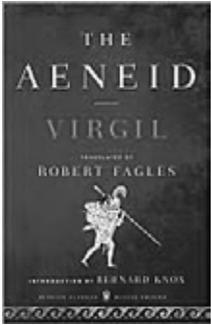


MR Classics Revisited



Featured Review

With as Many Voices: The Aeneid of Virgil

Wars and a man I sing.

With these marvelously compact words, Virgil opens his great epic with a promise to tell not of warfare alone, of great clashes of armies and heroes, but also of the very human struggles of a

man entangled in war and entrapped by Fate. The poet's fulfillment of this promise assured *The Aeneid's* (Viking, New York, 2006) longevity and stature in the history of literature. A poet of dualities, Virgil presents warfare in epic and personal scope, both celebrating and questioning the Roman Empire of his day. As a result, this most acclaimed Roman poet has been characterized as both state propagandist and quiet critic of empire.

With the long-awaited publication of Robert Fagles's new and masterful translation, Virgil's many voices come alive to speak to our own troubled moment. Professor Fagles has now completed the trifecta of translation. His *Iliad* and *Odyssey* are the standard translations of Homer for our era. *The Aeneid* completes the sweeping tale that begins in Homer's song of Troy and ends with Virgil's tale of the Trojan exiles' Italian "homecoming." Fagles's translation, perhaps more than any before, highlights Virgil's range of voices. At appropriate times, Fagles's verse rings with the deep resonance of Aeneas beating his famous God-wrought shield to goad on his troops:

*Now up steps Clausus from Cures,
flushed with his young strength
and flings his burly spear from a
distance, hitting Dryops
under the chin full force to choke
the Trojan's throat
as he shouted, cutting off both his
voice and his life*

*in the same breath, and his brow
slams the ground*

as he vomits clots of blood.

*. . . Like clashing winds
in the vast heavens, bursting forth
into battle,*

*matched in spirit, power—no gust
surrendering,*

*one to another, neither the winds
nor clouds nor seas:*

*all hangs in the balance, the
world gripped in a deadlock.*

*So they clash, the Trojan armies,
armies of Latins,*

*foot dug in against foot, man
packed against man. (10.406-426)*

At other times the quiet, private voice of Virgil surfaces in bitter-sweet moments that lend the poem its humanity. Like the cave at Cumae where the mystic Sibyl scribbled her prophecies on leaves prone to blow about, in Fagles's hands Virgil's poem seems to speak from "a hundred mouths with as many voices rushing out." (6:54)

Readers may notice that Fagles's *Aeneid* shares many echoes and tonal qualities with his translations of Homer. In his "Translator's Postscript," Fagles is self-conscious about this, going out of his way to explain why his Virgil seems as prone to performance as was his Homer. He needn't be concerned. This translation begs both for reading aloud and for private meditation. The echoes of Fagles's *Iliad* and *Odyssey* are fitting reminders that Virgil reprised and reworked Homer, translating the epics he made his own. Graced with a knowledgeable introduction by eminent classicist Bernard Knox, a pronunciation glossary, and helpful notes, Fagles's translation is for casual readers and scholars alike. This translation will draw in readers new to the work and quickly demonstrate to them why "epic" may never describe anything on television. It is destined to be the standard edition of the *Aeneid* for years to come, and Fagles can

only improve it by including Virgil's *Eclogues* and *Georgics*.

While the dust of 2,000 years may appear to weigh down the *Aeneid*, it speaks to our time. But readers must pay attention. In *Warrior Politics: Why Leadership Demands a Pagan Ethos* (Vintage, New York, 2003), Robert Kaplan tries to use the classics to instruct modern leaders, but he cherry-picks his way through the literature and quite remarkably ignores Virgil except to dismiss him as an Augustan panegyrist. This characterization overlooks a century of scholarship questioning Virgil's role as state-sponsored propagandist. To hear only one Virgilian voice, instead of the multivocal Virgil Fagles highlights so well, is to miss depths of meaning. Yes, the famous image of Aeneas leaving Troy's ruins with his beloved father on his back and young son in hand is an emblem of the Roman virtue *pietas*, or duty. But it is too easy to read Aeneas as a model hero, or to follow Kaplan in critiquing Virgil for pandering to his political masters. While the epic holds lessons on duty and Virgil does praise Augustus, the public voice is balanced by another voice—one perhaps growing louder as it resonates in our present.

The private voice of Virgil, made distinct in this translation by Fagles's tonal and rhythm shifts, is not one of outright political opposition. Rather, it quietly voices a sense of foreboding and sadness, undercutting triumphal proclamations elsewhere in the poem. While the public voice declares Rome *imperium sine fine* (empire without end), the "other" voice invites readers to sympathize with Turnus, the "Italian Achilles" opposing Aeneas (and thus Rome). Turnus, like Aeneas, is urged on by divine beings who inspire him to take up arms against the foreign invader come to claim his land and bride. However, Virgil denies readers any simple right or wrong; there

is no comforting archetypal battle of good versus evil here. Instead, Aeneas and Turnus *both* fight as proxies for higher powers, and are often chided for doubts or forced into actions they might spurn if not for divine meddling. Both heroes rightfully claim divine sanction for their actions. Readers, who admittedly know Aeneas will prevail, nonetheless feel disgust at the needless yet providentially sanctioned slaughter. At one point, even Jove, King of the Gods, throws up his lightning-bearing hands and withdraws, telling the bickering gods and goddesses:

Since it is not allowed that Latins and Trojans

join in pacts of peace, and there is no end

to your eternal clashes—now, whatever the luck

of each man today, and whatever hope he follows,

Trojan or Italian, I make no choice between them.

. . . How each man weaves his web will bring him to glory or to grief.

King Jupiter is the king to all alike.

The Fates will find the way. (10.128–10.138)

It is a timely reminder that in a conflict where both sides claim the backing of God or “Providence,” both might be wrong.

Later, before the final blow is struck in the mortal realm, a deal is struck on Olympus. Jove promises

there will be no second Troy, declaring that although victorious, “the Trojans will subside. / And I will add the rites and the forms of worship, / and make them Latins all, who speak one Latin tongue.” (12. 969-971). Colonizer and colonized, victor and vanquished, invader and invaded are all changed forever. The ambivalence of Virgil’s two voices culminates in the mixture of the two races and the nullification of all victory or defeat. Readers may not echo the sentiments of Turnus’s soul as “his breath fled with a groan of outrage / down to the shades below,” but they certainly feel no triumph. The final note of the epic is, as it ever was, a note of resounding ambivalence.

An odd practice grew up around Virgil in the centuries following his death, a testament to the poet’s enduring ability to speak to readers about their own day, regardless of how far removed from his time. The *Sortes Virgilianae* (“Virgilian Lottery”) used Virgil’s works as fortune-teller by applying random passages to tell the future. In his introduction, Knox relates the famous story of King Charles I consulting the *Sortes Virgilianae* during the English Civil Wars, when his kingdom was awash in religious sectarian violence and he was ousted by a somewhat misguided attempt to install a republican government. The passage he found foretold England’s struggles and his own imminent demise.

Virgil may or may not predict the future, but he certainly clarifies

events past and all-too present. He and his capable translator can be trusted to speak in one breath of glory and senseless loss, to both celebrate and question, and to forcefully engage concepts of duty, destiny, and chance encounters with death.

Virgil has been called a poet of exiles. It is thus apt that a new and vibrantly alive translation has appeared when our society is exiling people at an alarming rate. Now, when many feel increasingly distant from the culture they knew, when we can no longer be sure we serve the ideals we ground ourselves on, Virgil and this moving translation may force us to recognize and deal with a growing gap between our ideals and our reality. It may even encourage us to do something—to fight our exile and raise our own quiet voice of discontent in memoriam of our losses: the colleagues, teachers, students, friends, and those we’ve never known and now never will no matter how often we perform our futile rites of mourning.

Fill my arms with lilies, let me scatter flowers,

lustrous roses—piling high these gifts, at least,

On our descendant’s shade—and perform a futile rite.

(6: 1019–1021)

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MR Book Reviews

THE POLITICS OF PROSTITUTION: Women’s Movements, Democratic States and the Globalisation of Sex Commerce, Ed. Joyce Outshoorn, Cambridge University Press, New York, 2004, 329 pages, \$29.99.

While *The Politics of Prostitution* might seem an odd choice for review in a military journal, its selection reflects a growing awareness of the military’s recent actions to combat

prostitution, an initiative that is part of a larger fight against the dangerous international scourge of human trafficking. The Department of Defense has mandated education about human trafficking, and commanders have made establishments suspected of human trafficking activities off-limits to military personnel. Also, recognizing that service members—especially those stationed or deployed overseas—

are an obvious market for sex traffickers, President George W. Bush signed an executive order in 2005 to clarify that “patronizing a prostitute” is a violation of Article 134, Uniform Code of Military Justice, in the Manual for Courts-Martial.

These new policies have been largely influenced by an understanding that prostitution has direct links to human trafficking. Along with arms and drug trafficking, human

trafficking finances criminal organizations that support terrorism, the killing of Soldiers, and regional instability. So, to say nothing of social justice considerations, fighting human trafficking activities such as prostitution is a national security issue, one that is directly tied to the military's mission of fighting and winning our country's wars.

While *The Politics of Prostitution* does not discuss the U.S. military in particular, it does address human trafficking and its links to prostitution and prostitution policy. The book is a collection of studies by the Research Network on Gender Politics and the State (RNGS) that examine prostitution policy debates in a dozen Western democratic nations: Australia, Austria, Britain, Canada, Finland, France, Israel, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain, Sweden, and the United States.

The RNGS characterizes approaches to prostitution policies as abolitionist (punish the johns but not the prostitutes), prohibitionist (punish everyone involved), or regulatory (subject prostitution services to state control). These competing approaches appear both within countries and across borders. Each of the book's chapters covers a different country; the authors give a clear and concise description of the main debates over prostitution policy in each country, and they identify the groups that helped craft the policy. The chapter on prostitution policy in Italy, for example, outlines the continued debates over the 1958 Merlin Law—debates generated largely by Catholic and feminist concerns (which are often at odds) and brought into public view because of increasing human trafficking activities in that country resulting from the breakup of the Soviet Union.

I recommend *The Politics of Prostitution* with two caveats. First, the book's social-scientific approach gives it not just an impartial tone, but a sterile one. You won't find any personal accounts or stories of those whom the prostitution policies affect most—that is, the prostitutes themselves. The stories of such

women, when they become public, sometimes cause a public outcry resulting in changes to policy. Public awareness of the plight of trafficked women in bars outside U.S. military bases in Korea, for example, forced people to examine prostitution more closely and recognize its connection to human trafficking and terrorism—and these discoveries led to policy action.

Second, the volume claims to examine the success or failure of women's movements at influencing prostitution policy. However, the researchers narrow their focus to such a degree that the hypotheses they seek to prove seem fairly obvious. "Women's movements in democratic states," the argument goes, "have tended to be more successful where women's policy agencies have acted as insiders in the policy-making process." But surely, most people would already accept that in order to influence policy, you must have a seat at the table.

What the book does, it does well; but—as an academic work of social science—its arguments are limited. Although *The Politics of Prostitution* provides a good foundation for examining prostitution policy, the topic certainly merits further discussion well outside small academic circles. Here's hoping the book inspires further thought about the philosophical ideas, religious beliefs, and practical considerations that underlie prostitution policies; additional evaluation of the consequences and effectiveness of particular policies; and more research about prostitution policies in nondemocratic states, not just democratic ones.

Overall, *The Politics of Prostitution* is a worthwhile read for anyone interested in the prostitution debate or policy-making in general. It provides the reader with the basic policy positions; moreover, it explains who holds these positions, how policies differ in democratic states, and which groups have had an influence on creating those policies.

LTC Karen M. Thoms, U.S. Army, West Point, New York, is a former Department of Defense Special Investigator who conducted

an assessment of DOD efforts to combat trafficking in persons.

MISSION AL JAZEERA, Josh Rushing with Sean Elder, Palgrave Macmillan, New York, 2007, 233 pages, \$24.95.

"It's almost impossible to overestimate the impact Al Jazeera has had on the Arab world," notes Josh Rushing, who resigned from the Marine Corps in 2006 to accept a correspondent's post with the Arab network. On that point, I don't think even Al Jazeera's detractors could argue with Rushing. As a television network, Al Jazeera has enormous credibility in the Arab world, the Muslim world, and indeed the developing world.

Perhaps no player enmeshed in the current firestorm of debate about Qatar's upstart TV network—a global competitor within a decade of its inception—is better situated to write this book. Rushing, the Washington correspondent for the English-language Al Jazeera International, considers himself a truth-seeker; a patriotic American; and first, last, and always a Marine (recruited to the Corps, incidentally, by an Egyptian-American sergeant).

Rushing's book is neither strident nor timid as he pursues his various aims:

- A history and assessment of Al Jazeera with comparisons to Rushing's previous employer, the U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) headquarters located in Qatar. (Coincidentally, the emir of Qatar founded Al Jazeera in 1996 from the remnants of the short-lived Arabic version of BBC. That same year, he built the largest airfield in the Middle East and invited the United States to use it "indefinitely.")

- A defense of Al Jazeera as an Arab voice penetrating Mideast worlds previously closed to anything but official pronouncements and thought dictated by state religion.

- A somewhat low-key defense, but naming names, of the agonizing decision that led him from "behind the wire" as a Marine

spokesman for CENTCOM into his current role across town.

The last of these make for perhaps the book's most compelling reading. At CENTCOM, the military spokespersons were overseen by a highly partisan Republican operative dispatched from the White House. According to Rushing, "Political issues trumped military interests every time" and personnel literally "found new ways to say nothing."

At the time, Rushing was bothered by the use of the military to sell the politics of the invasion and spin the ensuing chaos in Iraq. Now, however, he declares, "I am . . . less conflicted by the information CENTCOM media center did not put out than I am about some of the information that we did. I was not asked to lie . . . But between truth and falsehood exists a vast grey area, and considering the spin CENTCOM was releasing, we were deep in the grey area." His political boss, he says, consistently corrected his use of the word "spin," urging instead that the term should be "context."

Ultimately, Rushing came to the difficult conclusion that he had to leave the Marine Corps after he was censured for appearing (briefly) in the documentary "Control Room"—an appearance he was ordered to make. He remarks ruefully that he witnessed what often happens when wars go on longer than expected: the military begins turning against the media.

As for the film itself, "the filmmakers made me appear like someone who, while never giving up what he believed in, really did want to understand the other side. I like to think it's an accurate portrayal," he says. Rushing contends that the United States missed an opportunity by not using his appearance as a voice of understanding to counterbalance the brutish Abu Ghraib pictures that exploded at about the same time. And he believes the U.S. continues to miss the same boat in its failure to use Al Jazeera as a vehicle to get the American message into the Arab and Muslim world.

Appearing across America "in an attempt," as he puts it, "to overcome

the U.S. misperception that (Al Jazeera) represents the ultimate in terrorist television," Rushing says he quickly learned that in the estimation of U.S. cable bosses, "Americans just don't care about international news . . . (preferring instead) 24 hours of NASCAR, seven days a week."

Rushing admits that he was sickened when Al Jazeera showed footage of dead Americans, but he counters obliquely that his network will continue to be less interested in the sanitized pictures of the U.S. Air Force launching "smart" bombs—highlighted endlessly on U.S. television—than in showing the carnage where they land. He also points out that Al Jazeera was the first Arab network to invite Israeli officials to appear, and the first medium in history to give a voice to Arab women.

U.S. criticism of Al Jazeera and Josh Rushing will doubtlessly continue well past the life of this book, but the author has perhaps opened the door to discussion. The voice that so inflamed the brass in "Control Room" has now been heard in appearances at West Point and the Army Command and General Staff College (where the book is on sale), in classes at the armed forces Defense Information School, before a blue-ribbon audience of Air Force generals, and on Israeli television—where Al Jazeera has replaced BBC.

George Ridge, J.D.
Tucson, Arizona

IS WAR NECESSARY FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH? Military Procurement and Technology Development, Vernon Ruttan, Oxford University Press, New York, 2006, 219 pages, \$45.00.

Vernon Ruttan's *Is War Necessary for Economic Growth?* examines six subjects (interchangeable parts, aviation, nuclear energy, computers, the Internet, and space industries) to analyze the military's role in technological development. Ruttan argues that military spending has been a vital contributor to the development of technologies in each of these sec-

tors, and postulates that American military spending has traditionally been stimulated by war or the threat of war, leading to major advances in technology. He draws excellent parallels between the items of his study, particularly in the critical role military funding plays in private-firm research.

A key component of Ruttan's thesis is that private firms do not have enough capital to make radical innovations, and only government entities function with a sufficiently long-term view to undertake the massive development projects required by the modern military. Technologies spun off by these projects are often unintentional, but prove profitable for private firms and provide an incentive for cooperative research-and-development projects. Ruttan provides examples of key advancements made by researchers working toward other goals. Importantly, he believes that the direction of spin-offs has reversed, and that the military is now benefiting from new applications of civilian technologies. He also notes that some firms have become entirely dependent upon military contracts, and as a result, many major contractors have consolidated since the end of the Cold War.

Ruttan is a persuasive writer, but his work has several flaws: he tends to consider technological development in a vacuum and only from the national perspective; he leaves little room for the intentional transfer of ideas or parallel development of technologies in multiple locations; he focuses heavily on innovative leaps when most technological advances are incremental; and he fails to discuss "surprise" uses of technology in the private sector, many of which have contributed to the economic viability of new products. Nevertheless, his work, though not perfect, helps to illuminate the military's role in technological procurement. It should interest any scholar of military technological development.

Paul J. Springer, Ph.D.,
West Point, New York

OVER THERE: How the GI Bill Transformed the American Dream, Edward Humes, Harcourt Press, Orlando, FL, 2006, 320 pages, \$26.00.

On 22 June 1944, the signing of the Servicemen's Readjustment Act produced positive, unintended consequences for thousands of veterans and post-war America. In *Over There*, Edward Humes, a Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist, shows how the three key opportunities provided by the GI Bill—education, home loans, and unemployment benefits—had a rippling effect on society, stimulating industry, business, and education and improving the lives of millions of Americans. To understand the GI Bill and its benefits is tantamount to understanding how America prospered as a nation after the World War II.

Humes illustrates the tangible and intangible results that arose from the bill's trifecta of opportunities by recounting veterans' personal stories. The "second bill of rights" helped thousands of former Soldiers become leaders, scientists, doctors, lawyers, educators, politicians, and other worthy members of society by leveling the playing field of opportunity. Tragically, the bill did not apply to minorities and women, thus limiting the full growth of the nation and preventing even greater additions to the collective pot of American dreams. Sadly, too, the current version of the bill does not make much of an economic or life difference for veterans—white, male, or otherwise. Despite the relatively small size of today's military force, the current bill falls far short of past promises. Its provisions have not kept pace with rising inflation and increasing education costs, and Humes argues convincingly that we need a new bill for veterans, one that has the transformative potential of its predecessor and that can be adjusted to meet changing circumstances.

Appendixes featuring the actual Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944 and the current GI Bill could have illuminated the arguments presented in *Over There*, but that's a minor shortcoming given the book's

overall virtues. Humes provides a wonderful exposition of how one government program helped transform a nation while arguing persuasively for a new bill that could lead to a more skilled workforce and a rediscovery of the values of America's "greatest generation."

**MAJ John M. Hinck, USA,
Fort Leavenworth, Kansas**

THE ROAD TO SAFWAN: The 1st Squadron, 4th Cavalry in the 1991 Persian Gulf War, Stephen A. Bourque and John W. Burdan III, University of North Texas, Denton, 2007, 312 pages, 27.95.

Consider the humble unit history, a popular genre that combines memoir, after action report, and operational journal. The Combined Arms Research Library index at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, lists 172 such offerings, from histories of national armies and strategic campaigns to the understandably more concise account of the 1139th MP Company's recent operations in Baghdad. The collection also features three separate and lengthy bibliographies of military unit histories, suggesting there's plenty more where the others came from.

Stephen Bourque and John Burdan's *The Road to Safwan: The 1st Squadron, 4th Cavalry in the 1991 Persian Gulf War*, represents an important and enlightening addition to this collection. Their subject combines an appropriately significant topic and a relatively brief timeline, focusing on a divisional cavalry squadron that assumed its combat mission within weeks of its arrival in theater and later provided security at the ceasefire negotiations that ended the war.

The squadron deployed to Saudi Arabia as part of the 1st Infantry Division in early January, only days before the start of the coalition's air campaign to liberate Iraq. After retrieving its equipment, the unit moved to the Saudi Arabian border, where it performed a dangerous and difficult border security mission, then supported the division's attack into Iraq and Kuwait as part of the

coalition's ground campaign in late February. During the war's final hours, the squadron found itself occupying the Basra Road north of Kuwait City, 30 kilometers forward of its division and in grave danger of being overrun by Iraqi units retreating from Kuwait.

Bourque and Burden tell this story with refreshing candor. The squadron's leaders are competent and the men are brave, but vehicles still break, radios fail, Soldiers get lost, and accidents happen. Fratricide poses a particularly dangerous threat, and the authors describe several friendly-fire incidents involving neighboring units. The enemy, too, poses a significant threat, and the squadron fights several deadly engagements. Along the way, Lieutenant Colonel Robert Wilson and his subordinates demonstrate considerable poise and judgment during repeated moments of crisis, reinforcing the importance of effective leadership during combat operations.

The Road to Safwan reminds us that Desert Storm was no cakewalk. Coalition forces enjoyed significant advantages in technology and firepower, but small-unit leaders and well-trained Soldiers proved to be our most effective secret weapon.

**LTC Bill Latham, USA, Retired,
Fort Leavenworth, Kansas**

TIGER FORCE: A True Story of Men and War, Michael Sallah and Mitch Weiss, Little, Brown and Company, New York, 2006, 403 pages, \$25.95.

Tiger Force is a disturbing book about a platoon in Vietnam and its protracted campaign of war crimes and atrocities. The authors were working for the *Toledo Blade* when they were tipped to the story by a fellow reporter who had been bequeathed boxes of secret documents from Henry Tufts, a former head of the Army's Criminal Investigations Command (CID), after his death in July 2002.

One of Tufts's files contained allegations and preliminary investigative reports against "Tiger Force," a special reconnaissance

platoon formed in Vietnam by the 1st Battalion, 327th Infantry, 101st Airborne Division. Using the file as a start point, Sallah and Weiss conducted their own investigation into charges that the unit had gone on an appalling killing spree that was apparently sanctioned by the chain of command within the battalion. The result of their investigation, which included interviews with 43 Tiger Force veterans and several trips to Vietnam to track down elderly Vietnamese witnesses, was a four-part series for their newspaper entitled “Buried Secrets, Brutal Truths.” The series won the 2004 Pulitzer Prize for investigative reporting; the book is a more detailed account of Tiger Force’s crimes and subsequent efforts by a series of Army investigators to bring its members to justice.

Tiger Force was established in November 1965 by Major David Hackworth to “outguerrilla the guerrillas.” Organized to carry out reconnaissance and commando functions, it was often inserted in small, near-autonomous teams to find the enemy and conduct hit-and-run missions. The 45 men of Tiger Force were handpicked volunteers and, by most accounts, the unit enjoyed a reputation as a highly effective force; it even received a presidential citation for bravery in 1966. However, in May 1967, Tiger Force began to unravel. Led by an incompetent lieutenant who ordered his men to “kill anything that moves,” the unit, frustrated by heavy casualties and weeks of being hit by snipers in the Song Ve Valley, committed a number of “revenge” killings against unarmed civilians. In September, it was moved to Quang Tin province as part of Operation Wheeler, where its descent into chaos and near-anarchy continued. During that operation, conducted in a designated “free fire zone,” the unit committed more atrocities. They threw grenades at villagers hiding in bunkers, fired on entire villages indiscriminately, and shot unarmed farmers in rice paddies. They also began to mutilate the bodies of their victims, cutting off ears, taking scalps, and, in one

reported instance, beheading a baby they had shot.

As deeply troubling as the actual war crimes was the apparent sanction of these actions by Tiger Force’s chain of command. The authors note that those in authority apparently chose to ignore warnings about what was going on; several Soldiers in the unit tried to stop the carnage, but they were ostracized by their buddies and when they tried to bring the unit’s activities to the attention of their superiors, they were ignored and some were transferred to another unit.

Tiger Force also addresses the exhaustive three-year CID investigation that resulted in a damning 55-page report that came out in 1975. The report concluded that “a total of 18 soldiers committed crimes, including murder and assault.” However, the report was promptly buried after it was sent to the secretaries of Defense and the Army. According to the authors, the allegations were deemed too similar to the My Lai massacre and too close to Richard Nixon’s resignation and the fall of South Vietnam to warrant pursuing.

The story of Tiger Force clearly demonstrates what happens when a breakdown in discipline is coupled with criminally incompetent leadership. The situation was exacerbated by a command climate that sanctioned war crimes in the interest of raising body counts. The result was a unit that went over the edge into an abyss of murder and atrocity.

This is not an easy book to read, but it is highly recommended. Although these events happened over four decades ago, the issues brought up by this book are just as timely today, particularly given the challenges that confront U.S. forces in the intense fighting in Iraq and Afghanistan.

**LTC James H. Willbanks,
USA, Retired,
Fort Leavenworth, Kansas**

**THE SPECTER OF MUNICH:
RECONSIDERING THE LESSONS OF APPEASING HITLER,**

Jeffrey Record, Potomac Books, Inc., Dulles, VA, 2007, 176 pages, \$17.95

In *The Specter of Munich: Reconsidering the Lessons of Appeasing Hitler*, Jeffrey Record goes back to the appeasement of Munich—the “how could this have happened” of an earlier time—in order to address the United States’ current “how could this have happened”—what Record characterizes as our “energating” involvement in Iraq.

Record is a respected and erudite scholar whose work includes one of the great critical examinations of U.S. involvement in Vietnam, *The Wrong War*. In this new study he identifies how the appeasement of Hitler at Munich was critical in shaping leaders’ attitudes after World War II. It is often argued that subsequent catastrophes—World War II and the Holocaust—were caused by not standing up to Hitler earlier than 1939. Record astutely argues that this claim ignores the historical context the British and French appeasers faced. He argues that they did not have the political support to stop Hitler even if they had correctly estimated that Hitler was “unappeasable” and “undeterrable.” Record argues that by divorcing decision-making from context, post-war observers and policy-makers took the wrong lessons from Munich. The lessons they should have learned had to do with “threat miscalculation,” the importance of public opinion, the imbalance between “foreign policy aims and military force posture,” the dangers of strategic overextension, the proper maintenance of “offensive-defensive balance” in U.S. strategy, and the “virtue of consistency in threatening and using force.” Record applies all of these lessons scathingly to the Bush administration’s War on Terror, involvement in Iraq, and measures for Homeland Defense.

However, in his critique of the Bush administration, Record is guilty of making the same errors that his predecessors made in criticizing the pre-World War II appeasers. This mistake has been called “creeping

historical determinism” by Malcolm Gladwell. In an article for *The New Yorker* in 2003, Gladwell explained how hindsight informs the way human beings criticize the “failures” of those in the past. The hindsight critic claims that the dots were obvious and easy to connect, and it was only criminal stupidity or negligence that contributed to catastrophe. Gladwell argued that this attitude is a logical fallacy that often ignores the larger contexts surrounding decision-making, especially decision-making based on intelligence—which was, is, and will always be incomplete.

By book’s end, Record has used everything from the U.S. invasion of Iraq to the catastrophe of Hurricane Katrina as vehicles to indict the current administration for strategic negligence; the cautions of his Munich analysis seem almost forgotten. Just as the neoconservatives in Bush’s administration ignored the historical context of the Munich appeasement in justifying a “pre-emptive” war against Saddam Hussein, so Record ignores the historical context prior to the Iraq war. He overlooks systemic failures that were beyond the executive branch’s control in mounting his too-broad criticism of current U.S. strategy and foreign policy. Simply put, Record overplays his hand.

Despite its flaws, I highly recommend this little book to a broad audience. Record’s timely re-analysis of the experience at Munich continues to influence U.S. strategic thinking. Readers are, however, advised to retain their skepticism, especially for the later chapters, which border on rant.

**CDR John T. Kuehn,
USN, Retired,
Fort Leavenworth, Kansas**

FIRST TO THE RHINE: The 6th Army Group in World War II, Harry Yeide and Mark Stout, Zenith Press, St. Paul, MN, 2007, 376 pages, \$27.95. Harry Yeide and Mark Stout’s *First to the Rhine: The 6th Army Group in World War II* is a factual and objective history of one of the

lesser known aspects of the War in Europe: the 6th Army Group’s campaign from the invasion of Southern France through VE Day. Yeide and Stout seek to redress the short shrift typically given to this important aspect of the war, an oversight that is puzzling given the logistic and strategic importance of Marseilles and the Rhone River valley. At least 40 fully supplied American and French combat divisions were able to enter the fight against German forces in the west through the southern French ports liberated by the French 1st and American 7th armies.

To detail this usually neglected and often-misunderstood aspect of the war, the authors rely heavily on a wide array of primary and secondary sources that include after-action reports, award citations, unit operations journals, personal diaries, unit histories, and biographies of key individuals. This mix of sources enables Yeide and Stout to present a well-balanced chronological history of 6th Army Group’s operations from the initial stages of the Dragoon landings in August 1944, up through Operation Nordwind, the German counteroffensive during the bitter cold of January 1945, to the final campaigns along the Danube and into Austria in April 1945. Neither the French nor the American contributions to the campaigns are neglected, and the authors provide ample information on the German dispositions, plans, and personalities that figured prominently in the campaigns. Key allied commanders such as Devers, de Lattre, Patch, and Truscott are all included, but so too are the common Soldiers’ contributions down to the squad level. The result is a comprehensive picture of the fighting on the southern edge of Eisenhower’s Great Crusade.

While the authors have meticulously researched their material, they do not get bogged down in unnecessary details. Yeide and Stout’s crisp narrative style takes readers inside the strategic and operational command decisions; it also makes them feel the agonies and sacrifices endured by the common Soldiers of both sides. The authors

also take great care to place the southern operations into the larger picture of the war in Europe so that the reader understands the 6th Army Group’s purpose and contributions without taking anything away from their better-known counterparts: Bradley’s 12th Army Group and Montgomery’s 21st Army Group. *First to the Rhine* fills a long-felt void in the European Theater’s operational histories. It is a valuable book for both the casual historical reader and the serious student of military history.

**Dan C. Fullerton, Ph.D.
Fort Leavenworth, Kansas**

ASSAULT ON SICILY: Monty and Patton at War, Ken Ford, Sutton Publishing, Gloucestershire, England, 2007, 272 pages, \$36.95.

Colorful personalities and their bold adventures make for better wartime press than the grim reality of thousands of Soldiers in battle. During World War II, no two figures served this need better than good-natured rivals Bernard Montgomery and George S. Patton, walking caricatures of the archetypal British and American warriors. Ken Ford’s latest work, *Assault on Sicily*, attempts to reconcile the public personas of these leaders with the reality of the one battle in which they fought as equals: the invasion of Sicily.

Ford is British, but Montgomery comes off the worse in his comparison. Living off his fame from El-Alamein, Monty attempts to push the Americans to the sidelines in the Sicily campaign. His overly cautious nature, however, ensures that the Axis forces have ample time to organize a solid defense. Meanwhile, Patton—a bold tactician, yet also a dutiful Soldier—waits obediently during the critical days of the battle, guarding the British flank instead of seizing the initiative with his characteristic audacity. Ford seems entirely sympathetic to Patton until he gets to the slapping incidents; then, the general turns into a monster.

Monty’s and Patton’s flaws aside, Ford ultimately blames the campaign’s mismanagement on Field

Marshal Harold Alexander and General Dwight Eisenhower. Not only do they bow to Montgomery, but they bear responsibility for the poor interservice cooperation typified by numerous fratricide incidents. Ford concludes that Sicily was “coalition warfare at its worst.” Only the total collapse of the Italian forces prevented Sicily from being a much more costly lesson. Indeed, the most successful leader in Ford’s account is German General Valentin Hube, who took advantage of the Allied delays to execute a masterful defense of the island.

Despite its announced focus on leaders, most of *The Assault on Sicily* is given over to the kind of endless descriptions of unit movements into which campaign histories often degenerate. Without a situation map at hand, one will quickly lose track of (or interest in) just how many miles each battalion advanced each day. Additionally, much of the book seems drawn from a few—mostly official—sources, and the Monty vs. Patton aspect lacks depth and could have been better integrated with the tactical descriptions. In the end, these weaknesses tend to illustrate, if inadvertently, the gap between the media images of giant personas striding across the battlefield and the actual tactical situation.

**LTC David D. DiMeo, USA,
West Point, New York**

JEB STUART AND THE CONFEDERATE DEFEAT AT GETTYSBURG, Warren C. Robinson, University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln, 2007, 198 pages, \$24.95.

I must go over the ground again.—Edmund Blunden, *Under-tones of War*

Why do we need another book on such a time-worn topic as the Gettysburg campaign of the American Civil War? William C. Robinson’s impetus for producing a new work is straightforward: to establish definitively whether or not Jeb Stuart’s failure to appear at Gettysburg on 1 July 1863 really is one of the prime reasons Gettysburg proved a major blow to the Confederacy.

Prior to Gettysburg, Stuart’s raids on Union camps greatly aided Lee in his victory at Second Manassas; his maneuvering impeded the flow of Union General George McClellan’s forces, and he proficiently kept Lee informed of the intentions or whereabouts of Union generals Ambrose Burnside and Joseph Hooker, thus facilitating Lee’s victories at Fredericksburg and Chancellorsville. Lee trusted Stuart implicitly. However, the picture began to muddy around June 1863 as Stuart let the more cavalier part of his personality dominate over his operational imperative to screen Lee’s Army. Lee trusted Stuart to use the good sense and discretion he had exercised in the recent past, but the cavalry commander chose instead to embark on a deleterious raiding spree that only harassed—but did not delay—the pace of the Union forces’ march across the Potomac on their way to counter Lee. In the month prior to the battle of Gettysburg, Stuart broke contact with Lee for several critical days, even though his was the only substantive body of cavalry with the experience and resources to screen Lee from Union forces.

By the time Stuart’s men arrived at Gettysburg, it was far too late for them to make an impact on the battle. Only if “Stuart had achieved surprise and gained the Union rear ‘unhindered’ can one imagine his movement’s having an impact on the outcome on Cemetery Ridge.”

In developing his thesis, Robinson does not discount other factors affecting Stuart’s actions, such as terrain, the availability of fords across strategic rivers—major considerations for maneuverability and logistics—and whether or not Stuart’s actions were sparked by a desire to avenge his cavalry’s beating at Brandy Station early in June 1863. Nonetheless, much of “the legendary elusiveness of Lee’s army was due to Stuart’s skill at providing it with an impenetrable screen of cavalry scouts.” Had Stuart been in a tactically sound position, he could have disrupted the Union army’s excellent spy network and kept the Union commanders in the dark

about Lee’s whereabouts; the battle that precipitated the Confederacy’s fall might never have happened. In the end, though, Robinson does not ignore wider factors concerning Stuart’s actions, and Lee remains accountable for the overall loss of the battle as his orders to Stuart should have been more explicit.

Robinson’s research was extensive: he culled over 145 primary and secondary sources, many of them among academic heavy-hitters of Civil War history. He includes 15 pages of notes, four theater-level maps, and several photos and battlefield sketches relative to the Gettysburg campaign. It is unlikely that Robinson’s work will satisfy all Civil War scholars and students, but whatever its eventual reception in academic circles, this is an enthralling work of history.

**MAJ Jeffrey C. Alfier,
USAF, Retired,
Ramstein, Germany**

TAIWAN IN TRANSFORMATION: 1895-2005: The Challenge of a New Democracy to an Old Civilization, Chun-chieh Huang, Transaction Publishers, New Brunswick, NJ, 2007, 252 pages, \$49.95.

Taiwan in Transformation is a lively history of the island that begins in 1895, when Taiwan was ceded to Japan, and ends in 2005, with the pressure increasing on Taiwan either to declare its independence or return to its roots as a Chinese province.

The author, Chun-chieh Huang, describes the nostalgia of the Taiwanese for their mother country, China, that was aroused by the Japanese occupation and then shattered as a result of the corruption, discrimination, and abuses of power of the Chinese Nationalist government in the 1950s. Also discussed are Taiwan’s historic transition from an agrarian to an industrial society—the “economic miracle” that led to the rise of the middle class and the creation of a middle-class intelligentsia—and the changes in culture and attitude that ensued.

It was during the great economic change, in the late 1980s and 1990s, that the Taiwanese began to resent the heavy-handed tactics of the mainland's oppressive Communist regime. Today, the Taiwanese are faced with the challenge of developing a mature relationship with the People's Republic that can survive the pressure for either a quick unification or a quick declaration of independence. Author Huang believes that only a solid understanding of the historical experiences of both the Taiwanese and mainland Chinese can point the way to a solution that will enable peaceful coexistence.

A recognized historian and native Taiwanese, Huang exudes a real understanding of the culture and feelings of the Taiwanese people. He evinces a depth of knowledge about the country and its transformation over the last 110 years, a transformation that ultimately increased the availability of information and educational opportunities for working-class Taiwanese, thereby accelerating the process of democratization. According to Huang, it was Taiwan's educated citizenry and their commercial contacts with Western businesses, educational institutions, and governments that pushed the island toward a Western political-economic model.

Taiwan in Transformation is a well-written, interesting book, albeit a bit redundant in places. It presents a wealth of historical and cultural material that explains how Taiwan transformed itself into one of the most powerful and efficient technology centers in the world, and why China and Taiwan seem to be bent on a collision course. With the U.S. still committed to safeguarding the island's autonomy and the People's Republic now a great power on the international stage, *Taiwan in*

Transformation has much to offer those in the defense and policy establishments.

**MG Ralph O. Doughty,
Retired, Ph.D.,
Fort Leavenworth, Kansas**

EMPIRES, WARS, AND BATTLES: The Middle East from Antiquity to the Rise of the New World, T.C.F. Hopkins, A Tim Doherty Associates Book, New York, 2007, 244 pages, \$24.95.

Empires, Wars, and Battles is a lively and compelling historical narrative that describes the origins and advances of the Middle East. Its author, T.C.F. Hopkins, presents the complexities, traditions, and history of the region in a balanced, uncomplicated style. In five short chapters, he takes the reader on a journey that starts in the Ancient World and concludes with the decline of the Ottoman Empire. Along the way, he covers such fascinating topics as Roman expansion, the Byzantine Empire, the Crusades, and the War of the Black and White Sheep Turks. Despite the book's unremitting pace and the vast period of history it covers, the reader is reassuringly left with a basic, if abridged, understanding of the character, nuances, and rivalries of many of the ancient societies of the Middle East.

While *Empires, Wars, and Battles* provides insights into the origins and intricacies of conflict in the Middle East, readers will be frustrated that Hopkins avoids linking past events with contemporary challenges: an explanation as to *why* historical occurrences continue to play such a critical role in world affairs would have been helpful. Likewise, for those unfamiliar with the geography and episodes of the region, the seven black and white

maps intended to assist the reader to understand cultural, national, and other environmental factors fail to deliver; they are confounding and irritatingly basic. A series of high-quality maps, carefully annotated, would have assisted the reader enormously. There would also have been merit in including a number of pictures or representations of the key characters introduced throughout the book, since many will be unfamiliar to the lay reader.

Despite these shortcomings, *Empires, Wars, and Battles* is an absorbing and cleverly researched history of the Middle East. Focusing principally on the social, political, and monetary motivations of conflict, Hopkins articulates the historical struggles of the region and, importantly, its relationship with Europe. He also posits a number of profound observations worthy of contemplation. For example, while describing the Roman period, Hopkins notes: "Rome had discovered an important truth about war as a result of their clashes with the Carthaginians: that war and conquest are not the same thing and that the success of a war is ultimately judged by what comes after it. As one Roman general of this period quipped, 'Wars are won in the peace.'"

In sum, *Empires, Wars, and Battles* is an enjoyable and absorbing study. While not a must-read for those deploying to the Middle East, it will appeal to many who wish to gain an overview of the region's history and its complexities. Despite a number of minor deficiencies, few will be disappointed by the book's fast pace and straightforward, well-written accounts.

MAJ Andrew M. Roe, British Army, Bulford, United Kingdom

Learning From Modern Wars

LTC Craig Collier, *Baghdad*—LTG Peter Chiarelli’s advice to “embrace the requirements for full-spectrum operations” in his article, “Learning From Our Modern Wars: The Imperatives of Preparing for a Dangerous Future” (*Military Review*, September-October 2007), has been accomplished. In fact, the belief in our Army that the war in Iraq will be won through primarily non-kinetic/non-lethal means has become the ascendant philosophy. What is frustrating is that a “brutal” assessment of the non-lethal lines of operation—especially the economics line of operation—is absent from the discussion.

Contrary to what LTG Chiarelli implies in the article, there are very few officers in our Army who believe solely in brute strength and ignorance as the path to victory in Iraq. What I have witnessed are quite a few officers at the field- and company-grade levels who have diligently worked the economics line of operation and found it lacking in effectiveness, especially when compared with lethal operations. They resent being told that they “Don’t get it,” and dismissed like the armor enthusiasts prior to World War II that LTG Chiarelli mentioned in his article.

Prior to this year’s surge, projects and services were supposed to lead us out of the Iraqi wilderness, eliminating the economic incentive to join the insurgency and making potential insurgents content with their jobs rather than lay IEDs. The result should have been a reduction in the level of violence, but that didn’t happen. In spite of billions of dollars spent on projects and essential services, the violence continued to increase as if that money was never spent. If “. . . we must embrace the concept of nation-building, not just rhetorically, but entirely,” then

understanding what our money spent on projects and services achieved is critical.

We faithfully track measures of performance such as how much money we spent and how many projects we completed, but not measures of *effectiveness*. How much did violence drop in an area after we completed a project or spent tens of millions of dollars on an essential service? What is the correlation between the amount of money we’ve spent in a province or district and the level of violence there? In this corrupt environment, too much money pumped into an area too fast is just as likely to fuel violence as it is to curb it.

The events on the ground in Iraq that have recently given us hope are decidedly kinetic. Al-Qaeda’s brutality, their disruption of historic smuggling networks, and coalition and ISF effectiveness at attacking them brought the Anbar sheiks into our camp. Al-Qaeda is on the run in Anbar because they are being killed by the locals, who decided that eliminating them was in their own selfish best interests. The Sunnis in Anbar Province are on our side at least for now because “the enemy of my enemy is my friend.”

A similar change could be happening in Baghdad. Muqtada al Sadr has temporarily ordered his Mahdi Army to refrain from attacking coalition forces, and the violence has dropped significantly as a result. Sadr didn’t come to this decision because we finally turned on the improved sewer system in Sadr City. As he’s done in the past, Sadr is going to ground to consolidate and reorganize based on the internal Shia power struggle and because since January we’ve killed or captured dozens of his lieutenants and even more of his foot soldiers.

In Baghdad neighborhoods, the keys to limiting the violence have been the erection of barriers and the establishment of Combat Outposts

and Joint Security Stations. The barriers separate the neighborhood residents from those outside who seek to terrorize its inhabitants, while the COPs and JSSs demonstrate our commitment to their security.

What all of these recent successes have in common is that kinetic actions provided the most effective solution to what a year ago appeared to be an unsolvable problem. Current events in Iraq seem to contradict the popular belief that “the decisive elements of power required to prevail may, more often than not, be non-kinetic.”

Improving the Iraqi economy is certainly a worthy goal that could go a long way in consolidating victory. However, proponents of projects and essential services as the path to peace often speak about it with a religious zeal, as if its effectiveness is somehow beyond scrutiny. We’ve been at this now for four years, so we have the hard data; polling results are not a brutal assessment. Without an honest assessment of what our money spent on projects bought us, we’re poised to learn the wrong lessons about what worked and what didn’t in this insurgency.

Mounted Vertical Maneuver—Today; When We Need It: Use Existing U.S. Army M113 Gavin Light Tanks

Mike Sparks, *Air-Mech-Strike Study Group*—In reading BG (Retired) Robin P. Swan and LTC (Retired) Scott R. McMichael’s pro article, “Mounted Vertical Maneuver: A Giant Leap Forward in Maneuver and Sustainment,” and LTC (Retired) John Gordon IV and COL (Retired) David E. Johnson’s anti-article, “Air Mechanization: An Expensive and Fragile Concept” (*Military Review*, January-February 2007), I found embedded *factual errors* that were either to justify new

FCS vehicle/JHL aircraft purchases or [to show] that what we have or want is not good enough. BG Swann argued that we don't have any equipment to perform air-mech with and must buy new 27-ton FCS tracks and giant tilt-rotor JHL airlifters to obtain air-mech capabilities; he claims we don't have and never had. RAND's retired LTC David Johnson argued against this concept, saying all we have to perform air-mech with is road-restricted 20-ton Stryker trucks that are okay but somehow open-terrain; cross-country mobile, 27-ton FCS tracks that are too vulnerable; and the JHL, which is too easy to shoot-down while implying that air-mech has never worked in past combat operations.

The truth is we already have 15,000+ air-transportable, amphibious, closed-terrain, cross-country-mobile 11-ton M113 Gavin light tank/APCs that have been used for years in successful air-mech operations by several allied armies—including the U.S. Army.

We have 500+ C-130s, 180 C-17s, soon C-27J fixed-wing transports and 400 CH-47 *Chinook* helicopters to airdrop or airland *Gavins*; the former at higher speeds and altitudes to avoid enemy air defenses than any non-existent tilt-rotor. MVM air-mech combat operations have already been successful beginning with the German Me-323s airlanding SP assault guns into North Africa, British *Hamilcars* glider-landing *Tetrarch* and *Locust* light tanks on D-Day and the Rhine river crossing, Russian assault guns and BMDs airlanded into Czechoslovakia in 1968. In 1978 the Soviets did the first heliborne MVM, into East Africa, a feat they repeated in Afghanistan later that year. The Israelis airlanded M113s at Entebbe, the Australians into East Timor in 1999, the British CH-47 air-meched *Scimitar* light tanks into the Balkans to avoid land mines and fly over the Sava river blocking our non-swimming medium-to-heavy vehicles. American Airborne units were the first to parachute drop M551 *Sheridan* light tanks into combat to link up with M113 *Gavin*

APC task forces to collapse the PDF and prevent Noriega from escaping Panama in 1989. In 2001, M113 *Gavins* of General Meig's IRF-Medium were denied being flown into Camp Rhino in Afghanistan because it would make the *Stryker* truck purchases look unnecessary (they are). Resultantly, we didn't fan-out closed-terrain mobile forces to block Bin-laden's escape, and he remains free today. In 2003, the IRF-M was slowly C-17-airlanded into Northern Iraq when it should have parachute-inserted M113 *Gavins* immediately and fanned out to block Saddam/subordinates from escaping to Tikrit to start the rebellion against us.

Air-mech by high altitude delayed low opening (HALO) parachutes at 10,000 feet above enemy MANPADS solves shoot-down fears and was done in 1972 to resupply An Loc during the Vietnam war—another inconvenient fact not reported by either MVM author's group. The Russians jump with drogue chute deployed parachutes with delay devices to effect HALO capabilities—we could easily emulate by switching the new T-11 parachute from obsolete static-line and d-bag deployment means. Ram-air parachutes opening at high altitudes make M113 *Gavin* platform loads into de facto 25-mile stand-off gliders but with precision landing guidance. All we have to do is field the new parachutes and practice with them to get HALO/HAHO air-mech capabilities.

It's the *quality* of the vehicle's armor that counts not its parking weight—a 10-ton M113 *Gavin* hull of thick aluminum is far more protective than a road-bound *Stryker* truck with a thin steel box at twice the weight—this means superior armor layering can be added that coupled with v-hull shaping makes the *Gavin* not only more air-transportable for 3D maneuvers by C-130—it is superior in armor protection than a flat-bottom *Bradley* that is supersized carrying a turret armoring dead air. 27-ton FCS has turret inefficiency and cannot fly by C-130s nor drive through closed, vegetated terrain and cannot swim like *Gavins* can to

strike at where enemies hide. High technology *Gavins* with land-mine resistant armoring, band-tracks, hybrid-electric drive are stealthy for 60-mph speeds. M113 *Gavins* can be reduced in size to roll-on/off from inside Army operated CH-47s and C-27Js to air-mech *now* by either airdrop or airland and should be supplied to every airborne, air assault, or LBCT infantry battalion; Delta Weapons Company; and/or HHC anti-tank and mortar sub-units to replace vulnerable *Humvee* trucks. The M113 was originally designed for light units by General Gavin for as-needed all-terrain, amphibious armored transport, and with TOW ATGMs can act as light tanks blasting enemy vehicles and strongpoints for the dismounting infantry. A sapper squad makes them *Engineer Cavalry Troops* able to breach mines with probing and towed-rocket line charges. Modularity LBCTs don't need or get 27-ton FCS or 20-ton *Stryker* trucks—they air-maneuver into closed terrains; it's high time they be equipped with M113 *Gavin* light tracks needed to fight better than M16 versus AK47 and RPG at a foot-slog.

A New Strategic Paradigm

LTC Scott Tousley, *USA, Retired*—I would like to offer a few thoughts on Sean McFate's article, "U.S. Africa Command: A New Strategic Paradigm?" (January-February 2008 *Military Review*).

First, I suggest that new strategies and operational concepts matter much more than a new DOD command organization, as Africa's substantial problems will be less affected by a more coherent DOD organization than by truly revolutionary changes in approaches to those problems. The implicit thinking in the article is that a focused DOD organization addressing Africa will help develop more successful approaches to its problems by the entire U.S. interagency and government. But a better DOD organization held to the same kinds of legacy approaches will effect little or no change to the status quo in Africa.

This leads to my second observation—a true “new strategic paradigm” is not the creation of AFRICOM, but rather would have been the creation of AFRICOM along with a forced synchronization of parallel organizations in both the Department of State and USAID. DOD’s AFRICOM may be able to spark some synchronization of efforts across the interagency, but this positive change will likely be measured in decades rather than years or months, a cycle far slower than the evolution of the problems bedeviling Africa. It is perhaps telling that the establishment of AFRICOM was a DOD rather than Administration initiative.

Finally, concerning the creation of AFRICOM, there is a (small) elephant in the room that is not mentioned in the article—what about the predecessor known as SOUTHCOM? We have several decades of experience in Central and South America with a mission unlike that of CENTCOM or PACOM or even EUCOM, a mission focused substantially on development and relationships and institutional strengthening. One could argue that AFRICOM should look to follow the relevant lessons of its elder sibling SOUTHCOM, and consider this “old strategic paradigm” and what has and has not worked there.

...The Author Responds

Sean McFate—Scott Tousley raises three excellent points in his letter regarding my article on AFRICOM. I agree with LTC Tousley’s suggestion that a truly revolutionary change in approach toward Africa would be preferable than a new Unified Command. Such an approach might include boosting civilian agency capacity, such as USAID or State, and instituting interagency mechanisms that synchronize a “whole of government” approach to conflicts on the continent.

However, such an approach would require substantial reorganization and realignment of national security architecture and strategy, requiring Goldwater-Nichols-caliber legislation. This is no mean feat, and the

creation of AFRICOM—assuming it avoids legacy approaches, as I recommend—is a relatively easier way to at least consolidate DOD’s focus on the continent, and perhaps serve as a model for other Unified Commands, if successful. Alternatively, if we wait for Goldwater-Nichols II, we may be waiting decades. That said, there are projects underway investigating how the interagency should be transformed to address new security threats of the 21st Century, such as fragile and failing states. One such initiative is the Project for National Security Reform at Washington, D.C.

Lastly, AFRICOM planners did utilize SOUTHCOM as a blueprint, but aspired to take this model to “the next level.” AFRICOM staff members have remained in communication with SOUTHCOM to glean lessons learned and adapt them to the African context. However, many (most?) aspects of AFRICOM’s strategy and structure are significantly enhanced compared to its SOUTHCOM sibling, from its planned employment of “soft power” to its unprecedented civilian-heavy leadership. The sum of these and other radical developments ultimately makes AFRICOM a unique Unified Command mandating a unique strategic vision. Only time will tell if AFRICOM is an evolution or devolution of the SOUTHCOM model.

The New Legs Race

MAJ Raymond Farrell, *Canadian Army*—In Andrew Hom’s “The New Legs Race: Critical Perspectives on Biometrics in Iraq” (*Military Review*, January-February 2008), he comments on initiatives to establish so-called “identity dominance” in Iraq or indeed, anywhere. He raises some fair objections. Nevertheless, even without any technical knowledge of biometrics, a dispassionate reader will note that Mr. Hom’s conclusion does not automatically flow from his arguments.

Mr. Hom’s main argument is that biometric technologies are intrusive and humiliating and would therefore be counterproductive in the Iraqi

context. He points especially to the importance of female purity in Arab concepts of honor. Mr. Hom notes that as currently practiced, U.S. TTPs for biometric data collection are often insensitive, and sure enough, the article is accompanied by a photo of an American Soldier taking a footprint from an apparently unhappy Iraqi man. Mr. Hom deduces that biometrics causes more harm than benefit.

My own deduction is that biometric technologies must not be intrusive or humiliating. It would be easy to amend TTPs to ensure this, albeit at some cost to capability. By limiting collection to non-intrusive methods, Mr. Hom’s basic objection could be met without entirely sacrificing the very significant benefits of identity management.

For example, Mr. Hom notes that collecting facial recognition images from women would require them to uncover their faces. Fair enough. Then why not simply dispense with facial recognition for women? Fingerprint and iris data are far more reliable in any case. Even if we decided to forego collecting data on women entirely, we would still be mapping the male population from which the large majority of insurgents are drawn. The basic idea being that we accept a limitation on our own use of biometrics to mitigate very real cultural concerns, but that we retain many of the benefits.

Mr. Hom also makes the argument that U.S. identity dominance would render conventional human intelligence networks redundant and therefore cause them to atrophy. First, I do not share his faith in any single technology as a panacea. Even quite comprehensive identity management would only be partially effective, and in a population as fragmented as that in Iraq (or most failed/fragile states) incomplete data is the best that may be hoped for. In such a case, identity management is only one tool in the box. Traditional human networks would remain another important one, the more so since they can provide many types of information that identity management cannot.

One might argue that perceptions are what matter, and that a population that believed itself to be perfectly tracked, rightly or not, would abandon HUMINT. I personally doubt this, but even if it were true, the deduction is again that identity management must be unobtrusive, or even imperceptible. TTPs for biometrics should ensure that the system should have as low a profile as possible. Its extent, scope, and perhaps even existence should be secret. Conceptually, biometric data could be collected only forensically or covertly. In such a case, the entire system could operate covertly, and yet still be quite effective for intelligence and counter-intelligence. This is, after all, the way many other human and technical intelligence capabilities are employed.

In general, most of Mr. Hom's objections to the use of biometrics can be addressed simply through wisdom and prudence exactly as we do for other capabilities such as firepower. Mr. Hom does, however, raise one very important concern that is not so easily answered. He correctly points out that in the wrong hands a good identity database could be a tool for repression or even mass murder. This is an argument that ought to give pause.

I see two responses: First, limiting the scope of the system to perceived threats, rather than large portions of the population, would greatly mitigate the danger, since a small database would be of scant use to a would-be tyrant. This limitation would also be coherent with the preference for an unobtrusive system already described. If, however, the entire civil population *were* to be mapped (insofar as possible) then that data would be best erased at the conclusion of the campaign. Data on potential enemies will of course be retained after the campaign is over.

Second, data must be treated as any other military secret and shared only with trusted allies in limited circumstances. Mr. Hom rightly points out that we cannot guarantee what future decision-makers will do, but I feel it is reasonable to assume that the U.S. and other like-minded states would think twice before sharing potentially dangerous data with a tyrant.

I personally think biometric technologies have a great deal to offer us in counterinsurgency, so I am glad that this paper has prompted me to examine my own views and even amend them in some respects. Thank you, Mr. Hom.

Fighting Identify

Chaplain (LTC) Kenneth E. Lawson, USAR, *Puerto Rico*—In Michael Vlahos' article, "Fighting Identity: Why We Are Losing Our Wars" (*Military Review*, November-December 2007), he states that "We lack a holistic approach to human conflict. We have no access to the religious dimension of war, and so no way to assess the inner dynamics of wars of identity." For those who desire information on the religious aspects of contemporary conflicts, I recommend contacting the U.S. Army Chaplain Center and School (USACHCS) at Ft. Jackson, South Carolina. USACHCS houses a world religions library that routinely answers religious information requests from the field. Also located there is the Combat Developments Directorate, which contains world religion database resources. Unit chaplains can use these resources to advise their commanders on the religious aspects of current military conflicts. The Army Chaplain School can be contacted at 803-751-8900 or accessed at <www.usachcs.army.mil>.

Understanding the Problem

Bruce Stanley, *Fort Leavenworth, KS*—Dr. (LTC) Tom Clark's timely and relevant article "Army Planning Doctrine: Identifying the Problem is the Heart of the Problem" (*Military Review*, November-December 2007) offers a teachable problem-identification method. His three-step method to identifying a problem and three-step method to developing a problem statement will benefit military instructors and students alike.

The Combined Arms Doctrine Directorate should consider this article as they update Field Manual 5-0, *Army Planning and Orders Production*. The inclusion of the identification steps and problem statement format into the military decision-making process, specifically the mission-analysis step, will be a valuable addition to the Army's decision-making model.

The article should further the discussion of why problem identification is key at all levels of command (tactical through strategic). The Command and General Staff School, particularly the Center for Army Tactics, has recently included instruction on identifying and writing a tactical problem into the course curriculum. Student feedback acknowledges that when a tactical problem is clearly defined and articulated, staffs are able to clearly focus when they are developing solutions to problems presented during practical exercises.

Dr. Clark's tactical problem model provides staff officers and commanders a useful tool to help reduce uncertainty and better focus operational planning. Adding this framework to doctrine will promulgate the framework throughout TRADOC, ultimately resulting in a common understanding of the importance of identifying the problem.