Faculty Spotlight

Use of Force and Diplomacy

Ideas, Identities and Decisional Processes that Affect Security

Institutions that Manage Violent Conflict

Graduate Student Research

Peter Mansoor

Peter Mansoor is the Raymond E. Mason Jr. Chair in Military History, a joint appointment between the Mershon Center for International Security Studies and the Department of History. His research interests include modern U.S. military history, World War II, the Iraq War, and counterinsurgency warfare.

Mansoor is author of The GI Offensive in Europe: The Triumph of American Infantry Divisions, 1941-45 (University Press of Kansas, 1999), a comprehensive study of America’s infantry combat performance in Europe during World War II. It won book awards from the Society for Military History and the Army Historical Foundation.

Mansoor’s most recent book is Baghdad at Sunrise: A Brigade Commander’s War in Iraq (Yale University Press, 2008), winner of the Ohioana Library Association Book Award. This memoir is based on Mansoor’s 2003-04 command of the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division, in Baghdad, Iraq. After the April 2004 uprising of militia loyal to the Shiite cleric Muqtada Al-Sadr, Mansoor’s brigade combat team restored the holy city of Karbala to coalition control, an operation for which the organization was awarded a Presidential Unit Citation for collective valor in combat.

This past year, Mansoor taught a graduate seminar on the history of counterinsurgency warfare and an undergraduate elective on the history of World War II. He also oversaw organization of Military Frontiers: A Graduate Symposium at the Mershon Center.

Mansoor’s current projects include research into counterinsurgency operations in Afghanistan and the Iraq War, as well as a new book on the history of the U.S. Army in the Pacific War against Japan. Next spring he is organizing a conference on counterinsurgency at the Mershon Center.

Mansoor is a highly decorated officer with more than 26 years of distinguished military service. Prior to coming to Ohio State, he served as Executive Officer to Gen. David Petraeus, then commander of the multinational forces in Iraq. In this position, Mansoor assisted Petraeus with strategic planning for the U.S. war effort in Iraq and prepared him for meetings with top executive branch leaders as well as testimony before Congress.

Mansoor also served on a Council of Colonels that enabled the Joint Chiefs of Staff to reassess the strategy for the Iraq War. Based in part on this
group’s deliberations, the United States began the "surge" strategy in 2007-08. Mansoor is also founding director of the U.S. Army/Marine Corps Counterinsurgency Center at Fort Leavenworth, Kan.

Mansoor has remained an important figure in the public discussion concerning the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Last fall he published op-eds in The Washington Post (“How the Surge Worked,” August 10, 2008) and The New York Times (“How to Leave Iraq - Intact,” November 23, 2008). He has also appeared on a number of national television shows such as The Charlie Rose Show, Tavis Smiley, 60 Minutes, and C-Span.

On March 26, 2009, Mansoor appeared before the Air-Land Subcommittee of the Senate Armed Services Committee to discuss the future of U.S. ground forces in the 21st century. Subcommittee chair Sen. Joseph Lieberman said he appreciated Mansoor’s candid and thoughtful testimony and thanked Mansoor for his efforts on behalf of the nation.

The Mason Chair in Military History is endowed by Maj. Gen. Raymond E. Mason Jr., a 1941 graduate of The Ohio State University who retired from military service in 1976. The previous holder of the Mason Chair was Allan R. Millett, now director of the Eisenhower Center for American Studies at the University of New Orleans.