

Moral responsibility & military effectiveness

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Résumé ou extrait : "The missions of armed forces are required to be effective. Thus missions are oriented to objectives that help prevent, contain or solve problems. A soldier, for example, who skillfully neutralizes his or her target is not effective when the problem is not prevented, contained or solved. Political, legal and moral awareness is important to the soldier, because doing things right is not the same

as doing right or rightful things. The soldier wishes to avoid unlawful orders, but also tries to avoid casualties among non-combatants. Normally responsibility lies with higher authorities, but the fact remains that the soldier is the one who pulls the trigger. It is not simply a matter of veering between two evils, because a mission that is without moral grounds should not have been initiated in the first place and when pursued against better knowing it will probably lose effectiveness in the end. It is impossible to make compromises here. But it is also not possible to foresee all the consequences of military action, and unanticipated consequences can easily backfire. Dilemmas are bound to occur when the soldier is caught up in blurred conflict situations. This volume tries to add to our understanding of the problem of creating and maintaining a balance between effectiveness and moral responsibility."

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