



The Institute for National Security Ethics and Leadership (INSEL)



The Compass

Winter 2010

Inside this issue:

- INSEL's Senior Military Fellow writes about the tension between national interests and values in driving strategy.
- INSEL offers a preview of upcoming events and conferences.

2010 Upcoming Events

March 24-25

Workshop for Combatant Command and Joint Staff Chaplains on the role religion plays in conflict. Co-sponsored with the Berkley Center for Religion, Peace, and World Affairs at Georgetown University. By invitation only.

June 23-25

INSEL, the Institut fur Theologie und Frieden, and the Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies at University of Notre Dame are jointly holding a seminar on noncombatant immunity. By invitation only.

Ethics Working Group Meets at National Defense University

The Professional Military Education (PME) Ethics Working Group met October 26-27, 2009, at the National Defense University (NDU) in Washington, D.C.

Since 2006, INSEL has organized this fall event, which brings together military officers and civilian professors who teach ethics at intermediate, advanced warfighting, and senior service schools across the PME community.

Approximately 20 people from 10 PME schools attended the three-day event. PME counterparts from Canada, Australia, and Great Britain attended for the second year in a row.

Over a couple of days, the participants talk freely and exchange ideas. The discussion is framed around topics selected in advance by the participants.

This year, the group discussed three main topics of interest. They began by considering the current issues their students bring in from the field. These student-driven topics included how to effectively and ethically handle a crisis after it's occurred, culture and corruption, and post-traumatic stress syndrome. Secondly, participants also examined the idea of an officer's professional identity and attendant responsibilities and what PME institutions were doing to address those concepts.



Working group members (from left to right) Maj CJ Connelley, Chaplain Maurice Buford, Dr. Rebecca Johnson, and CAPT Bernard Lessard meet at NDU to share ideas.

Thirdly, the group compared notes on initiatives, curricula, programs, and resources. The meeting ended with members discussing how to best help each other and the way ahead for their institutions.

The forum is kept deliberately small, with fewer than 30 participants, to focus on face-to-face discussion and the exchange of views among professionals. They share what they are doing in their respective schools and what works and what doesn't. In the working group model, each topic is framed in a short introduction, and then participants discuss it for an hour to an hour and a half.

In the post-event evaluations, participants particularly valued the small-group format and chance to talk informally with their peers from other PME

institutions. "Although participants can meet each other while attending conferences throughout the year," INSEL's Director Dr. Albert C. Pierce noted, "this working group is the only venue dedicated to PME school faculty and their common issues."

Sponsoring and organizing this annual event for colleagues from sister schools falls under the outreach portion of INSEL's mission. The response from participants has been overwhelmingly positive. As Dr. David Whetham, a Senior Lecturer in Defence Studies at King's College London, commented: "This is an excellent forum, and I am very pleased that the UK has been invited to attend to share and learn best practices. It is a small community that can have a big impact."

Checking Our Bearings



What stability in political life is worth protecting if it does not embody such things as free speech and the rule of law?

National Interests or Values: What Drives Our Strategic Interests?

By Chaplain (Colonel) Eric Wester, U.S. Army

One of the core missions of INSEL is to contribute to the education mission of National Defense University. As an Army reserve chaplain and the senior military fellow at INSEL, I co-teach two elective courses with active duty “line” officers—CAPT Bernard Lessard, USN, and COL Vince Dreyer, USA.

The Fall class I teach with CAPT Lessard is entitled, “Ethics and Strategy: Rethinking Morality and Power.” Students included U.S. Army, Navy, and Marine officers, an Australian Defence colonel, and civilian staff from USAID and the Departments of State and Energy. We began the semester trying to navigate that tricky question about how values might fit into a realistic national security policy. In the logic woven into Realpolitik, which dominates security and strategy planning, morality is dismissed or even avoided. One of our authors, Gordon Graham, Henry Luce III Professor of Philosophy and Arts at Princeton Theological Seminar, zeroed in on the debate about interests and values.

Via Graham, we considered George Kennan’s contention that a government’s “primary obligation is to the interests of the national society it represents” and that this means “its military security, the integrity of its political life and the well-being of its people. These needs have no moral quality.” Three claims

drive this conviction: (1) there is no place in politics for moral ideals, (2) it is an abuse of one’s power in political life to advance a personal moral cause, and (3) properly *political* considerations have no moral dimension. Realism (as advanced in the twentieth century by Kennan and Hans Morgenthau) can be thought of as “the belief that the first two propositions imply the third.”

Our students began to break this paradigm, separating moral idealism from the conventional, implied “wall of separation” between ethics and strategy. Further questions, raised by Graham and the NDU students, may be helpful in bridging the concepts of values and interests:

♦ What is the purpose of military security if it is not to protect the lives and liberties of subjects, and to advance those protections

to others?

♦ What stability in political life is worth protecting if it does not embody such things as free speech and the rule of law?

♦ How can promoting the well-being of citizens claim a validity over enslaving or impoverishing citizens unless such well-being is “morally superior?”

♦ How can economic development—improved diet, health, education, leisure, and so on—be understood except as a moral aim?

What we discovered in the class, from reading and our discussions, is that moral values and national interests are not mutually exclusive. In fact, a nation’s strategic interests are an expression of its values and ideals.



Chaplain Wester orienteering on horseback

INSEL Previews Upcoming Conferences

Part of INSEL's mission is to engage in outreach, and so INSEL is working with other organizations to provide programs to benefit PME faculty from sister organizations. The following future events are by invitation only.

INSEL and the Berkley Center for Religion, Peace, and World Affairs at Georgetown University are developing a workshop for Combatant Command and Joint Staff Chaplains, to be held on March 24-25, 2010. The workshop will examine the role of religion in conflict.

In the spring, INSEL will conduct a follow-on meeting for faculty who attended a workshop last June, which was co-hosted by INSEL and the Berkley Center. That workshop, for faculty members from PME institutions, also focused on religion and conflict.

Participants with a working knowledge and interest in the topic had the opportunity to meet and interact with experts. The follow-on meeting will explore classroom applications of concepts about religion and the role it plays in conflict.

INSEL, the Institut fur Theologie und Frieden, and the Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies at University of Notre Dame are jointly holding a seminar on noncombatant immunity. The format will be a three-day working group, to be held from June 23 through 25, 2010.

The working group will explore the following questions: Are noncombatants more vulnerable, or unduly vulnerable, today? To what extent does this vulnerability vary with the type of conflict and who is waging

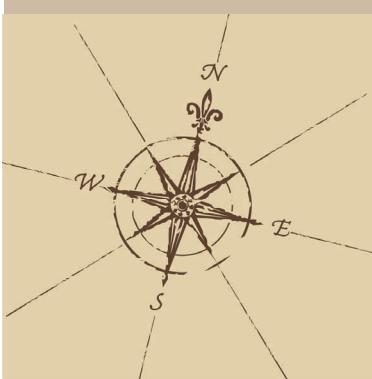
it? What are the major threats to civilian immunity today, from high-tech warfare and low-tech warfare, to terrorism and counter-terrorism, to insurgency and counterinsurgency? How have states, militaries, and non-state actors either respected or threatened civilian immunity? How has the norm of civilian immunity developed over time? Has the norm kept up with changes in technology, war-fighting, and other realities of war?

These questions and related issues will be examined through the multiple lenses of ethics, theology, the law, strategy, and policy, drawing on the expertise and experience of both scholars and practitioners.



Marshall Hall, home of INSEL at NDU, and site of some of the upcoming events

Compass Points



Issues of Ethics in the News

To read source documents for or coverage of the issues described below, click on the links.

Just War Ethics and National Strategy

[Remarks by the President at the Acceptance of the Nobel Peace Prize](#)

Professional Identity and Ethics

[Report on the use of anthropologists in the military's Human Terrain Program](#)

[Interview with author of book about the ethics of military anthropology](#)

Using Unmanned Aerial Vehicles

[New Yorker article about covert drone program](#)

[Article about Syracuse Air National Guard operating Reaper drones](#)





The Institute for National Security Ethics and Leadership

Dr. Albert C. Pierce, Director
National Defense University
Fort Lesley J. McNair
300 5th Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20319

Phone: 202-685-3506
Email: INSEL@ndu.edu

The Institute for National Security Ethics and Leadership (INSEL) at the National Defense University (NDU) was created to be a nationally and internationally recognized center of excellence in ethics and leadership in national- and international-security affairs.

In 2007, General Peter Pace, USMC, then Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, authorized the establishment of the Institute for National Security Ethics and Leadership. General Richard B. Myers, USAF (Retired), also a former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, plays an integral role in the Institute in his capacity as NDU's Colin Powell Chair of Leadership, Ethics, and Character.

The Institute for National Security Ethics and Leadership works in all three functional areas of NDU: education, research, and outreach. Its focus includes the qualities of the individual leader, the standards of the profession as a whole, the profession's relationship with society, and also encompasses a wider view of the ethics of national security.



Recent Publications

General Richard B. Myers:

["Counterterrorism Begs for a Strategy,"](#) *The Washington Times*,
October 29, 2009

with Dr. Albert C. Pierce, "[Strategic Leadership,](#)" in chapter 18 of the book *Global Strategic Assessment 2009: America's Security Role in a Changing World* (see page 423)

Chaplain Eric Wester:

["Army Chaplains: Leading From the Middle,"](#) *Military Review*. Fort Leavenworth: November-December 2009, p. 112 (4 pages)

