strength and restructure the force, thus shifting resource prioritization and allocation to align with national civilian leadership guidance. Accordingly, perceived violations of commitments to Army Family and Community Covenants as well as to retirement programs are sources of concern and potential distrust within the institution.⁹ While military leaders report trusting their subordinate leaders

...perceived violations of commitments to Army Family and Community Covenants as well as to retirement programs are sources of concern and potential distrust within the institution

and the Army as an institution,¹⁰ there were some qualifications. These same members expressed less trust in elected or appointed civilian leaders.¹¹

The Army Profession study concluded this section of the report, saying:

Despite these concerns, Soldier surveys indicate that they overwhelmingly believe Army senior leaders will act in good faith and

do what is best for the Army. Even with this continuing trust, this is not an area in which the Army can ever relax its vigilance. Similarly, senior officers must be ever watchful of their actions, so as to never put at risk the trust soldiers place in them; for once lost, it could take years to re-build.¹²

This conclusion reinforces the findings of the Center for Army Leadership which reported Army leaders are perceived as competent professionals who trust each other and believe their unit will accomplish its mission. However, there appears to be less trust in institutional level leaders' ability to manage the future of the Army. Both interpersonal trust and institutional trust increase with rank—the more senior the individual, the more positive are assertions of trust and confidence in others and the Army as an institution.¹³

The Trust Challenge

Interviews with commander (O-5/O-6 level) and senior enlisted (E-9) focus groups revealed a perceived lack of trust and confidence in subordinate leaders' expertise (knowledge, skills, and abilities) for garrison (home station) operations. They cited a lack of experience among midgrade officers and non-commissioned officers (NCOs) required for competence in the home station environment. These factors reinforce the concept that competence and expertise are major components of trust at the individual and organizational level.¹⁴

Within the Army, but especially among these midgrade leaders, lack of trust is related to the perception of a culture that fails to exhibit candor, does not permit honest mistakes, and where top-down loyalty is perceived as weak (i.e., loyalty to subordinate members is disproportionate or lacking). In addition, the perception exists among soldiers that senior leaders are not candid with their superiors, military or civilian. Such perceptions are characteristic of poor leadership environments and were cited in two *Army Times* articles in 2011 related to toxic leadership, which were based on Center for Army Leadership data and reports.¹⁵

Lack of trust in civilian officials as well as significant distrust of the media by members of the profession pose additional risk.¹⁶ Distrust of elected officials and the media can exacerbate the Army's separation from the society it serves. These indicators of mistrust

point to potential challenges for civil-military relations and the trust placed in the U.S. military by society.

At the turn of the 20th century, former Secretary of War Elihu Root, identified three great problems of “national defense, military science, and responsible command,” with each having a trust component inter-related with the four other characteristics identified in Figure 1.¹⁷ Applying Root's framework, national defense requires that citizens trust their Army to *serve* honorably and defend against all enemies, foreign and domestic. Military science conveys the technical *expertise* of trusted professionals to ethically employ military power to secure U.S. national interests and those of its allies. Responsible command embodies the *trust* that military professionals will be good *stewards* of people, facilities, equipment, and funds placed under their care.¹⁸

Trust Reexamined

At the organizational level, researchers have categorized trust as behavioral (predictive), cognitive-based (perceptions) or affect-based (feelings).¹⁹ In reviewing literature, we offer four components of trust that reflect the behavioral, cognitive and affective nature of trust:

- Credibility of *competence*.
- *Benevolence* of motives.
- *Integrity* with the sense of fairness and honesty.
- *Predictability* of behavior.

These components apply not only to individuals, but also to organizations and systems within the Army. That organizations have the ability to accomplish tasks and missions in an efficient, effective, and ethical manner is important to people. Also critical is the perception that organizational procedures (policies and regulations) are established for the common and greater good. Further, an essential element of trust is the feeling and belief that members behave according to a set of values that apply to all within the profession. Finally, trust builds on consistent achievement of moral objectives that advance both stakeholder and member feelings of good will. Violation of these conditions may lead to a lack of trust or, more destructively, a sense of distrust.

Public Trust

The construct of public trust toward the Army is a critical relationship that needs further explication. Business scholars Laura Poppo and Donald J.

Component (Element)	Based on perceptions of:	Likely causes of violations	Remedy
Benevolence (affective)	Good will & Kindness	Civil-military cultural gap; Legitimate claims of victimization	Increased external control & monitoring
Integrity (cognitive)	Honesty & fairness; Adherence to commitments	Self-Serving or opportunistic behavior	Characterize the behavior as an anomaly; Create Organizational distance; or correct misperception/attribution of motive
Competence (cognitive)	Skills & Knowledge -especially in core functions	Failures	Acknowledge, then proactively & visibly take steps to correct
Predictability (behavior)	Repetitive precedent setting behavior	Inconsistent, contradictory or deceptive behavior	CANDOR- Immediately acknowledge and remedy inconsistent behavior; correct misperceptions, explain apparent incongruence

Creating trust takes a lifetime; losing it takes a moment.

Figure 2
Public Trust: Violation-Remedy Matrix

Schepker offer the definition that public trust is “the degree to which the general public as a stakeholder group holds a collective trust orientation toward an organization.”²⁰ For the Army, this represents the aggregate perception of trust held by the American public in the Army, as a profession, distinguishable from both interpersonal and organizational trust.

Through examination and understanding of the nature of public trust, the profession’s leadership might avoid the general commentary offered by organizational scholars Kouzes and Posner.

Many wonder if there are any leaders left who have the strength of character to sustain their trust. Substantial numbers of people believe that leaders lack the capability to guide business and governmental institu-

tions to greatness in this intensely turbulent and competitive global marketplace. There is the gnawing sense in many corridors that leaders are not competent to handle the tough challenges; that they are not telling us the truth; and that they are more motivated by greed and self-interest than by concerns for the customer, the employees, or the country.²¹

Drawing from a variety of disciplines, political scientist Seok-Eun Kim conceptualized trust as the multifaceted integration of behavioral, cognitive, and affective elements. These three elements merge “into a mutually supporting construct that is collectively called *trust*.”²² Poppo and Schepker extended previous trust literature by developing a more nuanced multifaceted construction of public

trust. Consistent with the works of other scholars, they operationalize public trust across three components: benevolence, integrity, and competence. The addition of the predictability (reliable, consistent performance) component captures the role repetitive successful performance plays over time in building public trust.

There are two particular elements of public trust that differentiate it from the personal and organizational constructs. First, the public does not have (or does not take) the opportunity to become intimately aware of the Army's structure, processes, operations, activities, and information. The public's lack of a direct experience with the Army does not support first-hand assurances or the predictability associated with personal or organizational trust. Second, given the collective nature of public trust, the Army cannot appeal to an individual or a collective of like-minded stakeholders to explain or remedy breaches of trust, as it can with internal members. Except for the broadest constructs of good will, social commitment, or competence shared by the American public, aggregating individual perceptions of trust is largely rendered moot.²³ Actions taken to appease one group or individual will likely be viewed and weighed differently by other individuals or elements of the society.

Public trust determinations are therefore based on a collective perception of the Army's organizational legitimacy gained primarily through limited knowledge of the organization and impersonal observations of the institution in a variety of contexts. Knowledge and observations of the Army as an organization are typically filtered through the interpretive lens of the media, and often complicated by the perspectives of multiple stakeholders. These intermediary conduits provide symbolic substitutes for the intimate knowledge and relational observations associated with personal and organizational trust determinations.

Counter-intuitively, an informed American public can make valid judgments despite information flowing through these intermediaries.²⁴ Citing Samuel L. Popkin's reasoning voter model, authors Cooper, Knotts, and Brennan suggested "that citizens are surprisingly adept at making good decisions with limited information," despite arms-length relationships devoid of direct inti-

mate knowledge.²⁵ The issue for the Army is to determine how much influence it should exert to shape public perceptions through its official messaging.

This fundamental issue links closely to the role public trust plays in reconciling civil authorities' desire for formal accountability balanced against the Army's desire to achieve effectiveness through the exercise of discretionary professional judgments.

Public trust is required for the Army to retain the flexibility inherent in using professional discretion, and to avoid costly and often rigid bureaucratic controls and excessive external monitor-

...issue links closely to the role public trust plays in reconciling civil authorities' desire for formal accountability balanced against the Army's desire to achieve effectiveness through the exercise of discretionary professional judgments.

ing.²⁶ Retaining public trust is especially important as the United States finds itself in an austere fiscal environment. Previously, such post-conflict periods have been accompanied by a heightened public distrust and fear of (1) maintaining a fiscally burdensome large standing army, and (2) a wasteful and opportunistic "military-industrial complex" (a phrase coined by President Eisenhower in 1961). This distrust generates resistance to Army professional judgment and increased demands for higher accountability through surveillance and monitoring by those outside of the profession, among them are Congress, the media, and the American public.

The integrity, competence, predictability, and benevolence components of trust provide a useful framework to examine violations of public trust. Integrity and competence are cognitive assessments, predictability is associated with patterns of behavior, and benevolence assessments are personal-relational (affective) determinations. To

achieve consensus regarding what benevolence means at the collective level is difficult. Since benevolence-based trust is inherently relational and idiosyncratic, synthesizing consensus at the aggregate level of public trust is not easy. However, public consensus may coalesce over time around legitimate claims of victimization to an individual (or a group sharing some common identity). Such incidents may negatively impact public trust linked to benevolence.²⁷ Public trust violations based on benevolence are generally remedied by increased external control and monitoring, limiting managerial flexibility, and suspending professional discretion.²⁸

Determinations of public trust associated with integrity, competence, and predictability are arrived at through reason. People often base these on incomplete knowledge informed by the public's perception of the practices or principles on which the organization has agreed to abide. Integrity determinations reflect perceptions of an organization's adherence to implicit or explicit commitments, and normative assessments of its honesty and fairness in meeting those commitments. Lack of integrity can easily lead to perceptions of opportunism.



Members of the 30th Civil Engineer Squadron participate in a squadron-organized run to raise funds for the Pat Tillman Foundation in honor of fallen service member Cpl. Pat Tillman, Vandenberg Air Force Base, Calif., 17 April 2010 (U.S. Air Force, Tech. Sgt. Herman Ybarra)

Benevolence Violations

Mishandling of contemporary cultural issues could lead to violations of benevolence-based public trust. Benevolence violations are most likely to occur over issues associated with the difference between U.S. civilian and military cultures. The benevolence component of public trust is dependent on affective notions related to feelings and emotion triggered when normative values associated with kindness or goodwill are violated.

When the Army gets ahead of or lags behind social norms, it provides fertile ground for perceived benevolence violations of public trust. The Army's assessment of the role of women in combat is a contemporary example of the Army's culture evolving at a faster pace than American society. Despite reports of sexual assaults that challenge public trust, people perceive the Army's culture as more progressive and tolerant of women in combat and mixed-gender training than American society.²⁹ Conversely, despite the transparency and limited number of adverse incidents associated with the policy change, the repeal of "don't ask don't tell" is a case where the public perceived the Army's culture as lagging behind American society's normative assessment of homosexual service in the military.³⁰

Operational needs dictate the Army's position in these cases. To the Army, the realities inherent in maintaining the most effective all-volunteer force, not issues grounded in normative goodwill or kindness considerations, motivate policy choices. In both cases, the Army thought its policies were just and aligned with maintaining good order and discipline. In other words, Army policy positions aligned with the Army's cultural values.

In benevolence violation cases, the public perceives the Army's behavior as victimization of service members, and Army professionals do not interpret their actions as a benevolence issue (they see it in terms of effectiveness and discipline), corrective actions to remedy perceptions of victimization are unlikely to come from within the Army. Therefore, benevolence-based violations, by their nature, will most often resolve through externally imposed accountability controls and monitoring.

The Army can take action to avoid benevolence-based violations. Such action stems from classic civil-military relations theory. The military profession approach is to subordinate professional culture

to civil authority, willingly accepting societal direction and limits while maintaining an autonomous culture rooted in military effectiveness. The civil-military relationship entails the Army's leadership exercising professional discretion and autonomous action consistent with the values of the society it serves.

Counter intuitively, the subjective control or industrial-occupational civil-military relations models may offer the Army the best chance of preserving autonomous professional discretion. These models suggest that the best means of avoiding benevolence-based violations may be through policies and practices that more closely align military and civilian cultures (e.g., increased Reserve Officer Training Corps commissioning, broadening experiences, and Army leader development in a civilian setting). Maintaining a professional culture that differs from society in significant ways to achieve imagined greater military effectiveness, under this model, is counterproductive.

Integrity Violations

The Pfc. Bradley Manning trial (WikiLeak's informant) and the Cpl. Pat Tillman incident are two cases of perceived integrity violations linked to perceptions of opportunism at the individual and institutional levels of analysis respectively. With Pfc. Manning, the opportunism and integrity violations were at the individual level.³¹ In the Cpl. Pat Tillman case, the institutional integrity of the U.S. Army was called into question. Many in the public believed the U.S. Army exploited the patriotism and celebrity of Cpl. Pat Tillman for opportunistic reasons. The Army's leadership was accused of withholding details of Tillman's death until after the highly publicized memorial service, to protect the Army's professional reputation.³²

Public perception of Army officers violating the long-standing tradition of avoiding partisan politics is another potential threat to integrity violation. The line delimiting a violation in this area is evolving; the stigma associated with an officer voting or affiliating with a political party has all but disappeared. However, perceptions of partisan politics manifested in command climate, professional advice, and public communications are widely viewed as integrity violations of the Army's professional ethic. The firing of Gen. Stanley McChrystal is a recent example of

a uniformed officer being held accountable for a perceived violation. He was perceived by the public as condoning, if not fostering, a politicized command climate.³³

The collective and complex nature of the Army as an organization offers some bureaucratic protection against individual level integrity violations that are perceived as non-systemic by the public. In such incidents, the Army must acknowledge the violation, take action to distance itself from the behavior, and demonstrate a history of consistent behavior that suggests that the violation is an anomaly. Addressing an organizational level integrity violation is more difficult, especially if it is perceived to have been sanctioned by the Army's senior leadership.

Public Misperceptions—The Non-Violation Violation³⁴

When it comes to public trust, perceptions of trust violations can be as damaging as an actual violation. Varying degrees of bias and limited contextual understanding among stakeholders within the general public can lead to faulty attribution of motive and distrust in any of the component categories that frame a trust relationship. The perception of deception is an example of an integrity-based public trust non-violation.

Adherence to the Army's professional ethic precludes Army leaders from intentionally deceiving subordinates, the American public, or legitimate civil authority; however, several situations could result in the perception of deception, which would have the same effect as a violation if not countered immediately. The perception of an integrity violation may be based on any number of factors. Incorrect attribution of motives and misinterpretation of the communication based on individual or group bias are among the most common factors contributing to misperception.

Bob Woodward reported one such perceived violation in his book, *Obama's Wars*. Woodward claimed that the Obama administration did not trust its military leadership to offer viable military options to advance the administration's desired strategic agenda to rapidly draw down forces and end the war in Afghanistan. The administration's distrust of senior Army leaders, and the perception that their advice was politicized or insubordinate, is popularly reported as the reason President Obama

replaced five senior commanders in Afghanistan during his first term.³⁵

Accommodation of various audiences and stakeholder perspectives is a challenging task for senior leaders offering testimony at public hearings or conveying messages to support executive branch policy decisions. They need to guard against perceptions of deception in these highly politicized contexts. Public communications appearing to lack candor or driven by political correctness could be perceived as deceptive.

As empowered professionals, senior officers are expected to balance the obligations of loyalty to civilian authority with the candor and personal courage expected by members within the Department of Defense and with the American public. Army senior leaders' ability to communicate complex messages to multiple diverse audiences in these contexts has met with mixed success. The virtues of loyalty and candor must be closely guarded and balanced in highly politicized settings, where statements can unintentionally lead to perceptions of deception.³⁶ The service chiefs engagements in budget and posture hearings for fiscal year 2014 indicate whether senior military leaders are up to the challenge of navigating the potential mixed-message minefield of these budget battles.

Public statements by retirees and veterans present an integrity-based vulnerability to the Army's hold on public trust, especially if those statements appear to be motivated by political or ideological agendas.³⁷ The retiree or veteran might be an Army critic or advocate. In either case, the retiree or veteran is perceived as a credible intermediary informing the public about the Army. As civilians with intimate knowledge of the military, these retirees and veterans are entitled to their opinion and their right of free speech; but the perceived politicizing violates the Army's tacit professional code of ethical conduct.

As advocates or critics, retirees and veterans who politicize Army equity issues present a unique and largely uncontrollable vulnerability to the Army's public trust.³⁸ The Army profession can suffer at the hands of soldiers transitioning back into society as well. Soldiers re-entering American society risk integrity violations if they are perceived as flagrantly displaying an attitude of entitlement.³⁹ In addition, public criticism of the nation's civilian

leadership by retired generals, dubbed "the revolt of the Generals" by the media, was a high visibility example of a violation that crossed the line.⁴⁰ Chairman of Joint Chiefs of Staff General Dempsey clearly stated his concern, "If someone uses the uniform, whatever uniform, for partisan politics, I am disappointed because I think it does erode that bond of trust we have with the American people."⁴¹

Internal fractious bickering is another threat to integrity-based public trust. During periods of reduced conflict, the American public may perceive the Army as an opportunistic component of a self-serving civil-military industrial complex, behaving more as a political interest group than a military profession. This perception can be reinforced when the services or Army components disagree regarding budget reduction or resource prioritization choices in the public arena. The last round of infighting between Army components over reduced defense spending occurred in the mid-1990s.⁴² Perhaps a harbinger of things to come, Senator Patrick J. Leahy, commenting on the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2012, stated that "entrenched bureaucratic interests still resist what most Americans now accept as an accomplished fact. The Joint Chiefs fought our efforts to bring the chief of the Guard Bureau into the 'Tank' not because they misunderstand the value the Guard and Reserve, but precisely because they fear that value proposition may threaten the size and budget of their active components in the years to come."⁴³

To the public, who seldom have a direct role in resolving these disagreements, this bickering may

In a democratic system, however, civilian decision authorities are informed by robust public debate; silence is not always a viable option.

appear to be self-interested opportunism. Inter-service and component infighting is unseemly of a profession. Internal squabbles appear to violate the leadership principles of stewardship and the Army value of sacrifice in the national interest. Not engaging in the public quarrels is the best

way to avoid this perceived violation of trust. In a democratic system, however, civilian decision authorities are informed by robust public debate; silence is not always a viable option. Therefore, the most effective means of retaining public trust is to address accusations of opportunism directly, counter misrepresentation of motives, and present resource prioritization choices based on societal good, founded on empirical evidence, and not motivated by parochial service or Army component interests.

Competence Violations

Competence-based public trust depends on the public's perception that an organization possesses the requisite skills and knowledge to perform the functions society expects of it, and to do so in a manner the society approves. "When competence violations threaten the legitimacy of an organization's core function and *raison d'être*, they are more damaging to firm performance than integrity violations," which can be attributed to the aberrant behavior of individuals or small groups.⁴⁴ Unlike integrity violations, which do not transfer to the institution if the violation is acknowledged, dealt with, and perceived as non-systemic by the public, competence violations do transfer to the institution.

The U.S. Army and its leaders currently enjoy the public's trust as warriors and combat leaders. Army leaders are generally trusted to competently and ethically represent the American people, solve tactical problems, and achieve operational objectives in combat and other challenging environments. Public confidence does not automatically translate to the domains of strategy-policy leadership⁴⁵ or strategic management and force development responsibilities.⁴⁶

The public's impression that Army senior leaders do not think or act strategically or that they lack the skill and knowledge to effectively manage the Army's bureaucracy at the strategic level may be disputed. Army leaders have made significant and effective changes to organization, training, recruiting, and modernization policies and programs, while simultaneously engaging in two demanding theaters of war over the course of a decade. Regardless, the perception persists that Army senior leaders are weak at the strategy-policy interface, and are challenged with the

complexities of strategic level force development and management.

The Army's ethos and culture feed into these public perceptions. During military operations, Army leaders focus their efforts on effectiveness over efficiency when it comes to decisions that put soldiers or the mission at risk. Army culture lauds leadership and eschews management descriptors in the cultural idioms used in performance appraisals, awards, citations, etc. Accordingly, the culture rewards preference for leadership duty with troops over institutional level management and Army staff assignments.

Army leaders are fluent in the language, imagery, and narrative necessary to explain Army doctrine and campaigns at the tactical and operational levels. Yet they appear challenged in offering a compelling Landpower narrative to guide prioritization of capabilities and resourcing decisions in the national security discourse. To bolster public confidence, senior leaders need to convey the strategic relevance of the institution they are leading, and develop a vision and a lexicon that permits them to engage effectively in policy and resource debates.

These debates will determine how the Army will balance, link, and make choices among force structure, modernization, and readiness to manage risk across components. On a grander level of government analysis, Kim suggests that "declining competence of agency members, in response to increasing demands related to complex problems causes distrust of government."⁴⁷ To encourage the development of senior leader management skills and knowledge, the Army should find ways to embrace the role strategic management plays in the language of the profession.

Predictability Violations

The predictability component of public trust captures the role of repetitive behavior in creating and maintaining institutional legitimacy. Predictability is founded on a common understanding of what constitutes "desirable, proper, or appropriate" behavior between the American people and the profession. It establishes what the Army should do, and how it should go about doing it as a generalized construction across Army and society collectives. As with other forms of trust, public trust "...is extremely hard to develop between the public and organiza-

tions, [and] it is much easier to destroy.”⁴⁸ The predictability component of public trust is developed through consistent repetitive behavior; but it only takes one confirmed violation to damage that trust.

The Army’s vulnerability to the predictability component of public trust is related to action horizons and strategic patience. Action horizons are the timelines on which leaders expect their actions to produce definitive results or trends. Army leaders are habituated to making quick decisions to effect change within action horizons based on command tour lengths; but strategic decisions to effect organizational and cultural change may require years, if not decades, before they produce results. The strategic patience required to manage complexity has a corollary in the operational mission sets of security cooperation, stability operations, and security force assistance. Senior Army leaders appreciate the importance of patiently maintaining a strategic vision while adapting to the immediate demands of a changing operational environment during these missions.

Army leaders need to apply the same patience and adaptability to organizational issues. Civilian lead-

ers retain the authority to direct short-term actions based on austere resource conditions and political considerations outside the Army’s professional jurisdiction. Yet Army senior leaders need to maintain a focus on the service’s strategic vision (aligned with civilian policy and direction) and persist in the face of resource challenges. The Army Profession’s senior leadership has a duty and stewardship obligation to clearly and publically articulate the strategic risks associated with landpower management and employment choices, thereby informing civilian decision-making.

Conclusion

Generally, the Army has sustained a tradition of trust at the individual and organizational levels, and is held in high regard by the American public. While this trust is a strategic advantage, it is fragile and the Army needs to guard against complacency. To maintain internal and public trust in the Army and its leaders, there are a number of areas that require the profession’s constant vigilance (See Figure 2).

At the individual and organizational levels, trust



(U.S. Army, Spc. Ken Scar)

U.S. Army 1st Lt. Graham Hatch walks the site of a traffic checkpoint near Forward Operating Base Super FOB, in Paktika Province, Afghanistan, 13 March 2012.

is most closely associated with competency to lead and manage. In operational theaters, junior leaders are empowered and make decisions based on minimal guidance to take action within the intent of mission command. In the home station environment, junior leaders fear being stripped of their authority, autonomy, and freedom of action, which could undermine the trust relationship developed with their superiors.

Organizational trust is related to perceptions of senior leader competence in managing service-level processes and establishing priorities for the force (e.g., personnel, training, acquisition, sustainment, family programs). These perceptions are particularly acute in light of the projected austere resource environment, impending end strength draw-downs, and trade-offs in resourcing. Breach of trust perceptions based on prioritization decisions could undercut the strong perceptions of trustworthiness between cohorts within the Army.

Currently, the Army enjoys the public's trust and the profession is held in high-esteem by most Americans. Public trust is the most fragile echelon of trust; it has to accommodate a broad range of stakeholders, indirect access to information, and various motivations and interpretations of leader behavior.

Potential areas of concern for the Army Profession, exacerbated by the current economic environment and pending strategic choices, include:

(a) Perceptions that end strength and budget cuts will render the Army incapable of responding to threats and defending the nation's interests in a flexible and reliable way. (Competence and Predictability)

(b) Perceptions of the Army as self-serving, exploiting soldiers, exhibiting poor stewardship (fraud, waste, abuse, and mismanagement), or lacking a spirit of burden sharing as the society shoulders economic hardships to reduce national debt. (Benevolence and Integrity)

Future Research

Several areas are rich for further research to better understand, build and sustain trust of the Army Profession. Leaders of the profession should seek better understanding of trust internal to the Army. Research efforts need to assess and track the trust relationship among Army leader and subordinate cohorts as the institution transitions from a deployed force at war to a regionally aligned, home station-based force.

Researchers should evaluate the effectiveness of professional military education systems to develop Army leader competency with regard to strategic management of the profession. They should conduct and publish empirical studies—drawing on academic theory and practitioner experience—to contribute to senior service college curricula. Such topics necessarily include strategic decision making, strategic force development decision process analysis, and strategic management to support national strategy-policy interfaces.

A detailed examination of trust between the Army and its external stakeholders—public trust—is equally important for senior leaders of the Army Profession. Cross-disciplinary longitudinal studies could help identify antecedent factors and trends associated with public trust of the Army profession across several domains (business organizations, civic bodies, government agencies, and other nations).

This article examined inter-personal, organizational, and public trust of the Army profession. An aspiration of the Army Profession should be the development of professionals who trust in one another and in the institution's ability to serve the Nation, while caring for its people. The Army Profession must exemplify essential characteristics to be trusted by its soldiers and civilians members as well as the American public and international partners. **MR**

NOTES

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2. See Raymond T. Odierno, "Initial Thoughts—Chief of Staff, U.S. Army" (Washington, DC: Department of the Army, 7 September 2011) and Raymond T. Odierno, *America's Force of Decisive Action: Marching Orders* (Washington, DC: Department of the Army, January 2012).

3. *The Profession of Arms* (Fort Monroe, VA: U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command 8 December 2010).

4. Phanish Puranam and Bart Vanneste, "Trust and governance: Untangling a tangled web," *Academy of Management Review* (2009), 11-31.

5. Denise M. Rousseau, Sim B. Sitkin, Ronald S. Burt, and Colin Camerer, "Not so different after all: A cross-discipline view of trust," *Academy of Management Review* (1998), 393-404.

6. Gareth R. Jones and Jennifer M. George, "The experience and evolution of trust: Implications for cooperation and teamwork," *Academy of Management Review* (1998), 531-46.

7. James P. Steele, *Army Trust: A Multi-level Review* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Center for Army Leadership, U.S. Army Combined Arms Center, 2011).

8. *USAWC Study of Professionalism*, known as *The Westmoreland Study* (Carlisle, PA: U.S. Army War College, 1970), and *Army Training and Leader Development Panel Officer* (Fort Monroe, VA: U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command, 2002).

9. See Alex Keenan, "U.S. Military (Ret.): Commission could cut benefits, but talks will take years, at least," *Army Times* (29 June 2012), <<http://www.armytimes.com/money/retirement/offduty-military-retired-commission-could-cut-benefits-talks-take-years-070212w/>>.

10. *U.S. Army Profession of Arms Campaign 2011: Interim Report* (Fort Monroe,

VA: U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command, August 2011). Survey respondents expected senior uniformed Army leaders to make the right decisions (77.3 percent); trust their unit/organization's leaders to make right decision (85.9 percent); are confident in the Army as a profession that will sustain the trust of the American people (93.9 percent) and will accomplish the mission (93.2 percent); and there was an expressed belief that US society trusts the Army to do what is right in defending the Nation (93.7 percent).

11. *Ibid.* Responses were varied with regard to the statement "I trust senior civilian leaders within the Army to make right decisions," with 16.5 percent choosing "disagree or strongly disagree," 27.1 percent "neither disagree or agree," and 56.3 percent "agree or strongly agree."

12. *Army Profession Campaign Annual Report* (Fort Eustis, VA: U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command, 2 April 2010), 8.

13. Steele, *Army Trust*.

14. Don M. Snider, *Once Again, The Current Challenge to the US Army During a Defense Reduction: To Remain a Military Profession* (Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, 8 February 2012).

15. Michelle Tan, "Leading vs Leaving: Lack of development up the chain prompts many soldiers to get out," *Army Times* (23 May 2011), 16-17; Michelle Tan and John Gould, Toxic Leadership: Army wants to rid top ranks of toxic leaders. *Army Times* (2 August 2011); and Steele, *Antecedents and consequences of toxic leadership in the U.S. Army*.

16. Charles D. Allen, "Assessing the Army Profession," *Parameters* (Autumn 2011), 81-82.

17. Elihu Root, "The Army War College, Address at the Laying of the Cornerstone, Washington, D.C., February 21, 1903," and "The Army War College, Address at the Dedication, November 9, 1908," in *The Military and Colonial Policy of the United States: Addresses and Reports* by Elihu Root (1916), collected and ed. Robert Bacon and James Brown Scott (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1916), 121-29.

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21. James M. Kouzes and Barry Z. Posner, "Introduction—On Credibility and the Restoration of Trust and Confidence," in *Credibility: How Leaders Gain and Lose It, Why People Demand It*, 2nd Edition. (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2011).

22. Seok-Eun Kim, "The role of trust in the modern administrative state: An integrative model," *Administration and Society* (2005) 37:5, 621, 611-635.

23. Poppo and Schepker, 127.

24. See James Surowiecki's *The Wisdom of Crowds* (2005), for an excellent analysis of this phenomena, and a useful taxonomy of when crowd wisdom has purchase.

25. Christopher A. Cooper, H. Gibbs Knotts, and Kathleen M. Brennan, The importance of trust in government for public administration: The case of zoning. *Public Administration Review* (2008) 68:3, 460.

26. Cooper, Knotts, and Brennan, 459-68.

27. Poppo and Schepker, 127.

28. The 1996 reports of sexual harassment, assault, and rape of initial-entry trainees at Aberdeen Proving Ground and other locations resulted in extensive congressional, Department of Defense, and Department of the Army investigation and internal reviews. These investigations and reviews, a form of external monitoring, resulted in numerous external controls being placed on TRADOC training bases. Policy controls included everything from drill sergeant selection procedures and psychological screening, to mandatory values training and training standard adjustments. For a detailed examination see Anne W. Chapman (2008). Mixed-Gender Basic Training: The U.S. Army Experience, 1973-2004. Fort Monroe, VA: U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command, <<http://www.tradoc.army.mil/historian/pubs/mixed%20gender.pdf>>.

29. See "DOD Annual Report on Sexual Assault in the Military FY2011," from <http://www.sapr.mil/media/pdf/reports/Department_of_Defense_Fiscal_Year_2011_Annual_Report_on_Sexual_Assault_in_the_Military.pdf> (30 December 2012); see also: House Armed Services Committee Chair Duncan Hunter's comments during a 21 April 2004 hearing before the HASC, which clearly articulate the congressmen's belief that as recently as 2004, the American public was not ready to accept congressional sanction of women in combat, from <http://www.archive.org/stream/performanceofdep00unit/performanceofdep00unit_djvu.txt> (20 December 2011).

30. Crosby Burns and Alex Rothman, "The Repeal of Don't Ask, Don't Tell—1 Year Later," Center for American Progress, from <<http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/lgbt/report/2012/09/20/38764/the-repeal-of-dont-ask-dont-tell-1-year-later/>>.

31. Julie Tate and Ellen Nakashima, "Bradley Manning court-martial opens," *The Washington Post*, June 3, 2013 (on line) from <http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/bradley-manning-court-martial-opens/2013/06/03/9c65ea48-cc51-11e2-8f6b-67f40e176f03_story.html>.

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33. Kimberly Dozier, "McChrystal takes blame for 'Rolling Stone' article" (Associated Press, 5 January 2013), from <<http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/politics/2013/01/05/mcchrystal-rolling-stone-article-memoir/1811171/>>.

34. The authors are not implying that Army's senior leaders do not speak candidly or that they do not balance stewardship of the profession with national interest. We are saying, this is a tough business. Senior leader communications must account for trust relationships with multiple stakeholder audiences.

35. Daniel Greenfield, *Obama's War on American Generals* (19 February 2013), from <<http://frontpagemag.com/2013/dgreenfield/obamas-war-on-american-generals/>>.

36. As with any communication cycle, the public and other audiences share a responsibility for effective communication. They must listen with care to the whole message offered by senior leaders and they must consider the context in which it is delivered. In some cases, they must listen to several communications of the message in several contexts to gain a full appreciation for the nuance of the message, or challenge the comment in feedback exchanges to grasp the full meaning. This may be an unrealistic expectation. So the burden of clear communication rests with the senior leader delivering the message.

37. Several ideas expressed in this section were inspired by conversations between the authors and Dr. Lenny Wong of the U.S. Army War College's Strategic Studies Institute. To further examine the national debate on retired officers speaking out, see—

Responsibility to speak-out:

Martin L Cook, "The Revolt of the Generals: A Case Study in Professional Ethics," *Parameters* 38:1 (Spring 2008): 4-15, <<http://handle.dtic.mil/100.2/ADA485882>>

John Rupp, *Armchair Generals or Concerned Patriots: The Revolt of 2006*. U.S. Army War College USAWC Program Research Paper (9 May 2008), 1-25.

David Wood, "Military Officers Chafe for Bigger Role in Policy Decisions," *PoliticsDaily.com* (4 October 2010), <<http://www.politicsdaily.com/2010/10/04/military-officers-chafe-for-bigger-role-in-policy-decisions/>>.

David H. Gurney and Jeffrey D. Smotherman, "An Interview with Michael G. Mullen," *Joint Force Quarterly* 54 (Third Quarter 2009): 7-11, <<https://digitalndulibrary.ndu.edu/u2/ndupress.21107>>.

Responsibility to remain subordinate:

Mackubin Thomas Owens, "Rumsfeld, The Generals, and the State of U.S. Civil-Military Relations," *Naval War College Review* 59:4 (Autumn 2006): 68-80, <<http://handle.dtic.mil/100.2/ADA519804>>.

David Margolick, "The Night of the Generals," *Vanity Fair* 560, April 2007, 246.

Matthew Moten, "The Army Officer's Professional Ethic—Past, Present, and Future," Carlisle Barracks: U.S. Army War College, Strategic Studies Institute, February 2010, <<http://handle.dtic.mil/100.2/ADA514082>>.

Joseph J. Collins, "What Civil-Military Crisis?" *Armed Forces Journal* 147:6 (February 2010): 18-21, <<http://www.armedforcesjournal.com/2010/02/14/19089/>>.

38. Retired officers who were highly publicized and vocal critics of the Rumsfeld Defense Department and their fellow senior officers include: MG John Batista, MG Paul Eaton, MG Charles Swannack, LTG Gregory Newbold, GEN Barry McCaffrey, and GEN Anthony C. Zinni. Also, "entertainment news" media are increasingly seeking out retired officers to advocate for or refute official positions, and to provide comment on alleged motives and rationales.

39. Thomas E. Ricks, "Sure, You're a Vet, but that doesn't mean you have license to act like a jerk," 17 June 2011, from <http://ricks.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2011/06/17/sure_you_re_a_vet_but_that_doesn_t_mean_you_have_license_to_act_like_a_jerk>.

40. David S. Cloud, Eric Schmitt, and Thom Shanker, "Rumsfeld Faces Growing Revolt by Retired Generals," 13 April 2006, New York Times from http://www.nytimes.com/2006/04/13/washington/13cmd-military.html?_r=0.

41. Jennifer Griffin, "Dempsey 'disappointed' by anti-Obama campaign by ex-military members," Foxnews.com, 21 August 2012, from <<http://www.foxnews.com/politics/2012/08/21/dempsey-disappointed-by-anti-obama-campaign-by-ex-military-members/>> (30 December).

42. Robert Goldich, CRS Report 97-719F, *The Army Reserve Components: Strength and Force Structure Issues*, updated 15 July 1997.

43. Patrick J. Leahy, "Sen. Leahy issues statement on final passage of national defense authorization act for Fiscal Year 2012," *US Federal News Service* (Washington, DC: HT Media Ltd, 2011).

44. Poppo and Schepker, 132.

45. See intro, in Charles D. Allen and Stephen J. Gerras, "Developing Creative and Critical Thinkers," *Military Review* (November-December 2009): 77-83.

46. See, HASC Chair, Duncan Hunter's scathing remarks to LTG Joseph L. Yakovac, MG Buford C. Blount III and the acting Under Secretary of Defense (Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics) the Honorable Michael W. Wynne, during a 21 April 2004 hearing before the HASC Committee on the Armed Services, <http://www.archive.org/stream/performanceofdep00unit/performanceofdep00unit_djvu.txt> (20 December 2011). At one point he told these soldiers, "You guys" can't tie your shoe laces!"

47. Kim, 626.

48. Poppo and Schepker, 130.

MR Review Essay



REMEMBERING VIETNAM

Arnold R. Isaacs, Journalist and
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ALTHOUGH AMERICA'S PRESENT conflicts are a different war fought by a very different U.S. military force in an even more different world, Americans still keep bumping into memories of Vietnam. Four decades after the last U.S. combat forces left that war, its ghosts continue to hover over today's. But there is no agreement on what those memories are, or what those ghosts have to tell us.

On one side is a wish to fit Vietnam into a comforting narrative of our history as a righteous, successful nation, whose wars are honorably fought to protect cherished freedoms. A striking case in point is the website the Defense Department has created for its 50th anniversary Commemoration of the Vietnam War, which began last year. Though one of the commemoration's stated goals is to "provide factual information about the Vietnam War" (the others are to "honor our Vietnam Veterans" and "increase public appreciation of their service") a visitor to the site would not learn that there was any controversy about national policy or any troubling questions about how the war was conducted. Nor would he learn the small detail that ultimately, our side lost.

This rose-tinted (or perhaps red-white-and-blue-tinted) memory of Vietnam may be understandable as an expression of respect for the soldiers who served there, and as a reaffirmation of patriotic feeling. It has little to do, however, with historical knowledge and understanding. Glossing over a great national failure may make veterans and their countrymen feel better, but it also keeps us from knowing things that might help leaders, soldiers, and citizens make wiser decisions in the conflicts of the present era.

That knowledge can be unwelcome and painful. Those are certainly the feelings evoked by Nick Turse's *Kill Anything That Moves* (Metropolitan

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PHOTO: U.S. soldiers form a search-and-destroy patrol in Phuoc Tuy Province, South Vietnam, 1966 (U.S. Army)

Books, New York, 2013), an unsparing account of American complicity in a huge amount of civilian death and suffering in Vietnam. Turse writes from an ideological position at the opposite pole from that of the 50th anniversary website. He sees the U.S. war in Vietnam as an immoral and unjust conflict in which atrocities were not accidents or isolated crimes but reflected the true nature of the war as it was conducted by American forces. Hence his subtitle: *The Real American War in Vietnam* (emphasis added).

That overbroad condemnation will anger many veterans and other readers. But it would be a mistake to dismiss the facts set out in this book just because one dislikes the author's political slant. His conclusions may be overstated, but Turse makes a strong case that the dark side of America's war in Vietnam was a good deal darker than is commonly remembered. If *the American war* was not a crime against humanity, Turse confronts us with convincing evidence that there was *an American war* that it is hard to call anything else—and that we should not scrub out of our history.

Turse covers two separate issues. One concerns murders and other abuses that clearly violated the laws of war and official U.S. rules of engagement. The other concerns the massive use of firepower that was standard practice in U.S. military operations—and killed far more civilians than died in outright war crimes. One notorious example was a six-month campaign by the U.S. 9th Infantry Division code named Operation Speedy Express, in which at least 5,000 civilians died, mainly from artillery fire and air strikes. That is ten times the death toll in My Lai, the site of the best known and most deadly U.S. atrocity.

In the first category, Turse details a fairly long list of incidents that, he states, indicate criminal acts on a scale “far beyond anything that can be explained as merely the work of some ‘bad apples,’ however numerous.” A handful of these events made news at the time. Most remained unknown until Turse uncovered the details, initially drawn from long-ignored military reports and expanded through numerous interviews with veterans in America and survivors in Vietnam. From that fuller record, he concludes that such crimes were not an aberration but “the inevitable outcome of deliberate policies, dictated at the highest levels of the military.”

That judgment is debatable. The archived files that Turse discovered contain reports on more than 300 incidents involving verified or alleged war crimes by U.S. troops—a horrifying number, and surely not the full tally, since there must have been many more that were never brought to the authorities' attention. But can several hundred or several thousand crimes really be considered representative of American soldiers' actions over the course of an eight-year war in which a couple of million U.S. troops were involved?

The dispassionate answer to that question is probably, “No.” But if you ask different questions, the answers are more disturbing. Did prevailing *authorized* military practices fail to show reasonable concern for Vietnamese lives? Did those practices and senior officers' attitudes—particularly the relentless pressure for high body counts—create a climate in which war crimes were more likely? Did unit leaders up and down the chain of command largely turn a blind eye to atrocities and unnecessary civilian deaths? On these, Turse leaves no reasonable doubt that the answers are “Yes,” “Yes,” and “Yes.” And those yeses show, also beyond reasonable doubt, that even if many Americans served honorably in Vietnam, what our nation and our military leadership did there gives no cause for sentimental celebration.

There's a troubling footnote to Turse's work. The archive that led to his quest contained reports collected by a Pentagon task force called the Vietnam War Crimes Working Group. Routinely declassified after the required 20-year wait, the file was sent to the National Archives, where Turse discovered it in 2001. But soon after his research became known, the documents were pulled from the public shelves and remain unavailable. Even decades later, it seems, the official response to American war crimes is to try to hide them, rather than acknowledge the truth.

As grim as it is, Turse's account actually does not portray the full measure of civilian suffering in South Vietnam. That is because he does not show that those civilians were victims of both sides, not just one. The Vietnamese Communists had only a small fraction of the firepower employed by U.S. forces, but their war, waged with mines, rocket and mortar attacks, assassinations, executions, and forced conscription—not to mention the imprisonment of tens of thousands in “reeducation” camps after the war—also brought plenty of fear, loss, and death to the Vietnamese countryside over many years.

It's likely that some of those incidents too are remembered in the villages where Turse did his interviews. (For a vivid account of brutality on both sides, one need only read *When Heaven and Earth Changed Places*, further discussed below, whose author comes from the same coastal province where Turse collected much of his material.) But telling those stories would have been dangerous, because the Vietnamese authorities cling to their myths, too, and cases of Communist oppression conflict with the official heroic legend of the war. In Vietnam, it is safer by far—indeed, encouraged—to talk about American atrocities. Whether Turse appreciated that or not is not clear, but except for a single mention of the mass executions by North Vietnamese troops in Hue in 1968, he says nothing about Communist conduct at all. Their acts in no way excuse the American record of careless slaughter and destruction, but without them, the full story of what happened to the Vietnamese people in that war remains incomplete.

Also missing from *Kill Anything That Moves* is any acknowledgement of Americans who served in Vietnam and were not murderers. Turse doesn't say, quite, that all American soldiers were war criminals, but he doesn't say that they weren't, either. Those who didn't commit or cover up atrocities remain invisible in this book. The truth is more ambiguous—as shown in a remarkable letter from a veteran named Richard Brummett, written 30 years after Brummett came home from Vietnam and worth quoting at some length:

The first six months I served in C Troop 1-4 Cav in the First Infantry Division. The second six months in Viet Nam was with A Troop 1-1 Cav of the First Armored Division. That squadron, at large in Viet Nam without its division, later became a part of the new 23rd Infantry Division. These two cavalry troops were identical in TO&E and each were commanded by West Point educated captains. What was not identical was the philosophy of war as practiced by these two captains and that made all the difference.

While in the 1-4 Cav I could not understand what all the protest back home was about as we were genuinely trying to win

the hearts and minds of the Vietnamese people. Our war was being fought fiercely but honorably. One example will tell much: One day my M48A3 tank hit a tree and said tree then fell into a rice paddy. Our captain had us seek out the farmer, apologize to him and then help him get the tree out of his paddy.

Transferred to the 1-1 Cav in January 1968 I felt I had landed in hell. The tanks were reassuringly the same homey hulks, the Vietnamese were the same ornery little land mine laying critters, my fellow troopers were the same unwilling draftees.

The captain was insane.

This officer gave license to, indeed, required savagery. One land mine and a damaged tank equaled one village destroyed. One dead trooper and everyone who could be found in the village was killed. Two US KIA, two villages. A stop for lunch on a hill top was followed by shelling a distant village just for the hell of it. A newly issued bridge tank was "tested" by using it to flatten a mud and thatch village with the bridge. Likewise, a new flame throwing track was tested on a village which had not offered any overt sign of hostility. And etc. and etc.

The worst was the one on one barbarism encouraged by the captain and one of his platoon sergeants. The platoon leaders . . . well, let us say the second lieutenants had little influence on the course of events.

Fortunately, I was the driver for the platoon sergeant of the Third Platoon who simply did not allow the worst to happen in his platoon, or at least within his sight. Our tank and its covering APC was an island of sanity in a war gone very, very mad. With thirty years to think this over it is clear to me leadership is everything in war.¹

In a later letter, Brummett added this thought: "I can not say how many armored cavalry troops and squadrons went by the book and how many were uniformed savages. So, 'Win Their Hearts and Minds' or 'Kill Anything That Moves.' Both policies came from West Point."

Turse mentions Brummett, briefly, but not this letter. Nor does he mention anything comparable to Brummett's first unit—or for that matter, anyone like the platoon sergeant in his second. If he had, *Kill Anything That Moves* would be a fairer, stronger book.

The war in the pages of H.R. McMaster's *Dereliction of Duty* (HarperCollins, New York, 1997) is hard to connect with the one we read about in *Kill Anything That Moves*. Turse's war is a chaotic canvas of blood, explosions, terror, degradation, and moral disintegration. McMaster's is abstract, with a sound-track not of gunfire but the shuffling of paper and coffee cups clinking on conference-room tables. The two books differ in another way, too. One can't imagine any U.S. military professional reading *Kill Anything That Moves* without painful feelings. *Dereliction of Duty* is also critical of American military leadership, but many of those same professionals have taken comfort in its conclusions—possibly more comfort than is really warranted by the story it tells.

McMaster, now an Army major general, was a major when *Dereliction of Duty* was originally published in 1997. In it, he examines events not in Vietnam but in Washington: specifically, the decisions in 1964 and early 1965 that set the United States on the road to full-scale military intervention in the war. McMaster focuses on the relationship between the civilian leaders of the era (President Johnson, Defense Secretary Robert McNamara, and other senior figures) on one side, and the uniformed military leadership, represented by the Joint Chiefs of Staff, on the other. His often-quoted final paragraph states this verdict: "The war in Vietnam was not lost in the field, nor was it lost on the front pages of the *New York Times* or on the college campuses. It was lost in Washington, D.C., even before Americans assumed sole responsibility for the fighting in 1965 and before they realized the country was at war; indeed, even before the first American units were deployed."

Perhaps because it absolves the military leaders who actually ran the war, as well as the soldiers who fought it, many officers and others sharing conventional military views embraced that analysis (though no doubt some wouldn't mind reserving a little blame for the *Times* or college students too). At least one JCS chairman made it required reading for the generals under his command.

Along with the book's conclusion, enthusiasts embraced a single strand of its narrative: the one showing that civilian leaders made their decisions without seriously seeking military advice. Typical of that reaction is one pundit's comment applauding the book for showing how Johnson and McNamara "systematically conspired to prevent the Joint Chiefs of Staff from performing their duty." Similarly, a reviewer for a military journal spotlighted the portrayal of "McNamara and his 'whiz kid' civilian assistants . . . rejecting military advice about which they knew or cared little," while their boss, LBJ, distrusted military men and "regarded their advice with contempt."

Those admirers of *Dereliction of Duty* generally agree with one of its criticisms of the Joint Chiefs—that they sinned by not publicly protesting or resigning rather than carry out policies they did not agree with. As far as it goes, that charge is clearly true. But it overlooks a far more significant failure, which is that even if LBJ had been willing to listen, his military advisers had no useful advice to give. If the U.S. government marched (or stumbled) into war without any clear idea how to fight the Vietnamese revolutionaries, that intellectual failure occurred on both banks of the Potomac, not just one. McMaster's research documents that the Chiefs' strategic thinking was as vague and incoherent as that of their civilian superiors. For example, when intelligence reports warned in late 1964 about deteriorating battlefield conditions in South Vietnam, the Chiefs dithered for six weeks before coming up with a list of proposed actions intended to "demonstrate resolve," "increase pressure" and "pose a plausible threat" that might cause North Vietnam's leaders to stop supporting Communist insurgents in the South—exactly the same kind of mushiness that critics have denounced for years in blaming LBJ for not giving the armed forces a clear objective in Vietnam.

Criticizing Johnson and McNamara for ignoring military advice is a valid argument. Saying that was why the war was lost is more questionable. For that to be true, one has to assume that success was possible in Vietnam, that America's military leadership knew how to win there, and would have won if their advice had been followed—in other words, that the war could have been won in Washington, instead of lost. Nothing in *Dereliction of Duty* supports any of those assumptions.

McMaster himself, in an interview a couple of years after the book was published, observed that the decisions he wrote about “mired the United States in a costly war *that could not be won at a cost acceptable to the American public*”²² (emphasis added). That is inconsistent with his stated conclusion that the war was decided in Washington, but it is a far more plausible judgment on the true nature of a great American mistake.

There’s a reason why the United States went to war in Vietnam without a clear discussion of how the war would be won. The reason is that how to win was not really seen as a question that had to be asked. Winning was taken for granted. The choice was whether to intervene or not. If we did, neither civilian nor military decisionmakers imagined that U.S. military power could fail to achieve U.S. objectives. With few exceptions, other Americans couldn’t imagine it either.

That unthinking confidence was a key thread in America’s failure, Neil Sheehan argues in his book *A Bright Shining Lie* (Random House, New York, 1988). The generals who led the U.S. military into the war “assumed they would prevail in Vietnam simply because of who they were,” Sheehan wrote. Neither they nor the American public could grasp how a lightly armed force in a poor country could hold out against overwhelming U.S. military power. Because the American concept of war considered *only* the equations of armed strength and destructive force, ignoring all other factors, Americans failed to see either their enemy’s other strengths or their ally’s crucial weaknesses, which combined in the end to doom the U.S. effort.

Sheehan’s account of the American war is told through the story of a single American, John Paul Vann. Vann’s highest military rank was lieutenant colonel, and his highest civilian post was as the chief U.S. official in one of South Vietnam’s four military regions—positions that would not ordinarily have historic significance. But Vann’s story, as Sheehan tells it, stunningly captures the essence of America’s experience in Vietnam. Indeed, if it were not a true story, *A Bright Shining Lie* would be one of the great novels of that or any American war.

Vann arrived in Vietnam in March 1962, just as the few thousand U.S. military advisers there were moving into a more active combat role. He died there in June 1972, in the final year of the U.S.

military effort, when his helicopter crashed near Kontum in South Vietnam’s central highlands. Known for exceptional physical bravery, Vann excelled for most of that time in vision and moral courage as well. He saw many things more clearly and honestly than his superiors, and had the integrity to tell them what he saw: that corruption and poor leadership in the South Vietnamese system were undermining American goals; that U.S. tactics were causing vast numbers of unnecessary civilian casualties; and that even with a staggering advantage in firepower, the American strategy of attrition could not succeed in a war where the enemy could almost always choose when and where to fight and could avoid battle when losses became too great.

However, there was another side to Vann’s character. The moral hero in his professional life also committed monstrous acts in his personal life, mainly due to a twisted, compulsive sexuality. When Vann retired from the Army after coming back from Vietnam in 1963, he let his admirers—Sheehan among them—believe that he had sacrificed his career by telling the truth about the war to his superiors. But that was a lie. Vann ruined his military career by personal misconduct, not by challenging official deceptions.

In 1965, as the main-force U.S. war got under way, Vann returned to Vietnam as a civilian. He served there for the next seven years while American troop strength rose to over half a million, then fell back under President Nixon’s “Vietnamization” policy. As those events played out without the victory Americans had been so sure of winning, Vann continued to display physical courage, but over time, his clear-sighted vision began to fade. As honest as he had been with himself and others about the failings of particular U.S. actions and policies, Vann was still a product of the era of American supremacy, a believer in the righteousness of America’s purposes and the limitless reach of its strength.

In the end, he was unable to accept that America’s armed forces could not achieve national goals. Meanwhile, the war’s violence and the repeated tests of his bravery became his escape from personal demons. By the time he died, Sheehan writes, “the John Vann his old friends had known had disappeared into the war. Each year South Vietnam

had become a more perfect place for him. The war satisfied him so completely that he could no longer look at it as something separate from himself. He had finally bent the truth about the war as he had bent other and lesser truths in the past.”

Among the thousands of books that have been written on Vietnam, *A Bright Shining Lie* stands out for its unbent truths on America’s war there and the reasons it failed—reasons that lay in many historical circumstances but also in the character of a generation that believed too strongly in a myth of American infallibility.

Long after the war ended, some still clung to the belief that Americans could not lose a war—and did not lose in Vietnam. One such believer is Lewis Sorley, who declared in his book, *A Better War* (Harcourt Brace and Company, New York, 1999): “There came a time when the war was won. The fighting wasn’t over, but the war was won.”

It can be argued that that statement defies not just history but elementary logic. It is hard to see how a war has been won if the enemy is still fighting, much less if the bloodiest battles are still to come, as Vietnam’s did in 1972—well after Sorley says victory was achieved. It seems even more illogical to declare that a war was won if, after it ends, the enemy rules the country where the war was fought. Yet the claim that the U.S. military effort actually succeeded in Vietnam has become a theme for a number of historians. That alternative narrative of the war is relevant to recent policy debates, not just to the historical argument about Vietnam. That’s because the case made by Sorley and others is, in essence, that the United States succeeded in Vietnam by adopting many of the methods and principles now labeled as “counterinsurgency warfare.” Thus, rather than being remembered as a mistake, the American effort in Vietnam becomes a positive model for present-day strategists looking for solutions in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The “better war” of Sorley’s title is the one led by Gen. Creighton Abrams after he succeeded Gen. William Westmoreland in mid-1968 as the top U.S. commander in Vietnam. In place of his predecessor’s search-and-destroy strategy, Abrams declared protecting South Vietnam’s population as the main mission of U.S. forces. That policy, then usually called “pacification” rather than “counterinsurgency,” was undoubt-

edly wiser than Westmoreland’s. But Sorley’s claims for its success and his uniformly rosy spin on Abrams’s generalship rest on a deceptively selective version of the facts.

His argument that the Abrams strategy “won” the war is based on the low level of enemy action in the years after Abrams took command. But while the relative quiet on the battlefields in 1970 and 1971 may have been partly a result of pacification successes, it did not mean that U.S. actions had decisively destroyed the enemy’s ability to fight. The lull also occurred because the Communist forces deliberately avoided battle in order to rest, reequip, and replace losses. When they returned to the fight in 1972, in the attack that became known as the Easter Offensive, the fighting was more intense than in any previous stage of the war—far heavier, by any reasonable estimate, than would have been possible if they had really been defeated just a year or so before.

Some argue that to the extent that the 1972 attack was mounted by regular North Vietnamese units, it is valid to claim that pacification defeated the guerrilla threat in the South. Even if it were true, that is a meaningless argument, since U.S. efforts all along were directed at defeating Hanoi’s forces. And in fact, although the headlined battles in 1972 were with main-force units, local guerrillas reappeared strongly in many areas as well. In the revisionist narrative, the Easter offensive is invariably portrayed as a clear victory for the South, but that too is false. With U.S. air support, Saigon’s troops successfully defended the three province capitals that came under attack, but lost almost all of the chain of inland bases they had held as an outer defense line protecting the populated coastal lowlands, while unprecedented casualties and destruction permanently depressed civilian morale. The Communist side also suffered huge losses without achieving its goals. By any honest assessment, the 1972 fighting was not a victory for either side, but recreated the old stalemate at a higher level of violence, in which South Vietnam’s national will and fragile institutions continued to weaken over the next three years.

The “we really won” narrative leaves only one possible explanation for the final outcome of the war. It’s the same as H.R. McMaster’s, though transplanted to a decade later: that the war was not lost in Vietnam but in Washington—specifically,

because of reductions in military aid to South Vietnam in the final year of the war. That too is a hugely oversimplified answer to a complicated question. The aid cuts (not a cut-off, as is often alleged) were a factor in South Vietnam's defeat. But seeing it as the *sole* reason perceives the end of the war with the same illusion that permeated U.S. decision making at the beginning: that winning or losing was exclusively in American hands. For Sorley and others who have written in a similar vein, the war unfolded and ended entirely as the result of American decisions. In their lens, nothing is seen of the character, strategies, strengths, and shortcomings of either our enemy or our ally, or the idea that the leadership, skill, nerve, will, and endurance of the two Vietnamese sides had any bearing on the outcome.

The historian Ronald Spector, in his review of *Dereliction of Duty*, recalled a story about the Confederate general George Pickett's response when he was asked why the South lost the Civil War. "Well," Pickett is supposed to have replied, "I kinda think the Yankees had a little something to do with it."³ The Vietnamese had something to do with America's failure in Vietnam, too, a truth that Americans would have done well to remember before plunging into war in other distant, unfamiliar places. Sadly, a mass of evidence suggests that we did not learn that lesson well enough.

A good deal of that evidence can be found in *Cultures of War* (W.W. Norton, New York, 2010), by the renowned historian John W. Dower. *Cultures of War* is not about Vietnam, but focuses on wars before and after. It examines the influence of cultural attitudes in two events of the U.S.-Japanese war in World War II, Japan's decision to attack Pearl Harbor, and the American decision to drop an atomic bomb on Hiroshima; and in two events of the war-on-terror era, the 9/11 attack, and the U.S. invasion of Iraq. The parallels Dower finds in those two eras are arresting in themselves. They also evoke unmistakable echoes of Vietnam, even where that war is not mentioned.

An example is this passage from a "supporting paper" submitted in early 2005 for a Defense Science Board report on the U.S. effort in Iraq:

To put it bluntly, [U.S. forces] never possessed an understanding of the political and religious nature of their opponent. . . . It is clear that Americans who waged

the war and who have attempted to mold the aftermath have had no clear idea of the framework that has molded the personalities and attitudes of Iraqis. Finally, it might help if Americans and their leaders were to show less arrogance and more understanding of themselves and their place in history. Perhaps more than any other people, Americans display a consistent amnesia concerning their own past, as well as the history of those around them.⁴

Change the name of the country (and perhaps delete the word "religious") and every other word in those sentences could have been written about the U.S. war in Vietnam. The same is true in many other places in Dower's book, as where he notes the American habit of disparaging enemies from other races and cultures. That tendency leads Americans to chronically underestimate the people they are fighting, like the former Navy commander at Pearl Harbor who admitted, "I never thought those little yellow sons-of-bitches could pull off such an attack, so far from Japan."

The word "little" is as significant as the word "yellow" in that sentence, Dower points out, connoting "not merely people of generally shorter physical stature, but more broadly a race and culture inherently small in capability and in the accomplishments esteemed in the white Euro-American world." Both the attitude and the word persist in American culture. Three decades after Pearl Harbor, Henry Kissinger contemptuously called North Vietnam "a miserable little country."⁵ Three more decades after that, in a new century, a conservative columnist offered this policy advice: "Every ten years or so, the United States needs to pick up some small crappy little country and throw it against the wall, just to show the world we mean business."⁶

That arrogance has consequences. In seeing their opponents as inferior primitives, Dower writes, Americans fail to see anything of an enemy's "diversity, complexity, autonomy, history, and historical consciousness." That leads to costly mistakes in planning and carrying out wars. The same blindness about our friends can be even more damaging, though military theorists and historians often overlook that point. In Vietnam, miscalculating the qualities and

capabilities of our ally almost certainly had more to do with America's failure than any miscalculations about the enemy. One could probably say the same about American frustrations in Afghanistan as well.

Some wars can be understood through accounts of battles, weapons, and diplomatic exchanges. Vietnam's can only be understood in the context of a broader history and how that history was experienced by the Vietnamese themselves. Two books that can illuminate that experience for American readers are Duong Van Mai Elliott's *The Sacred Willow* (Oxford University Press, New York, 1999) and Le Ly Hayslip's *When Heaven and Earth Changed Places* (Doubleday, New York, 1989).

The authors have sharply different backgrounds. *Sacred Willow*, which tells the story of four generations in Elliott's family, is a saga of the mandarin class, the educated, privileged Vietnamese whose power and status were most threatened by the Communist revolutionaries. Often, they sided with the French colonial rulers and then with the Americans against the revolutionary side. But many made those choices out of loyalty only to their own interests, not to any principle or national goal. One of Elliott's brothers became an officer in the French army, but told his family, "Don't worry. I might be in their army, but I'm not going to do any fighting for them. Why should I die for them?"

To an extent many Americans were unable or unwilling to see during their war, a great many members of the Vietnamese elite who prospered from the U.S. presence had much the same attitude. This was the class that produced nearly all South Vietnam's political leaders, top military officers, and senior bureaucrats; a class that grew rich from corruption and purchased draft exemptions or paid bribes for safe noncombat assignments for their sons while peasant families lost their homes and fields and village boys did the dying. Elliott grew up with her family's fear and hatred of Communism, but came to see South Vietnam with more critical eyes: a fractured society, with no system, no ideology, and no leadership that could unite Vietnamese for a common goal. "Gradually," she writes, "it dawned on me that it was not communist cleverness or trickery that was making us lose. We were losing because of ourselves."

Le Ly Hayslip shows us the peasant's war, not the mandarin's. Even for those who believe they know something about the war, hers is a searing story. As a young girl in her village in Quang Nam province, Hayslip became a lookout and messenger for the local guerrillas, then was jailed and tortured by South Vietnamese police, then sentenced to death by the Viet Cong, who suspected her of becoming a government informant. The men who were sent to execute her raped her instead, then let her go, sparing her life but leaving her dishonored, with no chance to marry or have a family. Fleeing her village, Hayslip joined the new wartime world of millions of uprooted peasants trying to survive in South Vietnam's cities. In Danang and later in Saigon, she was a maid, a black market trader, a hospital attendant, a waitress, and on one occasion a prostitute, then met and married an American construction worker who brought her (but only after she paid huge bribes for a passport and visa) to the United States.

When Heaven and Earth Changed Places is about much more than Hayslip's own ordeal. It also tells about the destruction of her family and an entire way of life at the hands of "the Vietnamese on both sides who were making our country not just a graveyard, but a sewer of corruption and prison of fear."

In her family, no one escaped the war's ravages. Her mother, like Le Ly, also came under suspicion by the Viet Cong and had to leave her home. Later, her father was arrested as a suspected Communist and badly beaten by government soldiers; then, when the Viet Cong tried to use him to make Le Ly enlist as a saboteur, he killed himself to keep her out of danger. Her five siblings were all scattered by the war, as were the rest of her relatives and neighbors who lost their homes and land and everything else that once made sense of their lives. As one reviewer commented, if "telling how it really was" is supposed to be the ultimate praise for writing about war, *When Heaven and Earth Changed Places* tells how it *really* really was—a war of immense and needless suffering that if remembered truthfully, bears no resemblance to the patriotic myths of either side.

Two other titles are worth mentioning here. Both are novels showing the war from the Communist side, in a very different light from that

side's heroic legend. *The Sorrow of War*, by Bao Ninh, was published in Vietnam, but years after it appeared in the West. Duong Thu Huong's novel *Without a Name* remains banned; after it was published abroad, its author was expelled from the Communist party and briefly imprisoned.

Fortunately, America's myth-makers do not have the power to suppress books that challenge their myths. But the impulse to erase painful truths from our Vietnam memories has been a powerful one. It has several causes. One is that it helps today's Washington elite avoid difficult truths about the present wars as well. Another is that it is convenient for politicians and pundits who profit politically from current versions of American nationalism. Americans in general

prefer a memory that does not contradict the myth of a successful, benevolent nation. And no doubt many would like to put the experience of Vietnam veterans in a more positive, patriotic light.

Those veterans deserve recognition, to be sure. But treating them as children who can't face troubling facts is a poor way to honor them. Turning the history of Vietnam into a false feel-good fable, like that being promoted in the Pentagon's 50th anniversary observance, does not truly respect the service and sacrifice of the Americans who fought there or the better qualities of the country they served. To the extent that it keeps us from seeing what we should have learned from that war, it is also a serious disservice to the soldiers we ask to fight our wars today. **MR**

NOTES

1. The letter, written in 1999, was made available to the author by Brummett and is quoted here with his permission. In recent years he has made regular visits to work with humanitarian assistance projects in Vietnamese villages, including one that he and his fellow soldiers burned to the ground in 1968.

2. McMaster was interviewed for a 1999 PBS Frontline documentary. Full text is at <<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/military/etc/lessons.html>>.

3. Ronald Spector, "Cooking Up a Quagmire," *New York Times Book Review*, 20 July 1997.

4. Defense Science Board, *2004 Summer Study on Transition To and From Hostilities Supporting Papers*, January 2005, 67-68. The full text is available at <<http://www.dtic.mil/cgi-bin/GetTRDoc?AD=ADA438417>>.

5. Henry Kissinger, *White House Years*, 1120.

6. Jonah Goldberg, "Baghdad Delenda Est, Part Two," *National Review*, 23 April 2002. That particular sentence, Goldberg wrote, paraphrased an earlier speech by the neoconservative pundit Michael Ledeen.

The Future Army

Capt. Tim Bauler, *AR, 5-15 CAV*—It was great to read Gen. Robert Cone’s article “The Future Army: Preparation and Readiness” (*Military Review*, July-August 2013).

I am glad that he refused to parse his words and simply stated that we have developed a reluctance to place top-tier officers in the institutional Army. He’s absolutely correct. This is not to trivialize the service rendered over the last decade. Desperate times indeed, but now the day has come to recognize and rectify the desperate measures we had to take. Nearly all company grade combat arms officers are familiar with the phrase “then I got stuck in TRADOC for a while.” They are similarly familiar with the reaction it usually elicits—a shudder and a look of pity. That a position instructing the planet’s premier land force is generally accepted as pitiable is, in and of itself, quite pitiable.

To be clear, the way a select few branches treat their officers in the institution is a shame. They’re treated as pariahs, and are encouraged to leave as soon as possible, made to believe that TRADOC kills careers. This has obvious detrimental effects on the officer, his subordinates, and his unit. The officer doesn’t stay long enough to really learn anything. His subordinates know his time is short.

Continuity in junior officer billets at brigade and below is nonexistent. We must return to the days that saw some of the absolute best and brightest officers and leaders teaching the future of the Army. Even Gen. George S. Patton worked many long days in the institution. Our Marine Corps colleagues have continued this tradition even in the face of two grueling conflicts.

Simply stated, an officer who trains students in the institution will have a greater impact on the future force. Often this is measurable by orders of magnitude.

In his one year, a company commander in this environment will train anywhere from 500 to nearly 1,000 soldiers, depending on the MOS. An operations officer in the initial entry training environment for 12 months will impact over 3,000 soldiers. He will see firsthand how the institution integrates the Army Learning Concept 2015 and how it adapts to accommodate changes in doctrine and force requirements. His effect on the future force is expansive, yet strangely it’s a captain’s billet.

We’re on our way, the resurrection of Project Warrior is a step in the right direction, but it only accounts for a very few positions in the institution.

Shouldn’t we be making every effort to get our best guys here?



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Lt. Col. Mark Russell, (far right) Lead Core Observer, Coach/Trainer, Operations Group Sierra, Mission Command Training Program, meets with members of the core team to discuss cause and effect at North Fort Hood, Texas on 18 September 2012. OC/Ts spend the majority of their time observing training audiences to capture actions and timelines. "It's great to capture data but unless we can tie it back to a concrete "so what", we haven't been successful and the training audience won't benefit from our observations," said Russell.

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