WAR IS A MORAL FORCE

State Department district support team political advisor talks with Afghan elder at informal community council meeting

U.S. Marine Corps (Colby Brown)

DESIGNING A MORE VIABLE STRATEGY FOR THE INFORMATION AGE

By PETER D. FROMM, DOUGLAS A. PRYER, *and* KEVIN R. CUTRIGHT

A thought is a thing as real as a cannonball.

—Joseph Joubert

Since World War II, the United States has spent far more on national defense than any other country. In fact, America currently spends nearly as much on defense as the rest of the world combined.[1] However, such spending has not meant that the Nation has fared well in war.

The Vietnam War, for instance, was the first great harbinger of change. In this deeply tragic conflict, America lost its sense of *moral* purpose and will to fight, effectively abandoning an ally to a brutal, determined enemy that it could not defeat.

After Vietnam, there was Beirut in 1983 and then Mogadishu in 1993—brief, bloody incidents followed by moral routs. America's interventions in Lebanon and Somalia were "moral routs" not because Servicemembers were involved in war crimes, but because leaders made morally unaware decisions at all levels of command. At the national command level, congressional debates and resolutions did not support these ventures. In the country itself, substantial portions of the population perceived U.S. military actions as blatantly partisan, unfair, and culturally ignorant.

The Gulf War seemed to signal a return to America's winning ways, but this victory rang hollow when the war proved to be only the first campaign of a much longer conflict that America would wage in Iraq today. In Afghanistan, despite America's exorbitant expenditure of blood and treasure, its Taliban enemies have actually grown stronger in recent years. America's worst setbacks in the "Long War" against terrorism have not been defeats on the physical battlefield; they have been revelations of "extraordinary renditions," specious interpretations of international laws, detainee abuses at Abu Ghraib and other facilities, and murders in Haditha, Mahmudiya, and elsewhere.

Sadly, the decisions of U.S. strategic leadership set the conditions for many of these moral failures. The key to understanding why these decisions led to failure is realizing that there is actually very little difference between having a sense of moral purpose and possessing the will to fight. When decisions lead one side to lose the former, this side inevitably loses the latter as well.

For strategy to work in our age, it must possess solid moral and political legitimacy. This essay seeks to explore ways to improve

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moral awareness and psychological understanding of war as an aspect of American strategy. It argues that the best way to win constructive peace in any future conflict is for American forces to display a focused consistency of justifiable action at all levels.

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War Is a Moral Force

According to Carl von Clausewitz, the "effects [in war] of the physical forces and the moral are completely fused, and are not to be decomposed like a metal alloy by a chemical process."[2] The term *moral* here and elsewhere in this article refers to both its ethical and psychological denotations, which experience and language inextricably connect.[3] The reason for these two meanings is that perceived *right action* and consistency in word and deed are the psychological glue holding together a community, even the community of states. Shared perceptions of right action bind individuals to groups and groups to communities. The moral *approbation* (or psychological approval) at the root of stable communities is the natural result of acting rightly. Approbation, it bears repeating, leads to peace.

There are two ways of thinking about such approbation as it feeds moral and political legitimacy. There is the pursuit of right action in accordance with accepted norms, which incidentally and typically results in approbation. Then there is the practical pursuit of approbation, which incidentally and typically results in right conduct. Rightness and practicality merge in philosophical pragmatism, and together they form a grammar of approbation for specific actions. To put it another way, approbation is a response to the communication that comes from actions.

Approbation may mean little to the strategic realist. Realists often connect notions of pragmatism with the idea that ethical concerns are secondary to what they imagine as strategic necessity in pursuit of "victory" or in pursuit of national interests. For the strategic realist, sometimes such imagined "victory" itself becomes the moral object rather than the means to a moral end. Seeking approbation in such cases may even seem like a bad idea to the strategic realist.

When General Douglas MacArthur famously uttered in his farewell address at West Point that "there is no substitute for victory," he fed the fantasies of those realists who imagine "decisive victory" at all costs. Yet at what moral cost can military victory be a success worthy of the name? Can it be victory if the cost is one's moral worth? Or if the Nation's honor is destroyed? Or if the war results in far greater loss of life and human dignity than could have conceivably occurred without the war? At some point, ethics intrude upon the realist's vision.

The justifications for the atom bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki illustrate the need to give moral answers to operational questions. The bombs ended the Pacific war before an ostensibly necessary U.S. invasion that would have led to millions more casualties, military and civilian. What side of this debate one comes down on does not matter; the fact the moral justification occurred is the point. All else about war supervenes upon the perceived moral necessity of any given conflict and any given military action in a conflict. Post hoc analysis always frames victory as a morally worthy endeavor. Even for the realist, approbation has to be sought, and has to be derived, from the situation. Victory *must* mean moral success, ethically and psychologically. That is, victory is fundamentally about hearts and minds.

More importantly, strategists of the realist ilk must face the growing reality that this fused grammar of psychological and ethical meaning is becoming harder and harder to separate in the modern age. If the bulk of casualties in a conflict are collateral, in what sense can a military force claim that the casualties are unintended and hope to be believed? When everyone has a cell phone camera that records a disproportionate operation, how can a military escape moral judgment and strategically counterproductive censure? Evidence must support the fact that a military action was taken to avoid noncombatant harm, not to inflict it.

Actions that meet this test win moral approbation. More than being popular, more than winning some kind of marketing campaign, such approbation assumes some kind of objectivity that is not merely "crowd-sourced" ethics. What we call "moral approbation" represents multiple moments of reasoning on the same subject, even if the reasoning is inexact and varying across contexts. There may be ethical limits to moral approbation, but its power cannot be ignored.

Theoretical Bases Briefly Elucidated

When Field Manual (FM) 3–24, *Counterinsurgency*, was published in December 2006, it catapulted ideas about moral efficacy in strategy back into the forefront of military doctrine. *Legitimacy* is this doctrine's key concept. "Victory is achieved," the manual declares, "when the populace consents to the government's legitimacy and stops actively and passively supporting the insurgency."[4] With this formulation, FM 3–24 reiterates the primacy of war's moral dimension that ancient and modern Eastern and Western theorists have repeatedly called out.

Carl von Clausewitz's *On War* is the Western analog to the politico-strategic disposition that military thinkers find in the wisdom emanating from ancient China—from thinkers like Sun Tzu, Lao Tzu, Confucius, and Mencius. Perhaps one does not at first approach Clausewitz as a moral philosopher, yet he is that. In *On War*, Clausewitz describes war in an idealized, amoral form. War involves the use of "utmost exertion" by states to achieve political ends, he says, without emphasizing that the political is also the moral.[5] However, Clausewitz understands that moral moderation is necessary in war. The use of violence, he says, is tempered when intelligent minds "take into account the human element" and discern a "more effectual means of applying force."[6] Social conditions, political limitations, and other sources of moral "friction" all serve to temper war's violence. Via such practical constraints, real wars—wars as they must actually be fought and strategized—are won.

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This practical understanding of war's moral-political qualities stemmed from Clausewitz's deep appreciation for the role of human nature in war. Continental philosophy acted as a lens through which he understood his and others' experiences. Enmeshed in philosophy, perhaps reluctantly, his muse was Platonic (the concept of the human

psyche—*pathos*, *logos*, and *ethos*—from Plato's *Phaedrus* serves as Clausewitz's centerpiece, the "paradoxical" or "wonderful" trinity). Clausewitz echoes Plato's Socrates, who was also a soldier, and one whose Peloponnesian War experience shaped his approach to politics and morality.

As a revolutionary, Mao Zedong echoed Clausewitz, directly advocating moral legitimacy to obtain political legitimacy using both experience and theory: "the masses will certainly come over to us. The Koumintang's policy of massacre only serves to 'drive the fish into deep waters.'"[7] Mao's political metaphor intentionally echoes moral implications found in Mencius, the 4th-century BCE thinker: "If, among the present rulers of the kingdom, there were one who loved benevolence, all the other princes would aid him by driving the people to him. Although he wished not to become sovereign, he could not avoid becoming so."[8]

Mencius expresses the moral and political theory informing both Taoist thought about war (Sun Tzu and Lao Tzu) and his own Confucian traditions supporting the political hierarchy of Chinese culture. Subsequent Eastern military philosophy, including the later Japanese, Korean, and Chinese medieval commentators, echoes both Sun Tzu and Mencius. For example, "*Tu Mu* [commenting on Sun Tzu]: The Tao is the way of humanity and justice; 'laws' are regulations and institutions. Those who excel in war first cultivate their own humanity and justice and maintain their laws and institutions. By these means, they make their governments invincible."[9]

Military theorists, East and West, have always been concerned about moral strategy and the reality of creating enemies by failing to act with moral and political legitimacy. The difference today is that legitimacy is more likely to be based on shared moral perception: a growing global moral solidarity. In the modern age, the narrative of "victory" is more likely to be grounded in a story that makes its way around the planet at the speed of light. That narrative will hinge on a grammar of observed actions, not so much upon attempts at manufacturing or controlling the discourse.

GEN Stanley McChrystal, USA, speaks to Afghan media at bridge between Afghanistan and Uzbekistan, May 2010

U.S. Navy (Mark O'Donald)

The Power of Personal Example

In the grammar of action, human beings are in general agreement about what constitutes "right." The story of Mahmoud provides one real example.

When Mahmoud first volunteered in 2006 to be an interpreter for coalition forces in Iraq, he struggled with whether he was going against his religion and country.[10] Born in Iraq, but more recently a citizen of Jordan for his family's safety, he felt the compulsion of his culture to scorn all Westerners. He reported to a U.S. military base in Anbar Province thinking that, if nothing else, working closely with the Americans would allow him some influence on their treatment of his fellow citizens.

His internal debate ended after a bomb destroyed a nearby bridge in Ramadi, wounding many Iraqis. All the interpreters on the base were ordered to the camp's hospital. Mahmoud and his friends watched the Americans treat the wounded with diligence, urgency, and genuine care. He saw Soldiers respond to a nurse's cry for blood by immediately setting their gear down and rolling up their sleeves. From this event, he realized he would not have to try to steer Americans toward helping the Iraqis: their good intentions were clear. This realization proved an epiphany for Mahmoud, moving him to become a wholehearted American ally.

The power of individual Servicemembers to affirm the legitimacy of their presence by setting a positive example cannot be overstated. Thanks largely to ubiquitous communications technology, this same dynamic now applies equally to both conventional and unconventional wars. Ensuring that such examples consistently occur is one of the greatest challenges for the U.S. military.

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Legitimacy and the Law

Samuel Huntington famously described the unique expertise of the military profession as the "management of violence."[11] If the moral dimension is war's most important dimension, where, then, should military professionals applying violence begin when considering the grammar of action? The best starting point is moral agreement. Although what the right action is for a given situation is not always clear, and nowhere is there complete solidarity on some moral questions, there is general agreement on standards of right and wrong. In war, that agreement is embodied in the Just War Tradition (JWT).[12] We pay homage to this agreement every time we stoop to cover up something. As Michael Walzer observes in *Just and Unjust Wars*, "The clearest evidence for the stability of our values over time is the unchanging character of the lies soldiers and statesmen tell. They lie in order to justify themselves, and so they describe for us the lineaments of justice. Wherever we find hypocrisy, we find moral knowledge."[13] Moral variations

experienced in cultural relativism belie the great commonality of moral solidarity in the world embodied in international law.

As it deals with the conduct of war, the JWT is expressed in the "law of armed conflict," which is amply supported in current Army doctrine if not yet in Army training.[14] Beyond the actual conduct of war, the tradition also governs when a nation can justly choose to go to war. The conditions include just cause, proportionality, reasonable chance of success, public declaration of war, declaration by a legitimate authority, last resort, and right intention. Importantly, they derive from reason and are universally self-evident in principle even if contentious in application. For example, that a political instrument as deadly and destructive as war should be employed only as a last resort is obvious, as is the idea that governments violating this tenet make themselves targets for retributive justice from other states.

Wars often start without meeting these conditions. Nonetheless, the conditions must be met if any war is to long remain legitimate in the eyes of an increasingly informed and connected world, one with an ever-increasing solidarity of moral opinion. Since it is questionable that an occupying force can generate a politically legitimate outcome from a war that is itself deemed immoral in conduct, current Army doctrine rightly extols the importance of adhering to the law of armed conflict.

That just war conditions are absent from this same doctrine is glaring. Although just war conditions involve political decisions outside of the U.S. military's control, these decisions are certainly not beyond the influence of the senior U.S. military leaders whose job it is to craft successful strategy. Moreover, properly accounting for the delegitimizing effects of a war that is popularly deemed unjust enables the military leaders fighting it to better understand, report, and plan for the limited gains their forces may actually hope to achieve. More critically still, when military Servicemembers believe in their cause and have faith in the moral principles of their senior leaders and their interpretations of law, they may well be inspired to fight better and behave more ethically themselves.

Just war concerns are by no means the only morally relevant factors of a given war. For example, U.S. draft policies increased perceptions at home that the Vietnam War was illegitimate.[15] However, the JWT provides us with authoritative understanding of actions that will always generate *moral reprobation* (the psychological disapproval that a people give to an act or to a policy).

In his Clausewitzian analysis of Vietnam, *On Strategy*, Colonel Harry Summers advocates *selling* the Nation on a war to buttress national will.[16] However, in the modern age, within a mature democracy with a free press, people cannot easily or long be manipulated. Attempts to seek approbation not earned by actions will eventually appear clumsy, ill-conceived, or transparently manipulative. The relevant truth will emerge in the grammar of actions, ultimately trumping the marketing of untruth, no matter how shiny its packaging.

A Moral Framework for America's Grand Strategy

When military strategists work in a moral vacuum, their products are likely to be dead on arrival. The impotence of amoral strategizing stems from the fact that moral qualities constitute the greater part of war's friction, a fact that has never held truer than in today's age of instant information dissemination.

A military strategy that recognizes and accounts for moral friction has to be built on a grand strategy with an overarching message, one that generates genuine moral approbation. To devise a psychologically agreeable strategy for the American military, we need look no further than the U.S. Constitution, as John T. Kuehn suggests:

> *The goals for a uniquely American grand strategy are not the subject of a guessing game and never have been. The Preamble to the Constitution explicitly lists them: "establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity."*[17]

In suggesting that the Constitution's inherently moral framework should serve as the foundation for a grand U.S. strategy, Kuehn also pinpoints the essence of what that strategy should be. The Founding Fathers gave war powers solely to Congress for a reason: they intended to ensure that the Nation only went to war when elected representatives thought the war vital enough to vote for it—and thus be held accountable for it. Using these values as the starting point of strategic military intentions, we should strive to make our actions consistent with them. If tactical methods, campaign objectives, and strategic ends do not morally cohere, national strategy is undermined and delegitimized.

Effects-based Operations

How do we determine campaign objectives and tactical methods for achieving moral strategic ends? Until recently, effects-based operations (EBO) seemed to provide the answer. EBO originated as a good idea: rather than bomb targets based on their importance as isolated military objects, Air Force pilots bombed targets based on the effect that their destruction would have on what planners imagined to be a "closed" system. For example, it might be more efficacious to destroy a radar platform used by several air-defense weapons than to destroy one of the weapons themselves. Such quantitative analysis propelled the "shock and awe" bombing campaign of the second Gulf War, a campaign carried out to cripple the command and control of Iraqi armed forces and to destroy the Iraqi leadership's will and ability to fight.

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Although EBO has proven useful as a planning paradigm for the targeting of complex infrastructure and weapons systems, problems arose when EBO adherents tried to apply it to war's moral domain, a sphere that is inherently open and nonquantifiable. Because human beings ultimately choose to act not from external causes, but for reasons residing within their private mental realms, EBO's materialistic determinism proved largely impotent in helping planners properly account for human behavior. Furthermore, this impotency became almost absolute when planners considered social groups with their complex array of ranks, relationships, and cultural mores and the contingencies these factors engendered.

The lack of a focused moral awareness is perhaps the salient reason EBO fell from grace.[18] Soon after General David Petraeus and

the moral epiphanies of FM 3–24 corrected the failures of American strategy in Iraq, General James Mattis, then commander of U.S. Joint Forces Command, greatly limited the scope of effects-based thinking. Petraeus and Mattis thus set the stage for a more adaptive, imaginative, and human-centric approach to warfare.

The Arrival of Design

The study of design methods in America can be traced to World War II and the use of novel, systematic approaches for finding solutions to the war's urgent technological problems. In the late 1950s, in the wake of the Soviet Union's Sputnik launch, interest in these methods continued to flourish amidst the feeling that American scientists and engineers lacked creativity. By the 1980s, the field had grown to become a coherent academic discipline, and the vast number of international journals and professional conferences on the subject today indicates that design research is booming.

Design methodologies today encompass architectural design, engineering design, art design, fashion design, social design, and program design (among others). The concepts, language, and techniques of these methodologies vary widely. What is common to all, though, is their attempt to create something new—a process that itself is routinely reconsidered and readjusted to seek the most efficacious approach. All designers strive to realize the moment's potentialities while working within the "art of the possible" toward the best outcome. The aim is to realize achievable ideas, not impossible dreams.

Herbert Simon, an early pioneer of design theory, defined design as "changing existing situations into preferred ones."[19] Morris Asimow, another early pioneer, defined it as "decision making, in the face of uncertainty, with high penalties for error."[20] Collaboration is crucial to design methodologies because the ideas and experiences of the many, when properly fused, typically yield better outcomes.

Israel was the first country to introduce elements of design theory into military doctrine. In 1995, Brigadier General Shimon Naveh founded the Israeli military's Operational Theory Research Institute. The institute developed a method called Systemic Operational Design (SOD) for the purpose of designing campaigns at the strategic and operational levels of war. Although SOD became influential, Israel's military never fully accepted it as doctrine. Instead, in April 2006, the Israel Defense Forces chose the EBO methodology as doctrine, simultaneously infusing this doctrine with SOD terminology.

Trying to combine effects-based thinking with little-understood SOD terminology proved to be a disaster. During Israel's 2006 war with Hizballah in Lebanon, Israeli forces fought a morally flawed campaign in which commanders and staffs had difficulty understanding assigned objectives.[21] "The core of SOD may not be without merit," one historian of the war wrote, "but it is useless if it cannot be understood by officers attempting to carry out operation orders."[22]

U.S. Army doctrine writers took Israel's painful lessons to heart, not only giving design primacy over EBO, but also seeking to ensure that design's terminology was clear, simple, and, where possible, linked to traditional operational terms. At first, as had been the case in Israel, design was associated with "operational art" and the development of theater-level campaign objectives. Then in March 2010, the Army published FM 5–0, *The Operations Process*. This manual recognizes that, on decentralized and complex battlefields, units at all levels can benefit from a creative design methodology that is "iterative, collaborative, and focused."[23] The new methodology encourages commanders and staffs to seek a deep understanding of the operational environment so that the best feasible objectives are chosen. To reach these objectives, the methodology articulates a broad operational approach consisting of interrelated lines of effort (such as the restoration of good governance and essential services). Commanders and staffs regularly reassess their working assumptions, often with the help of an assumption-challenging "red team" as devil's advocate.[24]

Today, our Army stands poised to use design theory to achieve better outcomes in its endeavors, something global industry has been doing for decades. Nowhere are these better outcomes more needed than in war.

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Moral Means to Moral Ends

The 1st-century historian Tacitus's self-conscious critique of the Romans in Britain, "where they make a desert, they call it peace," may be history's most concise and poignant comment about the only type of peace possible when a purely violent military force—a force lacking legitimacy—is used.[25] While wars of annihilation may have been acceptable to the barely informed citizenry of a harsh, xenophobic empire, they are certainly not acceptable to the citizens of modern, information-empowered democracies. Witness the civil unrest and fall of three French governments during France's long, brutal war in Algeria in the 1950s and 1960s. Or examine our own nation's crisis over lurid media reports of carpet bombings, jungle defoliation, and incidents such as My Lai during the Vietnam War.

Colonel Douglas Macgregor has observed that "[American] politicians frequently substitute a fascination with direct action in the form of air strikes or special operations killings for strategy."[26] This fascination demonstrates a lack of familiarity with the moral nature of strategy. Robert Kaplan similarly observes, "Sun Tzu notes that the best way to avoid war—the violent result of political failure—is to think strategically. The strategic pursuit of self-interest is not a cold and amoral pseudo-science, but the moral act of those who know the horrors of battle and seek to avoid them."[27] When Kaplan speaks of "a cold and amoral pseudo-science," it is hard not to think of EBO.[28]

To effectively strategize and gain favorable outcomes from war, we must choose our wars carefully, and once engaged in war, we must wage it in a morally aware fashion. Military design helps us to wage war in such a fashion by addressing the cognitive agents of war as central to operational adaptation. The posture it thereby creates is inherently morally attuned, sensitive to cultural values. Design promotes our understanding of the proper conditions for assessing, acting, reassessing, and accounting for the moral friction of the operational environment.

To paraphrase Timothy Challans, design opens one's mind to recognizing the way people act in an open system in the real world, and it therefore brings us closer to a holistic understanding of war by making us consider human beings as something other than objects.[29] It draws planners away from preformatted categories. The degree to which this happens is up to them, but design removes

a staff from "render and reduce" methods like the formal military decisionmaking process when framing a situation. Design attempts to get generals and field grade officers to stop doing sophisticated crew-drill in a vacuum and start rethinking when their brains' military muscle memories are no longer appropriate. Those who argue that design is just another process have fundamentally misunderstood its goals. Design strives to turn technicians into leaders who appreciate their environments, including the moral terrain.

Challans makes a strong argument that design can lead to better moral outcomes in war in "Tipping Sacred Cows: Moral Potential Through Operational Art."[30] Challans says that design "is philosophically interpretive—not pretending to be scientific—it remains consistent with modern scientific practice and understanding because it refuses to proceed without accounting for evidence. It accommodates a moral posture."[31] Design, therefore, has the potential to return the war machine to the wisdom of Ardant du Picq's assertion that "the human heart . . . is then the starting point in all matters pertaining to war."[32] This return to wisdom will help bring a stable termination to our foreign conflicts. That is, if a conflict is just and all levels of command display a moral awareness and symmetry (which design enables by encouraging a fuller understanding of the environment), achieving a lasting, favorable peace becomes the "art of the possible."

Critically, a consistently moral approach in a war can prevent even the most violent of mistakes (to include those labeled as atrocities by world opinion) from turning into major defeats. Although sound training and a high degree of professionalism can limit such mistakes (and perhaps even prevent atrocities on the scale of Abu Ghraib altogether), horror is inevitable in war. Nonetheless, tragic incidents can be credibly called *mistakes* when there is an overarching moral strategy that includes assiduously moral tactics. A sound moral posture across all levels of command, from the national to the tactical level can overcome the international uproar created by heinous, isolated acts of individuals and small units.

Considering the overriding importance of war's moral dimension, the most important indicators of a war's progress are moral ones. Physical measurements, such as the rate of enemy attacks and the amount of enemy propaganda produced, are not nearly as relevant to success. Furthermore, if moral indicators are to be truly meaningful, they must go beyond quantitative measurements like voter turn-out and answer qualitative questions: do locals trust their local government? Do locals trust coalition forces? Is there greater justice than before? Answers to these questions demand the deep study of and familiarity with the operational environment that design promotes.

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The End of the Beginning?

During the Second Peloponnesian War, the great Theban commander Epaminondas met his death at the battle of Mantinea in 362 BCE in a stunning military victory that ended Spartan oligarchic domination. Epaminondas hoped to permanently squelch Lacedaemon's efforts to enslave their rebellious helots and to politically and economically dominate Greece. Thebes proved successful against Sparta. Nearly 2,000 years later, Michel de Montaigne rated Epaminondas "the most excellent of all" the great commanders of antiquity.[33] Montaigne's admiration, according to Victor Davis Hanson, owed to the moral nature of Epaminondas's actions in a war to secure a politically just outcome.[34] Epaminondas sought not Alexandrian glory but a peace that Hanson calls "one of the landmark moral events in [the Greeks'] collective memory."[35] This admiration for Epaminondas underscores the general's "humanity, even toward his enemies," which, in tandem with his operational excellence, made him indispensable: "Victory like a shadow attend[ed] him wherever he went," and "he did not think it lawful, even to restore the liberty of his country, to kill a man without knowing a cause."[36]

Epaminondas's example evokes the universal moral dynamic that Mahmoud witnessed in the American field hospital near Ramadi. Today, as in antiquity and in Montaigne's Age of Enlightenment, legitimacy represents the psychological hub of a lasting peace. For a modern democracy to create legitimate outcomes from war, its conflict must follow what is perceived to be a moral trajectory. Recognizing this reality as pragmatic, not idealistic, our military strategists must embrace it.

Despite its shortcomings, the Army's counterinsurgency manual represents just such an embrace, rejecting an era in which leadership dreamed that war's moral qualities could be trivialized. However, this salubrious doctrine must mark (to paraphrase Winston Churchill) only "the end of the beginning" of our military's inner struggle with a morally myopic vision of war.[37]

Today, we must take stronger steps to ensure our leaders and Servicemembers possess the professional education, training, and role models they need to become moral

Supporter of Manuel Noriega waves Panamanian flag at Marines during Operation *Just Cause*

U.S. Navy (J. Elliott)

exemplars on the battlefield. We need to better define how to achieve and assess "legitimacy," to include fully incorporating a tradition that is internationally authoritative and centuries-wise, that of genuinely *just wars* (and not wars with a cooked narrative). We need to fortify our nation's grand military strategy with the national values expressed in the U.S. Constitution. We must realize that the use of military "hard power" to pursue a political goal as a matter of national policy is no longer feasible unless that goal also possesses moral legitimacy, at home and amongst our coalition allies. Finally, we must understand that, if a lasting and desirable peace is to come from any war, the means and ends selected must possess moral symmetry—a symmetry that design methodology can help us achieve.

Too often, U.S. military professionals view moral considerations as an extraneous hindrance to war's conduct or they misapprehend the real moral object. Yet this is exactly where military professionals must look to obtain any meaningful "victory" from a war. Simply stated, if we pay closer attention than our enemies do to moral considerations, we can be confident in a strategy that has the best chance of winning a lasting, workable peace from a conflict. The alternative, which is the routine and bloody sacrifice of this peace upon the altar of moral friction, is unacceptable. **JFQ**

NOTES

[1] Andrew Bacevich, *Washington Rules: America's Path to Permanent Wars* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, LLC, 2010), 25.

[2] Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, trans. J.J. Graham (Ware, UK: Wordsworth Editions Ltd., 1997), 151.

[3] The term *moral* in this essay always concerns the psychological approval or disapproval given an act based on the perception that the act is right or wrong.

[4] Field Manual 3–24, *Counterinsurgency* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2006), 1–3.

[5] Clausewitz, 8.

[6] Ibid., 20, 7. The term *friction* is used throughout in the sense of Clausewitz's "paradoxical" or "wonderful" trinity in which forces of passion, reason, chance, and creativity shape war from its abstraction into real experience.

[7] Mao Zedong, quoted in Richard H. Solomon, *Mao's Revolution and the Chinese Political Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971), 220. That Mao the practitioner later violated his own practical philosophy after attaining his goals does not dilute his argument's logic.

[8] Mencius, quoted in "A Single Spark Can Start a Prairie Fire," *Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung* (Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1967), available at <http://www.marx2mao.com/Mao/SS30.html>. Mao refers to *Mencius*, Book 4, Part 1, chapter 9.

[9] Sun Tzu, *The Art of War*, trans. Samuel B. Griffith (New York: Oxford University Press Paperbacks, 1971), 88.

[10] Mahmoud was an interpreter during coauthor Major Kevin Cutright's deployment to Iraq, 2009–2010. Mahmoud's story occurred in 2007.

[11] Samuel P. Huntington, *The Soldier and the State: The Theory and Politics of Civil-Military Relations* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1957), 11.

[12] Many people equate cultural relativism and moral relativism with little thought, and they thereby dismiss the possibility of moral solidarity. The Just War Tradition is and has been universal; it grew up in the human condition, and it was as valid many thousands of years ago as it is today. The early Christian thinkers who articulated it in writing as just war theory in the West (before and through the Dark Ages) were working off millennia of tradition, and the work of the classical Greeks and Romans conveyed it to them in a mature form. China and India both employed the Just War Tradition long before the West finally wrote it down, and we can return to those societies to extract the "ought" from the commentary on the violations of the tradition in the "is" or the "was." Islamic conquerors also continually made reference to the "ought" by providing a pretext for war, one that stood outside the mere evangelist's perspective.

[13] Micahel Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars: A Moral Argument with Historical Illustrations* (New York: Perseus Books, 1977), 19.

[14] Douglas A. Pryer, "Controlling the Beast Within: The Key to Success on 21st-Century Battlefields," *Military Review* (January–February 2011), 8.

[15] Arnold R. Isaacs, *Vietnam Shadows: The War, Its Ghosts, and Its Legacy* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997), 35–47. *Vietnam Shadows* is a poetic, philosophically rendered study of the Vietnam War's moral dimension, as this war's moral battles have raged in America from the 1960s until the present day. Isaacs spent the last 3 years of the war in Vietnam as a correspondent.

[16] Harry G. Summers, *On Strategy* (New York: Dell Publishing, 1984), 46, 50–52.

[17] John T. Kuehn, "Talking Grand Strategy," *Military Review* (September–October 2010), 76.

[18] Although not typically associated with effects-based operations, the U.S. military's flirtation with so-called enhanced interrogation techniques involved the same behaviorist, deterministic, and effects-based mindset.

[19] Pieter E. Vermaas et al., eds., *Philosophy and Design: From Engineering to Architecture* (Dordrecht: Springer Press, 2007), 1.

[20] John Chris Jones, *Design Method* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1992), 3.

[21] *Morally flawed* here refers to the international and national condemnation that Israel's military tactics attracted, to include its targeting of civil infrastructure (such as banks and schools) and its use of white phosphorous munitions and cluster bomblets.

[22] Matt M. Matthews, *We Were Caught Unprepared: The 2006 Hezbollah-Israeli War* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2008), 64.

[23] Department of the Army, Field Manual 5–0, *The Operations Process* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2010), 7–9.

[24] On a staff, a "red team" effectively serves as an advocate of the design process. The team forces the staff to consider the assumptions underlying an operational approach and ensures that planning sections are cross-talking (that is, that the staff effort is sufficiently collaborative).

[25] Publius Cornelius Tacitus, *Agricola* ("De Vita Agricolae"), trans. Alfred John Church and William Jackson Brodribb, available at <www.fordham.edu/halsall/ancient/tacitus-agricola.html>.

[26] Douglas Macgregor, "It's Time for Us to Leave Afghanistan," *Defense News*, May 25, 2009.

[27] Robert D. Kaplan, *Warrior Politics: Why Leadership Demands a Pagan Ethos* (New York: Vintage Books, 2002), 42.

[28] Kaplan wrote this prescient sentence in 2001 or 2002, before we had even started to think about counterinsurgency in Iraq.

[29] Timothy Challans, "Tipping Sacred Cows: Moral Potential through Operational Art," *Military Review* (September–October 2009), 28.

[30] Ibid., 19–28.

[31] Ibid., 27.

[32] Ardant du Picq, "Battle Studies," *Roots of Strategy, Book 2* (Harrisburg, PA: Stackpole Books, 1987), 65.

[33] Michel de Montaigne, Chapter XXXVI, "Of the Most Excellent Men," *The Works of Michel de Montaigne*, ed. W. Hazlitt (Philadelphia: J.W. Moore, 1856), 375.

[34] Victor Davis Hanson, "Epaminondas and the Theban Doctrine of Preemptive War," in *Makers of Ancient Strategy*, ed. Victor Davis Hanson (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2010), 93–94.

[35] Ibid., 107.

[36] Montaigne, 376.

[37] Churchill's speech celebrating the British victory at El Alamein included these famous lines: "Now this is not the end. It is not even the beginning of the end. But it is, perhaps, the end of the beginning."