

AWAKENING WARRIOR: Revolution in the Ethics of Warfare, Timothy Challans, State University of New York Press, Albany, 2007, 227 pages, \$24.95

In *The Age of Reason*, Thomas Paine remarks that “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?” In the groundbreaking book *Awakening Warrior*, Timothy Challans, who has taught philosophy and ethics to cadets and officers for 17 years and is the principal author of the 1999 version of Field Manual 22-100, *Army Leadership*, critiques the military’s system of professional ethics. Challans argues that using “values-based” moral examples without principles (what German philosopher Immanuel Kant called a “heteronomous” lack of critical reasoning) will lead the military into moral error with long-term strategic implications. In a blistering critique of the status quo, Challans argues for moral autonomy through reasoned principles instead of examples handed down from authority because, he claims, relying on the vagaries of authority is destructive to morality.

Challans asserts that chaplains need to get out of the ethics business, arguing that current modes of ethical indoctrination have morphed the war machine into a quasi-religious organization viewing itself as morally superior to the rest of society. He believes religious authorities cannot help but inculcate their own worldview without reflection. If one stops to think about it, it is odd that we believe that the caretakers of ideologies responsible for some of the greatest misery in human history are those most worthy to impart ethical knowledge. The religious authority’s moral injunctions are never reasoned, only received, and so there

is always the chance that status and rank will override everything. We should not expose those with the job of meting out death and destruction to that risk. Reason should rule.

For example, during “effects-based operations,” principles of minimal harm, proportionality, and discrimination are never considered in a systematic way. Not surprisingly, the war machine appears more concerned about homosexuality than about slaughtering noncombatants and dismissing the slaughter as collateral damage. A sense of moral superiority leads to contempt for the enemy, which can translate into contempt for treaties and concomitant moral responsibilities under constitutional law. For Americans to assume the ridiculously self-deceiving posture of moral superiority is dangerous. Every American officer who takes seriously the oath to support and defend the U.S. Constitution should read and digest Challans’ arguments.

A principled approach to ethics education will help officers avoid the problems of “means/end confusion,” where victory becomes an end in itself with no thought given to how one attains it and how that will affect the aftermath. A principled approach will also help avoid the problems caused by “is/ought conflation,” where what exists eclipses what ought to be. These two moral failures continue to plague military operations. Challans’ logic is the perfect antidote to the blithe certainties of historian Victor Davis Hanson, writer Ralph Peters, and the chorus of neo-conservative prophets who implicitly favor torture and other relaxation of rules. As Challans says, “It’s all about legitimacy. Without legitimacy, there is no hope.” A continuum of only legitimate means leading to legitimate ends suggests the two cannot be logically distinct. Challans recommends a return to Enlightenment attitudes, to engaging in reason.

Some may think Challans is a misguided idealist and ignore

or attack him, but he anchors his arguments solidly in well-reasoned judgments embodied in the Geneva and Hague Conventions, whose principles American officers have sworn to defend.

LTC Peter D. Fromm, USA, Retired, U.S. Forces, Japan

VICTORY IN WAR: Foundations of Modern Military Policy, William C. Martell, Cambridge University Press, NY, 2007, 436 pages, \$35.00.

According to William Martell, professor of national security studies at Tufts University, the national discussion about planning and conducting war suffers from an imprecise definition of the word “victory,” which has had three different meanings: defeating an opponent in battle, “tactical victory”; changing an enemy’s policy, “political-military victory”; and replacing the enemy regime, “grand strategic victory.”

As a consequence, the U.S. has not systematically examined the level of mobilization it must undertake, the force structure it must commit, and the post-conflict responsibilities it must assume to achieve the type of victory it pursues. Air and sea power, for example, are excellent instruments for changing a government’s policy, as we saw in 1986 when the U.S. punished Libya for conducting terrorism. On the other hand, a far larger contingent of infantry and associated ground forces are necessary for stability and support operations, as recently demonstrated in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Martell’s thesis is clear and virtually uncontested. Greater clarity about what victory means will help inform the debate about the costs, benefits, and risks of war. However, that in itself is not likely to establish a workable consensus or an accurate assessment of a contemplated conflict. The military

tends to “worst-case” the contingency and advise a larger ground force package. When advocating intervention, politicians are apt to predict far fewer difficulties lest we not allow them to conduct the intervention at all.

In the aftermath of Iraq, more credence will likely be paid to cautions, such as those articulated by some prominent officers who were largely ignored in 2001 and 2002. The 1994 warnings about falling into a quagmire in the Balkans reminiscent of Vietnam were nearly as inaccurate as predictions of a quick exit from Baghdad. We need more precise concepts to replace vague terms like “victory.” We also need more experts in the military, social, economic, and political intricacies of the areas in crisis and a political system that will not put them in limbo if they disagree with the opinions of senior government echelons. Martell himself says he has “no illusion” that his exposition “will end the debate; rather, there is hope that it will focus and encourage it.”

**Michael Pearlman, Ph.D.,
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ASK & TELL: Gay and Lesbian Veterans Speak Out, Steve Estes, University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, 2007, 280 pages, \$29.95.

Steve Estes, a social sciences professor at Sonoma State University, former interviewer for the Library of Congress Veterans History Project, and author of several works on civil rights has garnered the assistance of a number of activist organizations and veterans groups to conduct more than 50 interviews with veterans from World War II up through the current war in Iraq. The result is that his new book, *Ask & Tell*, is the only work on this topic that has such historical breadth. The salient findings arising from Estes’s research are that gays and lesbians are not security risks, do not adversely affect combat effectiveness or morale, and offer no threats to the privacy of others.

Estes interviewed veterans from World War II, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, the 1991 Gulf War, the Kosovo intervention, and the

invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq, and several who served during interwar periods. Included in the group are three retired flag officers. He records his findings in highly engaging first-person narratives via the interview process and provides valuable introductory notes prior to each account that outline the military policies toward homosexuals during the eras in which the veterans served. Throughout, Estes provides incisive commentary.

Aside from individual confrontations with policies banning open homosexuality, the character of service of most of Estes’s interviewees was not much different from that of their heterosexual counterparts. In sum, Estes found that gay and lesbian veterans believed that sexuality had little to do with job performance in or out of combat, although the military authorities believed it did (or could). As the interviews reveal, many kept their sexual identities secret for decades and often lived with implicit or assumed heterosexual identities, sometimes unwittingly. Some of Estes’s interviewees worked in legal areas, both in and out of uniform, to try to end the ban on homosexuals in the military.

This surprisingly refreshing work includes the names of those interviewed as well as photos of many of them in uniform. This is no dry textbook: its best feature is the fascinating personal narratives, which have an openness that is absent from earlier studies. Also included is a separate chapter on the environments of the U.S. military academies, a helpful appendix on the background of the U.S. Government’s history programs as they relate to Estes’s interviewees, interview transcripts, published texts, 12 pages of notes, and an index. Whether one believes the military should lift its ban on open confession of homosexuality or not, it is hard to argue with Estes that “at the very least, this volume documents courage that should not be forgotten.” Estes’s work is a welcome addition to the debate over homosexuals in the military and an appreciable addition to an all-too-elided aspect of military history.

**MAJ Jeffrey C. Alfier, USAF,
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INSTRUCTIONS FOR AMERICAN SERVICEMEN IN IRAQ DURING WORLD WAR II, John A. Nagl (foreword), University of Chicago Press, IL, 2007, 64 pages, \$10.00.

In this reprint of the War and Navy departments’ World War II handbook for wartime service in Iraq (1943), John Nagl’s foreword opens with an apt metaphor: “History doesn’t repeat itself, but it often rhymes.” Men have long pondered the seemingly recurring character of history, with the sagest postulations coming from those few—such as Nagl—who recognize the enduring nature of mankind as the genesis of those echoes in time.

Readers will appreciate *Instructions for American Servicemen in Iraq during World War II* for its colloquial writing and commonsense approach to the social and cultural niceties of conducting operations among a foreign people. Erudite counsel on soldierly generosity (“Don’t offer Moslems alcoholic drinks.”) and promiscuity (“Prostitutes do not walk the streets but live in special quarters of the city.”) is quite unique to the period and unlikely to be found in contemporary military cultural guides. However, *Instructions* isn’t so much a reflection on times gone by as a gentle reminder of man’s inherent ability to discount the often subtle echoes of history.

In a region of the world where little of essence has changed in hundreds of years, *Instructions* is still cogent today. As Nagl notes repeatedly throughout his foreword, the short guide would have been invaluable to our forces on the eve of the current war. But just as we allowed our counterinsurgency doctrine to fall into disregard in the decades following the Vietnam War, so we failed to draw lessons from the “rhymes of history” in preparing for operations in “the birthplace of mankind.” As a historian and veteran of the effort to resuscitate the Army’s

counterinsurgency manual, Nagl himself appreciates the necessity of listening for the echoes of history.

In reintroducing us to *Instructions*, Nagl—currently commanding 1-34 Armor at Fort Riley, Kansas, and the author of *Counterinsurgency Lessons from Malaya and Vietnam: How to Eat Soup with a Knife* (Praeger, Westport, CT, 2002)—presents an invaluable collection of historical rhymes. Leaders, Soldiers, and historians alike will be captivated by this simple yet so remarkable cultural guidebook. Veterans of the current war in Iraq will certainly reminisce on the abundantly familiar fare. All readers will enjoy and value this “little” book.

LTC Steve Leonard, USA, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas

STALIN’S GUERRILLAS: Soviet Partisans in World War II. Kenneth Slepian, University Press of Kansas, Lawrence, 2006, 409 pages, \$34.95.

In World War II, resistance movements were almost as common as mechanized maneuvers. One of the largest, best-organized resistance movements was in the Soviet areas occupied by German invaders from 1941 to 1944. In *Stalin’s Guerrillas*, Kenneth Slepian uses memoirs and Soviet documents to analyze this movement as a political and social entity within the larger Soviet society.

Slepian argues that we cannot view the Soviet partisans separately from their parent society, although paradoxically their very existence made them a challenge to that society. Of necessity, the partisans operated in an atmosphere of freedom and decentralized decision-making that was alien to Stalinist Russia. Thus, the central government sought to control the movement politically and militarily and dismissed any independent spirit as “partisan nonsense.”

For their part, many partisan leaders pretended to fit Soviet norms of political orthodoxy and culture in order to conceal their independent lifestyles and decision-making. To cite but one example, several partisan bands actually dedicated to

rescuing as many Jews as possible from German persecution portrayed themselves as “typical” Marxist irregular fighters.

Once Soviet leaders decided that the partisan movement should appear to be a genuine popular uprising, they insisted on a variety of militarily inefficient actions to portray that image. Among these actions were risky long-range infiltration raids into areas where there were no native resistance fighters. They also allowed people who lacked weapons and the stamina for active service to become full-time partisans. Once the Soviet territories were liberated, the regime put the surviving partisans under close scrutiny for political reliability and denied them a voice in the postwar portrayal of the “Great Patriotic War.”

Although Slepian describes the partisan organization and its effectiveness, he does not provide extensive information about the actual military conduct of the partisan war. What the reader will find, however, is an excellent analysis of the psychology and sociology of insurgents within the context of their larger society, and this is a topic of considerable utility in the current age of cross-cultural, asymmetrical warfare.

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THE CIVIL WAR, A&E Television, The History Channel, 2007, 10 hours, \$49.95, DVD.

Its liner notes announce that *The Civil War*, the History Channel’s new handsomely boxed set of six DVDs, is “the definitive collection of programming on the War Between the States,” one that “explores every aspect of this great conflict.” These ambitious claims fall short, however, because *The Civil War* lacks a thematic organization or premise beyond Civil War hagiography.

This set is a compilation of twelve episodes culled from *Civil War Journal: The Conflict Begins*; *Civil War Journal: The Commanders*; and *Civil War Combat*, arranged according to production rather than chrono-

nology or any unifying or organizing theme. It begins with “The Hornets’ Nest at Shiloh,” continues with “The Bloody Lane at Antietam,” “The Wheatfield at Gettysburg,” “The Tragedy at Cold Harbor,” “John Brown’s War,” “Destiny at Fort Sumter,” “The Battle of First Bull Run,” “The 54th Massachusetts,” “West Point Classmates—Civil War Enemies, Robert E. Lee, Stonewall Jackson,” and concludes with “Sherman and the March to the Sea.” Excepting the “March to the Sea,” the West and Trans-Mississippi West are ignored or forgotten, as is the war at sea.

Danny Glover and Tony Jay narrate the stories, with actors reading excerpts of letters and diaries against the backdrop of beautifully filmed battlefields and historic sites, period photos and illustrations, and dozens of re-enactors. Interspersed within the episodes are commentaries by historians, some of whom offer little more than stock or grossly simplistic views positing that “most historians consider [Gettysburg] the turning point of the Civil War,” or validating the myth that generals went into battle with a sword in one hand and Antoine-Henri Jomini’s *Art of War* in the other. Apparently, Winfield Scott’s 1847-1848 campaign against Mexico mattered little to Robert E. Lee or others.

Aimed at a general audience, this collection is more an affirmation of popular memory, the romanticized stuff of history, rather than a critical or analytical telling of the past. *The Civil War* is entertaining and sometimes informative, but it does not deliver on its promise. Watch it for the fun of it, but for sober and thoughtful television, fall back on Ken Burns’ *Civil War*.

Ricardo A. Herrera, Ph.D., Fort Leavenworth, Kansas

WOMEN AT WAR: Iraq, Afghanistan, and Other Conflicts, James E. Wise Jr. and Scott Baron, Naval Institute Press, Annapolis, MD, 2006, 234 pages, \$29.95.

Women at War, by James E. Wise Jr. and Scott Baron, is classic oral

history on an old topic that continues to be controversial. The book is an anthology of the personal stories of women from all services ranging in rank from private first class (E-3) to colonel (O-6). The authors provide a wide variety of first-person perspectives from American women who have participated in combat or supported combat.

The book begins with the current wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and works back in time through Vietnam and Korea to World War II. Each section is preceded by a short introduction that describes the social and military context of each particular war. As usual in books of this type, the entries detail a wide range of situations, personalities, and concerns, and are best appreciated in small doses.

In the introductory essay, Wise and Barron argue that “women are still, in theory, excluded from combat. The reality in Iraq is that women are in combat, and continue to prove that gender distinctions are irrelevant.” Although women’s dedication to duty and patriotism unquestionably equal those of any of their male peers, it is evident that gender does have a powerful impact on the lives of military women. The experience of U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) Lieutenant Commander Holly R. Harrison, who skippered a USCG vessel in the Persian Gulf, is both irritating and exasperating—the Iraqis refused, repeatedly, to believe she was the ship’s captain and insisted she was the cook.

Taken altogether, the experiences of Wise and Barron’s military women are so varied that it is impossible to generalize about them in such a short space. But the words of Captain Jaden J. Kim, a highly decorated former Marine fighter pilot, describe the challenges women still face: “When you’re constantly under the spotlight, people are bound to start tearing you apart, piece by piece.” The extra difficulties and sufferings experienced during war do not, however, deter talented and determined servicewomen like U.S. Army Staff Sergeant Jessica Lee Clements, who was so severely wounded in

Iraq that she was declared eighty-percent disabled. Her doctors called her “miracle girl” for her valiant recovery and indestructible spirit, but she preferred a more modest honorific—“Soldier.”

Women at War is by no means the definitive story of women at war, nor is it intended to be, but it does offer valuable source material that may serve for such a project in the future. The book should be of special interest to military professionals—both male and female—but also to civilian policymakers who have a say in what women are allowed to do or not do in the military, as well as to members of the general public who wonder what their daughters, sisters, wives, and mothers did, and continue to do, in war. I recommend the book.

LTC Prisco R. Hernández, USA, Ph.D., Fort Leavenworth, Kansas

THE OSS AND HO CHI MINH: Unexpected Allies in the War Against Japan, Dixee Bartholomew-Feis, University of Kansas Press, Lawrence, 2006, 425 pages, \$34.95.

Dixee R. Bartholomew-Feis takes the reader into the heart of World War II special operations with her thorough examination of the working relationship between the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) and Ho Chi Minh. The story she paints is anything but simple. Brigadier General William Donovan’s OSS worked under the basic assumption that the only thing necessary for a working relationship with nonstate actors such as the Viet Minh was agreement on the common enemy. Donovan’s people could never be accused of worrying too much about the world that would follow the defeat of the Axis powers.

To stop the flow of supplies to Chiang Kai-shek’s forces in China, Japanese forces worked an agreement with Vichy France that permitted Japan de facto control over the area, but permitted French forces to administer the colony. Officially, the Japanese recognized the colony as a French possession. In reality,

Japanese documents referred to the areas as their new acquisition. The relationship between France and Japan was tenuous throughout with the latter finally moving to seize full control of the area in 1945, shattering badly outnumbered French forces in the process.

Ho Chi Minh quickly shifted his focus to helping the Americans rid Vietnam of the Japanese. He fostered a working relationship with OSS operatives that provided valuable intelligence and other logistics support to the U.S. while at the same time used his relationship to solidify his position as the key spokesperson for Vietnamese interests in his battle to rid his country of colonial powers once and for all. Despite having earned the respect of many OSS operatives, the relationship between Ho Chi Minh and the Americans began to disintegrate at the conclusion of the war. The anti-colonial policy of President Franklin D. Roosevelt did not survive the president’s death. His successor, Harry S. Truman, saw the world through a cold war prism that saw all communists as puppets of the Soviet Union. The author implies that this disintegration and the false assumptions on which it was based created the conditions that eventually pulled the U.S. into a long and bloody war in Vietnam.

Bartholomew-Feis’s account of the early U.S. involvement with Ho Chi Minh reads well and is based on sound and thorough research. The questions the author raises in examining the Viet Minh’s war against the Japanese and the French hold their relevance for the modern era as U.S. forces find themselves increasingly working with allies who share a common enemy but not a common end state.

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THE GREAT WAR, Field Marshal Paul von Hindenburg, Charles Messenger, ed., Greenhill Books, London, 2006, 236 pages, \$34.95.

The Great War is an edited single volume of Field Marshal Paul von

Hindenburg's memoirs, which were originally published in 1919, just after World War I. The book's editor, Charles Messenger, has retained brief accounts of Hindenburg's early military education and his career through the Franco-Prussian War, but the majority of the volume focuses on the field marshal's World War I experiences. While *The Great War* does not offer a complete history of World War I or even of Hindenburg's campaigns during that war, it does an excellent job of providing insights into the grand strategy of the German General Staff.

Hindenburg's descriptions of Germany's responses to the strategic problems it faced at various points throughout the war suggest not German invincibility, but German capability and competence. He also offers us a unique perspective on Germany's allies, especially Austria-Hungary, Turkey, and Bulgaria, and on the difficulties that coalition warfare forced on the German Army. He makes interesting comments, too, about the fighting capabilities of Germany's allies and opponents. In speaking of the latter, he praises Russian endurance, French proficiency, and British obstinacy.

Hindenburg has definite opinions on the influence of new technology on the war, especially submarines, airplanes, machine guns, and tanks, and he sees American strength as having played an important role in the reversal of German fortunes in 1918. Also of particular interest in this memoir are Hindenburg's descriptions of German strategic thinking through most of the war, from key decisions concerning east to west troop movements, to the decision to begin unrestricted submarine warfare.

As a whole, this edited version of Hindenburg's memoirs provides a fascinating glimpse into Germany's most influential and important soldier of World War I. One of its few disappointments is Messenger's decision not to include Hindenburg's political and philosophical diatribes. Messenger states in the preface that he did so to keep the focus on mili-

tary career and accomplishments, but such political ruminations could be immensely important to understanding Hindenburg's role in the interwar years and the rise of Nazi Germany. Despite this shortcoming, Messenger has given us an important primary source document for understanding World War I, and he has done so in a format that is both useful and enjoyable.

**MAJ Michael Bonura, USA,
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SHOCK TROOPS OF THE CONFEDERACY: The Sharpshooter Battalions of the Army of Northern Virginia, Fred L. Ray, CFS Press, Asheville, NC, 2006, 414 pages, \$34.95.

Fred Ray's *Shock Troops of the Confederacy* covers a little-known but important aspect of the Civil War: the "sharpshooter battalions" of the Army of Northern Virginia. Overall, though, this book is really about adaptation and innovation on the battlefield.

In 1862, a Confederate "sharpshooter" was more of a skirmisher than a sniper, but as the war progressed, the Confederacy formed specialized sharpshooter battalions of volunteers who demonstrated superior marksmanship skills and boldness in battle. These units adapted to the battlefields of their day, leveraging the latest weapons technology and modifying tactics in a way that we often associate with the non-linear methods of late World War I German shock troops. Through extensive research, Ray has created a scholarly work that is worthy of serious study. His is the first book in over 100 years on Confederate sharpshooter units, and it fills an important gap in the study of Civil War history and tactics.

Although Ray uses a multitude of credible sources, including many firsthand accounts from sharpshooters on both sides, his best source is a diary kept by Major Eugene Blackford, a Confederate sharpshooter battalion commander in General Robert E. Lee's Army of Northern Virginia. Blackford

trained his unit in skirmish drills and marksmanship out to 600 yards. Lee took notice of the battalion's performance at Chancellorsville in 1863, and soon ordered each infantry brigade to form a permanent sharpshooter battalion. By the opening of the 1864 campaigning season, over 7,000 sharpshooters had been trained and formed into battalions. These soldiers proved their worth during the Overland campaign, by dominating the skirmish line and killing Union officers at long distances. At Spotsylvania, Union Major General John Sedgwick was killed by a Confederate sharpshooter seconds after stating "they couldn't hit an elephant at this distance."

Ray also discusses Confederate sharpshooter units in the West, as well as some Union sharpshooter units that seem to have been formed in response to the Confederate innovation. During the last two years of the war, sharpshooters on both sides fought in most major battles. In great detail, Ray describes over 19 battles during which sharpshooters played an important, if not pivotal, role. Exceptional examples include Forts Stedman and Petersburg, where Confederate sharpshooters scouted, raided Union trenches, and brought back prisoners.

Shock Troops of the Confederacy contains 43 informative maps and 59 illustrations, including pictures with information of the sharpshooter's weapons and uniforms. More than just an account of the sharpshooters' exploits, the book makes a strong case that the late Civil War battles they fought in were predecessors to the nonlinear tactics of the 20th century. Ray follows the development of light infantry organization, tactics, and weapons forward to the Boer War, through World War I, and beyond. In fact, Ray's study is still relevant for our forces in the field today, as we learn again that small-unit battlefield adaptation, innovation, and precision marksmanship are just as important now as they ever were.

**LTC Scott A. Porter, USA, Retired,
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The Center of Gravity in an Insurgency

Lieutenant Colonel Chris North, *U.S. Army, Retired, Taji, Iraq*—Major Mark Krieger’s article, “We the People Are Not the Center of Gravity in an Insurgency” (July-August 2007, *Military Review*), discusses an important issue. However, it misses the mark for “insurgencies” we face today. It uses an old model that is not so relevant anymore.

A model for a situation like Iraq today (one aspect that may include an insurgency) is it may be global in scope; focus more on defeating government resolve and political will than government forces; and the “bad guy” actors are numerous, fragmented, and factionalized, most of them pursuing divergent causes.

The organizational nature of insurgents is different: the leadership and command and control are decentralized; they operate in loose, networked affiliations, with mission-type orders; and are adept at replacing fallen leaders. Major Krieger claims that a cause attracts support, which leads to formation of an insurgent organization, which organization becomes the insurgent operational COG. That was one model, which worked in the 1960s, but it does not work that way today. “Cutting off the head of the snake” is no longer as effective as it used to be.

The new operating environment greatly affects the validity of ideas proposed by MAJ Krieger. He proposes that the strategic Center of Gravity (COG) for an “insurgency” is its cause, the operational COG is the insurgent organization, and control of the people is just a Decisive Point. A COG applies to actors, not to a situation like “insurgency.” In an insurgency, there may be different COGs for the government, coalition forces, insurgents, militias, any number of factions.

It is okay to say that the *strategic* COG for the various “bad guys” is their cause—recognizing that their

“causes” are loosely defined and usually different amongst the “bad guys.” However, the author asserts that the consensus among thinkers today is an “insurgency’s COG” is the people, and that they are incorrect—that is *not* a valid assumption. Those thinkers would probably tell you they are talking about the people as the *operational*, not strategic, COG—a distinction the author appears to ignore.

One has only to look to the definition of COG to realize that control of the population and resources (PRC) is the “source of power that provides moral or physical strength, freedom of action, or will to act.” ALL the actors pursue the PRC COG at the *operational* level of war. PRC is both the prize and the means by which ALL actors survive, conduct operations, and pursue legitimacy for their strategic COGs. Successful PRC allows all actors to function in the environment—failure to achieve it degrades strength, restricts action, and undermines willpower. The great majority of thinkers DO believe control of population and resources is the operational center of gravity—with good reason.

Most “thinkers” would say the people are more than just a “decisive point”—they are the sea in which the fish swim (Mao’s analogy.) They are the objective, and who wins them wins the war (Galula). The author claims “the people provide a tangible target against which to apply military power . . .” All counterinsurgency doctrine, past and present, disputes this assertion—it is the combination of political, economic, social, and military factors, with primary emphasis on the political factor, which must be mustered in order to “win” the people. To persuade, not “militarily target” them.

The author claims an “insurgency’s cause is a system made up of the people’s grievances.” Not any more. Not in Iraq. Car bombs blowing up innocent people in a marketplace,

using murder and threats to intimidate—these are not likely actions to rally people to the insurgent cause today. Often, the major grievance is the very existence of the insurgents, which prevents the people from enjoying their potential for economic recovery and well-being.

“Successfully targeting and attacking the strategic COG, the cause . . . will cause the entire insurgency to fail.” Not likely, today. It is doubtful any success has been achieved in changing the beliefs and objectives—the cause—of Al Qaeda. One might say the strategic COG for the “bad guys” is their motivation or objectives (versus a “cause”). In Iraq, take away the ideology and power bids of Al-Qaeda, the fragmented political and power aspirations of the militias, the factionalized greed, criminality, and self-interest of some organizations—what they are striving to achieve—and one may say they defeat the “bad guy” strategic COGs.

A key point in conducting counterinsurgency operations is to plan well, then stick to the plan. It is the positive aspects of a plan that will win the Prize—persuade the people to support the government. Making that plan work at the operational level, not being distracted by enemy attacks, not diverting excessive resources to attack enemy strategic COGs—that is what is important and will be effective.

What about the *strategic* COGs for two other actors in Iraq: the U.S. and the Government of Iraq? Take away the political will to remain engaged in regional stability in the Middle East—and the U.S. strategic COG will be weakened. We hear that erosion of will every week in the halls of Congress. Fail to establish a competent government with some measure of consensus—this is the strategic challenge for the Government of Iraq. Where does this leave the contest for the *operational* COG—the people?

Few people will support a government that is obviously going to lose. The challenge for the U.S. and the Government of Iraq is trying to keep both their strategic COGs intact while simultaneously “winning” the people’s support at the operational level. If the U.S. and the GOI can maintain credibility while doing this, they will likely succeed in achieving some measure of stability for Iraq.

Toward Strategic Communication

Christopher R. Paparone, *Ph.D.*, *Fort Lee, Virginia*—Brigadier General Mari K. Eder’s July-August 2007 *Military Review* article “Toward Strategic Communication” frames the debate and defines the scope of the strategic communication issue better than I have seen it before. However, these questions go unresolved with the conclusions:

- In a democracy, isn’t it dangerous to seek a unified “enterprise” message in the executive branch that was purposefully designed around diversity?
- Isn’t that diversity part of the diffusion of power that keeps our democracy strong?
- Does that diversity serve to protect the chief executive from “groupthink?”
- How do we separate political messages (or as you frame, “com-

municate policy”) from professional military advice (the latter directed to the public and the president and SECDEF)?

- Is it a fitting (both legally and morally) role for the U.S. Army to be involved in strategically communicating what could be construed as a political message?
- If we cannot discern the line between professional advice and a political message, can the role of the military in a democracy become blurred (and even dangerous)?

It seems to me that the people elect politicians to communicate policy and rely on an apolitical (career/merit-based) corps of professional civilians and military to execute the policy.

It also seems to me this whole idea is not really about information (implying the problem of getting the facts out), but about interpretation. Interpretation has social and psychological overtones. Should the professional military really be in the business of conveying social and psychological interpretations into the public domain?

BG Eder Reponds

The questions you ask lead me to think that perhaps I haven’t framed the discussion as well as I had thought, and I have written and rewritten this article numerous times over the past two years.

At the seat of government, I am most concerned that our communications with friends and allies are based on awareness, not necessarily agreement, between the branches of government. From the executive branch, the State has the lead for strategic communications (SC). Sometimes we do not communicate well as a nation I think when one agency or branch is unaware of what others say or do.

Simply, I think SC is broad based, long term, and overarching. Our messages have to be consistent and repeated. I do not want to imply (and really hope I haven’t) that we should be involved in politics.

This summer I’ve been involved as an advisor with the Defense Science Board’s summer study on strategic communications. I believe the final report will concentrate on raising the visibility and importance of the SC function within the department and that it will also stress the awareness and coordination of messages within DoD and the services.

Some of this blurring you sense has come about, I think, from the roles the military has assumed from necessity—engagement, nation building, governmental aspects of peacekeeping roles that are better suited to diplomats, or other agencies but due to funding or other restrictions are unable to undertake.