

CTX

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From the Editor

I don't know what to say. I've been thinking about how to write this editorial letter for a week and, not wanting to give in to the anxieties of the news headlines, I'm coming up empty. Which is ironic, given that the general theme of the articles in this issue is communication: what makes it effective, how word choice affects emotional responses, how messaging can be used—and not used—to manipulate outcomes, how a story can affect the course of a war. How we talk about ourselves and others, what we share, and with whom we communicate are choices we make to achieve an outcome, consciously or not.

Therefore, I'm going to stop here and let this issue speak for itself.

In our first feature article, Major Charles Ware III asks what Martin Luther and the Protestant Reformation can teach modern psychological operations specialists about social influencing. Luther didn't have TikTok, but he, better than those within the Catholic Church who opposed him, took full advantage of the newly invented moveable-type printing press to spread his ideas about church reform across sixteenth-century Europe.

The second article analyzes the effects that digital messaging from Q has had on the growth and direction of QAnon, the online community that spreads Q-inspired conspiracy theories across the United States and around the globe. Through a study of the word choices in "Q drops"—Q's messages to followers—authors J.R. Allan and Dr. Shannon Houck find a correlation between an increase in influential wording and the community's rapid spread.

Next, Major Christopher Smith takes a close look at the ways that the Iranian special forces, known as the Quds Force, used irregular warfare tactics to bring material and training support to the Houthi rebels in Yemen without allowing Iran to be publicly implicated. As the United States and its allies incorporate the

principles of IW into their strategic thinking. Major Smith suggests, there are lessons to be learned from the Iranians' success.

Lieutenant Commander Nikolaj Lindberg is back with the second and final installment of his fictional account of CBRN in the hands of an ISIS-affiliated terrorist group. We rejoin French Minister of Defence Florence Parlay as she and her advisors scramble to uncover the location of a chemical weapons lab, burrowed somewhere in the vast reaches of the Western Sahel, before the terrorists launch a promised second attack.

The *CTX* Interview features Peruvian Army Brigadier General Manuel Alvarez (retired) in conversation with Global ECCO's Sally Baho. General Alvarez discusses his experience fighting the violent Shining Path insurgency and his concerns about the movement's continuing influence on Peruvian society.

Finally, Major Caleb Edwards reviews *The Moon is Down*, a short novel of resistance propaganda that was written by John Steinbeck in response to the occupation of large areas of Europe by German forces in the early 1940s.

Be sure to see this issue's Publication Announcement. *By Water Beneath the Walls*, by Ben Milligan, will be of particular interest to our readers who are members of the special forces community.

Our mission at *CTX* is to bring you stories, essays, research, and ideas that will inspire and encourage you as you fulfill your role of countering threats to security wherever they arise. We invite you to share your experiences, comments, and ideas with the community. What would you suggest to make *CTX* even better? Write to us at CTXeditor@globalecco.org and follow Global ECCO on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/GlobalECCO/>.

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