MORAL, ETHICAL, AND PSYCHOLOGICAL PREPARATION OF SOLDIERS AND UNITS FOR COMBAT

I want to begin by thanking you for volunteering to serve our nation and humankind in time of war. We are engaged, as previous generations were engaged, against enemies who pose a great threat to all civilized peoples. As those generations defeated Nazi fascism, Japanese imperialism, and communist totalitarianism, we will defeat these enemies, who cynically use a perverted interpretation of religion to incite hatred and violence.

The murder of more than three thousand of our fellow Americans on September 11, 2001, is etched indelibly in all of our memories. Since those attacks, our nation has been at war with those who believe that there are no innocent Americans. It is those of you who have volunteered for military service in time of war who will continue to stand between terrorists who murder innocents—including children—as they do almost every day in places like Afghanistan, Iraq, Pakistan, Somalia, and Yemen—and those whom those terrorists would victimize.

As the recent attempt to commit mass murder on a flight bound for Detroit reminds us, battlegrounds overseas are inexorably connected to our own security. Our enemies seek to enlist masses of ignorant, disaffected young people with a sophisticated campaign of propaganda and disinformation. They work within and across borders.

And our fight against this networked movement is unprecedented, for several reasons. It is a new kind of threat because of the enemy's ability to communicate and mobilize resources globally. Moreover, the enemy employs mass murder of innocent civilians as its principal tactic. We recognize that if these terrorists and murderers were to gain access to weapons of mass destruction, attacks such as those on September 11th and those against innocents elsewhere would pale in comparison.

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As President Obama observed in Oslo on 10 December 2009, "To say that force may sometimes be necessary is not a call to cynicism—it is a recognition of history; the imperfections of man and the limits of reason." He observed that "a non-violent movement could not have stopped Hitler's armies. Negotiations cannot convince al Qaeda's leaders to lay down their arms." America, he observed, has used its military power in places like the Balkans and today in Haiti "because we seek a better future for our children and grandchildren, and we believe that their lives will be better if other peoples' children and grandchildren can live in freedom and prosperity."* I firmly believe that the servicemen and -women here today are both warriors and humanitarians.

The Army's recently published *Capstone Concept* is a document that describes the Army's vision of future armed conflict. It identifies a continuing need for "cohesive teams and resilient soldiers who are capable of overcoming the enduring psychological and moral challenges of combat."†

I would like to focus my remarks on military leaders' connected responsibilities of ensuring moral and ethical conduct in war while also preparing our soldiers psychologically for the extraordinary demands of combat. It is likely that you will be called on to advise your commanders in that connection, and I thought that I might share some thoughts on the moral and ethical preparation of soldiers and units for the challenges they are likely to face in combat.

Prior to the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, much of the debate over the nature of future armed conflict focused on the importance of emerging technologies. Many believed that these technologies would completely transform war. They called this a "revolution in military affairs." New communications, information, surveillance, and precision-strike technologies would permit technologically advanced military forces to wage war rapidly, decisively, and efficiently. We were seduced by technology.

Yet this ahistorical definition of armed conflict divorced war from its political nature. It tried to simplify the problem of future war to a targeting effort. All we had to do was target the enemies' conventional forces—which, conveniently, looked just like ours. This approach did little to prepare us for the challenges we subsequently faced in Iraq and Afghanistan. As Lieutenant General Sir John Kiszely of the British army observed,

> for many military professionals, warfare—the practice of war, and warfighting—
> combat, were synonymous, thereby misleading themselves that there was no more to
> the practice of war than combat. True, some armed forces found themselves involved

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* "Remarks by the President at the Acceptance of the Nobel Peace Prize," *The White House: President Barack Obama,* www.whitehouse.gov.

† U.S. Army Dept., *The Army Capstone Concept,* TRADOC Pamphlet 525-3-0 (Fort Leavenworth, Kans.: Training and Doctrine Command, 21 December 2009), available at www.tradoc.army.mil.

in other operations. . . . But these missions were largely considered by many military establishments to be aberrations—Operations Other Than War, as they came to be known in British and American doctrine—distractions from the "real thing": large scale, hi-tech, inter-state conflict.*

The lack of intellectual preparation limited military effectiveness and made it harder for our leaders and forces to adapt to the reality of the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. But our military is a learning institution, and we adapted to the demands of the conflicts after the removal of the Taliban and Hussein regimes. The U.S. military undertook a range of adaptations, from improving our military education and training to refining our tactics, to investigating abuses and other failures. These adaptations derived, in part, from a better appreciation for the political complexity of the wars we were in—and the complexity of war in general. Many of these lessons were formalized in the December 2006 publication of a counterinsurgency manual. This manual was meant to provide the doctrinal foundation for education, training, and operations.† Our forces *have* adapted, and leaders *have* ensured ethical conduct. Every day, our soldiers take risks and make sacrifices to protect innocents.

The orthodoxy of the revolution in military affairs had conflated warfare and warfighting. It had dehumanized our understanding of war, ignored critical continuities in warfare, and exaggerated the effect of technology on the nature of armed conflict. As John Keegan observed in *The Face of Battle,* his classic 1976 study of combat across five centuries, the human dimension of war exhibits a high degree of continuity:

> What battles have in common is human: the behaviour of men struggling to reconcile their instinct for self-preservation, their sense of honour and the achievement of some aim over which other men are ready to kill them. The study of battle is therefore always a study of fear and usually of courage, always of leadership, usually of obedience; always of compulsion, sometimes of insubordination; always of anxiety, sometimes of elation or catharsis; always of uncertainty and doubt, misinformation and misapprehension, usually also of faith and sometimes of vision; always of violence, sometimes also of cruelty, self-sacrifice, compassion; above all, it is always a study of solidarity and usually also of disintegration—for it is toward the disintegration of human groups that battle is directed.‡

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* John Kiszely, *Post-modern Challenges for Modern Warriors,* Shrivenham Paper 5 (Shrivenham, U.K.: Defence Academy of the United Kingdom, December 2007), p. 6, available at www.da.mod.uk.

† U.S. Army Dept./U.S. Navy Dept., *Counterinsurgency,* Field Manual (FM) 3-24/Marine Corps Warfighting Publication (MCWP) 3-33.5 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Army Combined Arms Center/Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps, December 2006) [hereafter COIN manual], available at www.fas.org/.

‡ John Keegan, *The Face of Battle* (New York: Viking, 1976), p. 83.

Keegan was obviously sensitive to the social and psychological dimensions of combat, but he argued against turning the study of war over to sociologists or psychologists. Keegan contended that understanding war and warriors required an interdisciplinary approach and a "long historical perspective."

If you take away one thing from our discussion tonight, I ask you to embrace your duty to study, as a complement to your expertise in the law of war and operational law, the history, literature, psychology, and philosophy of war and warfare, as well as memoirs and accounts of combat experiences. It is our duty as leaders to develop our own understandings of our profession and the character of armed conflict. But I would also like to talk with you about how you might help your commanders ensure your troopers' ethical conduct in war and steel your units against the disintegration that Keegan observes can occur under the extraordinary physical and psychological strains of combat.

Because our enemy is unscrupulous, some argue for a relaxation of ethical and moral standards and the use of force with *less* discrimination, because the ends—the defeat of the enemy—justify the means employed.* To think this way would be a grave mistake. The war in which we are engaged demands that we retain the moral high ground despite the depravity of our enemies.

Ensuring ethical conduct goes beyond the law of war and must include a consideration of our values—our ethos. Prior to the experiences of Iraq and Afghanistan, ethical training in preparation for combat was centered on the law of war. The law of war codifies the principal tenets of just-war theory, especially *jus in bello* principles of discrimination and proportionality. Training covered the Geneva Conventions and the relevant articles of the U.S. military's Uniform Code of Military Justice. As Christopher Coker observes in *The Warrior Ethos*, however, individual and institutional values are more important than legal constraints on immoral behavior; legal contracts are often observed only as long as others honor them or as long as they are enforced.† Experience in Afghanistan and Iraq inspired the U.S. military to emphasize values training as the principal means of ensuring moral and ethical conduct in combat.

Utilitarianism and the thinking of philosopher John Stuart Mill would have us focus on achieving good consequences in this conflict. As the Army and Marine Corps counterinsurgency (COIN) manual points out, the insurgent often hopes to provoke the excessive or indiscriminate use of force.‡ We are fighting

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* For example, some French army officers made this argument during the War of Algerian Independence. See Lou DiMarco, "Losing the Moral Compass: Torture and *Guerre Revolutionnaire* in the Algerian War," *Parameters* (Summer 2006), pp. 70–72, available at www.carlisle.army.mil/.

† Christopher Coker, *The Warrior Ethos: Military Culture and the War on Terror* (London: Routledge, 2007), pp. 135–38.

‡ COIN manual, p. 7-5.

this war on two battlegrounds—intelligence and perception. We must—locally in Afghanistan and Iraq, and broadly in the war on terror—be able to separate terrorists and insurgents from the population. This means treating people with respect and building relationships with people that lead to trust. And this trust leads to intelligence about the enemy. We have to counter what is a very sophisticated enemy propaganda and disinformation campaign and clarify our true intentions—not just with words but with our deeds. This is particularly difficult because the enemy seeks to place the onus of indiscriminate warfare on us by provoking overreactions, denying us positive contact with the population, and blaming his own murderous attacks on us. You know the line: if Americans were not in Iraq or Afghanistan, we would not have detonated this car bomb at this funeral, in the marketplace, at the mosque, etc.

Immanuel Kant would say that it is your duty to ensure ethical and moral conduct in this war. Kant would have us treat people as ends, not means—the essence of the ethics of respect. Indeed, today's wars are contests for the trust and allegiance of the people. Moral and ethical conduct despite the brutality of this enemy will permit us to defeat enemies whose primary sources of strength are coercion and the stoking of hatreds based on ignorance.

This might sound a bit theoretical to you, so I would like to talk to you about your specific components of ensuring moral and ethical conduct despite the uncertain, complex, and dangerous environments in which our forces are operating.

Breakdowns in discipline that result in immoral or unethical conduct in war can often be traced to four factors. (If you are looking for a case study that illuminates these factors, I recommend that you read Jim Frederick's recently published *Black Hearts*).*

- *Ignorance*—concerning the mission or the environment or a failure to understand or internalize the warrior ethos or professional military ethic.
  This results in the breaking of the covenant, the sacred trust that binds soldiers to our society and to each other.

- *Uncertainty.* Ignorance causes uncertainty, and uncertainty can lead to mistakes, mistakes that can harm civilians unnecessarily. Warfare will always remain firmly in the realm of uncertainty, but leaders must strive to reduce uncertainty for their troopers and units.

- *Fear.* Uncertainty combines with the persistent danger inherent in combat to instill fear in individuals and units. Leaders must strive not only to reduce uncertainty for their troopers but also to build confident units.

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* Jim Frederick, *Black Hearts: One Platoon's Descent into Madness in Iraq's Triangle of Death* (New York: Harmony Books, 2010).

Confidence serves as a bulwark against fear and fear's corrosive effect on morale, discipline, and combat effectiveness.

- *Combat trauma.* Rage is often a result of combat trauma. Fear experienced over time or in a traumatic experience can lead to combat trauma, and combat trauma often manifests itself in rage and actions that compromise the mission.

The counterinsurgency manual recognizes that ensuring moral conduct during counterinsurgency operations is particularly difficult, because "the environment that fosters insurgency is characterized by violence, immorality, distrust, and deceit." The COIN manual directs leaders to "work proactively to establish and maintain the proper ethical climate of their organizations" and to "ensure that the trying counterinsurgency environment does not undermine the values of their Soldiers and Marines." Soldiers and marines "must remain faithful to basic American, Army, and Marine Corps standards of proper behavior and respect for the sanctity of life."* To inoculate soldiers and units against the four aforementioned causes of moral and ethical breakdowns, leaders should make a concerted effort in four areas:

- Applied ethics or values-based instruction

- Training that replicates as closely as possible situations that soldiers are likely to encounter

- Education about cultures and historical experiences of the peoples among whom the wars are being fought

- Leadership that strives to set the example, keep soldiers informed, and manage combat stress.

Applied Ethics and Values-Based Instruction

Our Army's values aim, in part, to inform soldiers about the covenant between them, our institution, and society.† The service's seven values of loyalty, duty, respect, selfless service, honor, integrity, and personal courage are consistent with Aristotelian virtue as well as the ancient philosophy of Cicero and the modern philosophy of Immanuel Kant. It is easy, for example, to identify the similarity

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* COIN manual, p. 7-1.

† For the Army values, see "Soldier Life: Being a Soldier," Goarmy.com. For comprehensive analyses of the Army profession and military ethics, see Don Snider and Lloyd Mathews, eds., *The Future of the Army Profession,* 2nd ed., rev. and exp. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2005). The counterinsurgency manual states that "the Nation's and the profession's values are not negotiable," also that "violations of them are not just mistakes; they are failures in meeting the fundamental standards of the profession of arms." COIN manual, p. 7-1.

between the Army's definition of respect as beginning "with a fundamental understanding that all people possess worth as human beings" and Cicero's exhortation in *On Duties* that "we must exercise a respectfulness towards men, both towards the best of them and also towards the rest."* The U.S. Army's values have obvious implications for moral conduct in counterinsurgency, especially in connection with the treatment of civilians and captured enemy.

Applied ethics indoctrination for new soldiers is perhaps even more important today than in the past, because of the need to differentiate between societal and military professional views on the use of violence. In much of the media to which young soldiers are exposed—such as action films, video games, and "gangsta rap" music—violence appears justifiable as a means of advancing personal interests or demonstrating individual prowess.[†] In contrast, the law of war, like the military's code of honor, justifies violence only against combatants.

A way to offset or counter this societal pressure is found in the collective nature of Army ethics training. This is immensely important. Soldiers must understand that our Army and their fellow soldiers expect them to exhibit a higher sense of honor than that to which they are exposed in popular culture. As Christopher Coker observed, "In a world of honor the individual discovers his true identity in his roles and [that] to turn away from the roles is to turn away from oneself."[‡] Particularly important is the soldier's recognition that he or she is expected to take risks and make sacrifices to accomplish the mission, protect fellow soldiers, or safeguard innocents. Use of force that reduces risk to the soldier but places either the mission or innocents at risk must be seen as inconsistent with the military's code of honor and professional ethic.[§]

Values education can ring hollow unless it is pursued in a way that provides context and demonstrates relevance. While we emphasize ethical behavior as an end, we must also stress the utilitarian basis for sustaining the highest moral standards. Showing soldiers the enemy's propaganda helps emphasize the importance of ethical behavior in countering disinformation. Respectful treatment, addressing grievances, and building trust with the population ought to be

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* Marcus Tullius Cicero, *On Duties,* ed. and trans. M. T. Griffin and E. M. Atkins (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1991), p. 39.

† Coker, *The Warrior Ethos,* p. 92.

‡ Ibid., p. 137.

§ Don M. Snider, John A. Nagl, and Tony Pfaff, *Army Professionalism, the Military Ethic, and Officership in the 21st Century* (Carlisle, Pa.: U.S. Army War College, Strategic Studies Institute, December 1999), available at www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/.

viewed as essential means toward achieving success in counterinsurgency operations.

Historical examples and case studies of how excesses or abuse in the pursuit of tactical expediency have corrupted the moral character of units and undermined strategic objectives are particularly poignant. You might consider using films like *The Battle of Algiers* (1966) to inspire discussions on topics such as torture, insurgent strategy, terrorist tactics, and propaganda.

Training

Applied ethics education, however, cannot steel soldiers and units against the disintegration that can occur under the stress of combat. Training our new troopers and integrating them into cohesive, confident teams must be your first priority as leaders. Tough realistic training builds confidence and cohesion that serve as "psychological protection" and bulwarks against fear and psychological stress in battle. As Keegan observed, much of the stress that soldiers experience in combat stems from "uncertainty and doubt." Training endeavors to replicate the conditions of combat as closely as possible and to reduce thereby soldiers' uncertainty about the situations they are likely to encounter.

Units experiencing the confusion and intensity of battle for the first time in actual combat are susceptible to fear. Fear can cause inaction or, in a counterinsurgency environment, might lead to an overreaction that harms innocents and undermines the counterinsurgent's mission. In her book *Stoic Warriors,* Nancy Sherman quotes Seneca to emphasize the importance of training as a form of "bulletproofing" soldiers against the debilitating effects of fear and combat stress: "A large part of the evil consists in its novelty," but "if evil has been pondered beforehand the blow is gentle when it comes."* We must base training scenarios directly on recent experiences of units in Afghanistan or Iraq and conduct training consistent with Aristotle's observation that virtues are formed by repetition. Repetitive training under challenging and realistic conditions prepares units to respond immediately and together to encounters with the enemy, using battle drills—rehearsed responses to a predictable set of circumstances. Demonstrating their ability to fight and operate together as a team will build the confidence and cohesion necessary to suppress fear and help soldiers and units cope with combat stress while preserving their professionalism and moral character.

Soldiers trained exclusively for conventional combat operations may be predisposed toward responding with all available firepower upon contact with the enemy. Such a reaction in a counterinsurgency environment, however, might

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* Nancy Sherman, *Stoic Warriors: The Ancient Philosophy behind the Military Mind* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 2005), p. 117.

result in the unnecessary loss of innocent life and run counter to the overall aim of operations. In training, we should still evaluate units on their ability to overwhelm the enemy but also evaluate them on how well they protect innocents and apply firepower with discipline and discrimination.

Our training should include civilian role-players to replicate as closely as possible the ethnic, religious, and tribal landscapes of the areas in which units will operate. As in Iraq and Afghanistan, the enemy in these exercises blends into the population. When role players are not available, cultural experts should train soldiers to play the role of civilians while their fellow soldiers are trained and evaluated. Using soldiers as civilian role-players has a secondary benefit: it is very useful for soldiers to view their own force from the perspective of the civilian population. Exercises that include civilian role-players help soldiers understand better the importance of restraint and respectful, professional conduct. Role players and soldiers come together at the end of the exercise for an "after-action review" to identify lessons and consider how the unit might apply those lessons to future training and operations.

Cultural and Historical Training

Because unfamiliarity with cultures can compound the stress associated with physical danger, ensuring that soldiers are familiar with the history and culture of the region in which they are operating is critical for sustaining combat effectiveness and promoting respectful treatment of the population. Use professional reading programs; discuss books and articles with your soldiers. Use lectures and film. Excellent documentaries are available on the history of Islam, as well as on the history of Iraq and Afghanistan.

Cultural training has practical applications. An understanding of ethnic, cultural, and tribal dynamics allows soldiers to evaluate sources of information and anticipate potential consequences of their actions. Leaders who have a basic understanding of history and culture can also recognize and counter the enemy's misrepresentation of history for propaganda purposes.

Perhaps most important, education and training that include history and culture promote moral conduct by generating empathy for the population. The COIN manual describes "genuine compassion and empathy for the populace" as an "effective weapon against insurgents."* If soldiers understand the population's experience, feelings of confusion and frustration might be supplanted by concern and compassion. As Roman emperor and Stoic philosopher Marcus Aurelius observed, "Respect becomes concrete through empathy." Cicero reminds us that a soldier's respect must extend to the enemy and civilians: "We

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* COIN manual, p. 7-2.

ought to revere, to guard and to preserve the common affection and fellowship of the whole of humankind."

Leaders must also learn history to evaluate themselves and place contemporary operations in the context of previous experience. Examining previous counterinsurgency experiences allows leaders to ask questions about contemporary missions, avoid some of the mistakes of the past, recognize opportunities, and identify effective techniques.

A critical examination of history also allows soldiers to understand the fundamentals of counterinsurgency theory and thereby equips them to make better decisions in what are highly decentralized operations. Soldiers need to recognize that the population must be the focus of the counterinsurgent's effort and that the population's perceptions—of their government, the counterinsurgent forces, and the insurgents—are of paramount importance. This highlights the need for soldiers to treat the population respectfully and to clarify their intentions through their deeds and conduct.

While it is important that all soldiers possess basic cultural knowledge, it is also important that leaders and units have access to cultural expertise. Soldiers often share what they learn with other members of their team. So sending even just a few soldiers from each platoon or company to language or cultural training can have a broad positive effect on the organization. In a counterinsurgency environment, cultural expertise, such as "human terrain teams," can help units distinguish between reconcilable and irreconcilable groups through an analysis of each group's fears and aspirations.*

Ultimately, the counterinsurgent hopes to reduce violence and achieve enduring security by mediating between factions that are willing to resolve differences through politics rather than violence.† Cultural expertise contributes to the ethical conduct of war by helping soldiers and units understand their environment. This richer understanding can help them determine how to apply force discriminately and to identify opportunities to resolve conflict, short of force.

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* Teams of regional experts, linguists, and area-studies specialists, such as anthropologists (military and civilian), embedded at the brigade level to advise the command. See *Human Terrain System,* hts.army.mil/.

† Education in negotiation and mediation techniques represents a gap in leaders' education that can be filled with self-study until the military begins to incorporate this instruction into its formal education programs. For relevant work conducted in this area by the Harvard Negotiation Project, see *Program of Negotiation at Harvard Law School,* www.pon.harvard.edu/. For a book useful in connection with preparing for negotiation and mediation in a counterinsurgency environment, see Roger Fisher and Daniel Shapiro, *Beyond Reason: Using Emotions as You Negotiate* (New York: Viking, 2005).

Combat Stress

Education or indoctrination in professional military ethics and tough, realistic training are important. However, they are insufficient to preserve moral character under the intense emotional and psychological pressures of combat. Soldiers and units must also be prepared to cope with the stress of continuous operations in a counterinsurgency environment; combat stress often leads to unprofessional or immoral behavior.*

Counterinsurgency operations can be even more stressful than more conventional wars. Control of stress is a command responsibility. Leaders must be familiar with grief counseling and "grief work." Grieving our losses must be valued, not stigmatized. Understand how to "communalize" grief so units can get through difficult times together.

Watch soldier behavior carefully to identify warning signs. These include social disconnection, distractibility, suspiciousness toward friends, irrationality, and inconsistency. If units experience losses, get them combat-stress counseling. Watch for soldiers who become "revenge driven," as they can break down the discipline of the unit and do significant damage to the mission and their fellow troopers. Commitment to fellow troopers and mission must be the motivating factor in battle—not rage.

Additionally, soldiers' knowledge that they have behaved in a professional, disciplined, moral manner when confronting the enemy is one of the most important factors in preventing post-traumatic stress and various dysfunctions that come with it. Developing and maintaining unit cohesion is critical in preventing disorders associated with combat stress and combat trauma. As Jonathan Shay notes, "What a returning soldier needs most when leaving war is not a mental health professional but a living community to whom his experience matters."

Military education is thin on the psychological dynamics of combat, perhaps because its importance becomes obvious only in wartime. You might read and discuss such books as J. Glenn Gray's *The Warriors: Reflections on Men in Battle* (Bison Books, 1998), Jonathan Shay's *Achilles in Vietnam: Combat Trauma and the Undoing of Character* (Simon and Schuster, 1995), and David Grossman and Loren Christensen's *On Combat: The Psychology and Physiology of Deadly Conflict in War and in Peace* (Warrior Science, 3rd ed., 2008).

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* Evidence for this conclusion comes from the business world. A 1997 survey on the "Sources and Consequences of Workplace Pressure," for instance, found that workers responded to workplace pressure by resorting to unethical behavior—for instance, "cutting corners on quality control, engaging in insider trading, falsifying reports, accepting kickbacks, and having an affair with a business associate." Edward S. Petry, Amanda E. Mujica, and Dianne M. Vickery, "Sources and Consequences of Workplace Pressure: Increasing the Risk of Unethical and Illegal Business Practices," *Business and Society Review* 99, no. 1 (2003), p. 26.

Leadership

Common to all of these efforts to preserve the moral character of soldiers and units is leadership. Lack of effective leadership has often caused combat trauma. Sun Tzu had it right 2,500 years ago, in his classic *The Art of War*—"Leadership is a matter of intelligence, trustworthiness, humaneness, courage, and sternness." Humaneness in the face of the ambiguous and difficult situations we are facing today and will face tomorrow will permit soldiers to remain psychologically ready, and it must be an area that our leaders focus on. Sternness involves ensuring that leaders are in positions of leadership. Emphasize leader development but do not hesitate to remove those who do not enjoy the trust or confidence of their troopers.

Effective communication is vital. Explain to troopers the importance of their mission (the stakes) and make sure that they understand the higher commander's intent and concept for defeating the enemy and accomplishing the mission. A key part of the psychological well-being of soldiers is a sense of agency, or control; preserving discipline and moral conduct in combat depends in large measure on it.* It is vital that troopers understand how the risks they take and sacrifices they make contribute to the achievement of objectives worthy of those risks and sacrifices. Ultimately, positive feedback in the form of success in combat reinforces ethical and moral conduct.

Senior commanders must establish the right climate and send a simple, clear message continuously to their troopers: "Every time you treat a civilian disrespectfully, you are working for the enemy." It is, however, junior officers and noncommissioned officers who will enforce standards of moral conduct. Preparing leaders at the squad, platoon, and company levels for that responsibility is vitally important.

In *Black Hearts,* a headquarters company commander commenting on the cause of the horrible rape and murder of civilians south of Baghdad said the following: "Clearly a lot of what happened can be attributed to a leadership failure. And I'm not talking about just at the platoon level. I'm talking about platoon, company, battalion. Even I feel in some way indirectly responsible for what happened out there. I mean, we were all part of the team. We just let it go. And we let it go, and go, and go. . . . We failed those guys by letting them be out there like that without a plan."

It is the warrior ethos that permits soldiers to see themselves "as part of an ongoing historical community," a community that sustains itself through "sacred trust" and a covenant that binds them to one another and to the society they

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* Sherman, *Stoic Warriors,* p. 126.

serve. The warrior ethos forms the basis for this covenant. It is composed of such values as honor, duty, courage, loyalty, and self-sacrifice. The warrior ethos is important because it makes military units effective and because it makes war "less inhumane."

As our commander in chief observed in Oslo, "Make no mistake: Evil does exist in the world." Your advice and leadership will help our forces remain true to our values as we fight brutal and murderous enemies who pose a grave threat to all civilized people. I am proud to serve alongside you. My thanks to you and your families for your invaluable service to our nation in time of war.

BRIGADIER GENERAL H. R. MCMASTER, USA

Brigadier General McMaster, well-known for his 1998 book Dereliction of Duty, *has, since its appearance, commanded 1st Squadron, 4th Cavalry Regiment, and the 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment (in combat in Iraq), serving also on the U.S. Central Command Staff, at the International Institute for Strategic Studies, and in U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command. He is now serving on the staff of Commander, U.S. Forces Afghanistan.*