There have been a growing number of initiatives in recent years to promote cultural property protection (CPP) and to better implement it in U.S. military operations. These are encouraging developments. It is essential to include in this effort the Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC), a university-based program through which students are trained and commissioned as U.S. military officers. Like all legal and ethical components of military decision-making, CPP should be hard-wired in a leader from the very beginning of his or her training, so as to become second nature during actual operations. To this end, we are developing a series of CPP training modules for ROTC cadets and midshipmen. Our desired end state is for each ROTC branch command to mandate this training for ROTC curricula nationwide. We use a two-pronged approach. First, we are producing smaller packages of content that can be integrated into pre-existing elements of ROTC curricula. Second, we are producing fifty-minute, stand-alone parent modules, available as a subject matter expert guest lecture, or as a self-contained webinar, downloadable (free of charge) from the Combatant Command Cultural Heritage Action Group (CCHAG) website.¹

Introduction

Culture training in a Department of Defense (DoD) context is invariably linked to the behavioral aspects of culture, e.g. language training and communication skills, with the objective that U.S. personnel are able to “communicate and interact with multinational partners and local populations,” apply cultural knowledge to support mission accomplishment, and shape attitudes and behavior in a cross-cultural context.² Engaging the material aspect of culture, especially the protection or defense of cultural property

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per se, is not a stated priority. The rare example in which cultural property receives special attention is in the case of certain religious sites. For example, in the lead-up to Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) in March 2003, the United States Central Command (CENTCOM) placed heavy emphasis on Rules of Engagement (ROE) training, which included the protected status of religious sites. With some exceptions, Soldiers and Marines did a good job of avoiding or at least mitigating damage to mosques and other religious structures during active combat, except out of military necessity. However, there were no provisions made by military planners to proactively secure protected sites such as museums, libraries, archives, and archaeological sites. Yet as military culture training even in its narrow sense gains support in various DoD departments and agencies, initiatives to expand its scope to include cultural property protection (CPP) should gain traction as well. While not a stated priority, it is a logical extension—a preventive aspect—of the culture training objectives stated above: practicing CPP prevents incidents that undermine mission accomplishment, and incidents that foster negative attitudes and behavior towards U.S. forces in a cross-cultural context. It is a force protection issue. A fighting force that defends cultural heritage, and that projects a reputation for doing so, removes a significant stumbling block towards gaining the cooperation of multina-

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3 “Opening fire on a mosque was a sensitive subject ... Along with schools and hospitals, the houses of worship were the sites most often discussed by combat commanders” (Zucchino, Thunder Run, 241). Minarets were favorite sniper positions for insurgents and Iraqi soldiers during OIF, and mosques were often used as weapons depots; ambulances were also used as firing platforms (Conroy, Heavy Metal, 138, 219, inter alia; Zucchino, Thunder Run, 174, 239–241, inter alia). Of course, there were also unacceptable lapses on the part of U.S. forces, such as in the case of U.S. snipers occupying the al-Malwiya Minaret in Samarra: for a legal analysis of that incident, see Corn, "Snipers in the Minaret," 28–40.

4 Looting after regime collapse was predictable. During the first Gulf War in 1991, organized looters pillaged and destroyed nine regional museums, taking around 4,000 objects (George, “Foreword,” 1). U.S. military planners for the invasion of Iraq in 2003 made no provision for post-conflict cultural property protection, despite specific warnings and site lists provided by professionals before the invasion (Wegener, “US Army Civil Affairs,” 34–35). Upon the collapse of authority in Iraq in 2003 there was an incredible increase in looting of unprotected archaeological sites, although at least one local Iraqi inspector of antiquities was able to enlist sympathetic U.S. Marines and Italian Carabinieri to protect some of them (Garen and Carleton, “Erasing the Past,” 15–19). A chaplain assigned to Headquarters, First Marine Expeditionary Force at Babylon, who through great personal initiative became the Marine liaison for protecting and restoring the site, noted that no one in the chain of command was ever explicitly told to guard historical sites, and that the Marines sent home a large number of forces in the lull after the fall of Baghdad in April 2003, even while the Coalition Provisional Authority’s liaison to the Iraqi Ministry of Culture posted at Babylon begged for personnel to guard archaeological sites in the province (Marrero, A Quiet Reality, 186–187).