

Chairman's Conference on Military Professionalism

AN OVERVIEW

By ALBERT C. PIERCE

Readers of *Joint Force Quarterly* (JFQ) and others who follow his speeches know that Admiral Mike Mullen has been concerned for the past several years over possible erosion of the professional military ethos. A decade of war, the so-called Revolt of the Generals, active campaigning for Presidential candidates by retired flag officers, and other factors have challenged many of the traditional tenets of military professionalism in the Armed Forces. The Chairman has called for introspection and reflection on the part of the members of the profession and asked that more attention be paid to these issues across the spectrum of professional military education (PME) and training.

Admiral Mullen asked the Institute for National Security Ethics and Leadership (INSEL) at the National Defense University (NDU) to explore these issues, and specifically to convene a conference that would stimulate such introspection and reflection and encourage the PME community to rethink how it approaches such questions.

The conference took place at NDU on January 10, 2011. The Chairman's guidance helped INSEL determine both the kind of speakers and audience for the conference. In the spirit of introspection and reflection, all but one of the speakers were Active-duty or retired military professionals. To respond to the Chairman's appeal to PME, INSEL invited leaders from across the military and education community. Admiral Mullen served as keynote speaker. A former Chairman, General Richard B. Myers, now the Colin Powell Chair of Leadership, Ethics, and Character at INSEL, was also a featured speaker, as was a former Deputy Secretary of Defense, The Honorable John Hamre.

Dr. Albert C. Pierce is Director of the Institute for National Security Ethics and Leadership at the National Defense University.

With able logistical and administrative support from NDU's Center for Strategic Conferencing, INSEL organized a 1-day program of featured speakers and panels. It also commissioned and produced two products on military professionalism and has made them available on its Web site.¹ INSEL is in the process of posting on its Web site a video of all the conference speakers and panels. It is also planning to publish an anthology of readings on military professionalism through NDU Press. Other products and programs are being considered as part of this ongoing INSEL project.

As another way to share the conference deliberations more widely, JFQ graciously offered to publish edited versions of some of the conference presentations. This special section that follows includes edited transcripts of remarks by Vice Admiral Ann E. Rondeau, USN (President of NDU); Colonel Matthew Moten, USA; Sergeant Major Bryan Battaglia, USMC; Admiral Leon Edney, USN (Ret.); and Major General Paul Eaton, USA (Ret.).

As INSEL director, I am pleased that we were able to host the conference and produce materials that can be used across the military education and training community and beyond. I thank the editors of JFQ and the leadership and staff of NDU Press for their active support and assistance. **JFQ**

NOTE

¹ See Richard Swain, "The Obligations of Military Professionalism: Service Unsullied by Partisanship," December 2010, available at <www.ndu.edu/INSEL/docUploaded/obligations%20of%20military%20professionalism.pdf>; and "Military Professionalism: An Annotated Bibliography on the Nature and Ethos of the Military Profession," December 2010, available at <www.ndu.edu/INSEL/docUploaded/MilitaryProfessionalismBibliography.pdf>.



Chairman presents keynote speech at military professionalism conference held January 10, 2011, at National Defense University

National Defense University (Katherine Lewis)