

MEMORANDUM

31 October 2001

From: Deputy Director, Naval Chaplains School
To: Distribution

Subj: ETHICAL ISSUES: WAR AGAINST TERRORISM

1. **Background.** On 17 September 2001 a request went out from the Naval Chaplains School asking you to consider various ethical issues and concerns regarding America's war against terrorism. Thank you for your responses! You will find the collated issues and concerns below.

As you read through the topics you are encouraged to reflect on how the responses can be utilized for ministry and training opportunities. The scope and impact of this conflict are significant. Our CNO, Admiral Clark, recently remarked at a Naval War College seminar that he wanted "people to climb into the ring against our enemy....individuals and communities who will challenge our assumptions about this war." As this conflict continues and the stakes increase, commanding officers and sea service personnel deeply desire the input of their chaplains. You are a significant ethical advisor to the command. It is important to collaborate with experts in the command structure, such as legal, medical, and others, to develop some innovative forums and programs regarding this war.

Clearly, this is a war that requires "out of the box thinking and ministry." From the information gathered and presented below, there are opportunities for a variety of ministry forums. More than ever, our presence is important to personnel *at all levels and grades*. Chaplains, especially, carry the messages primal to all of humanity....messages of hope, justice, compassion and security.

2. **Questions.**
 - a. **What does your personal scenario of a full-scale war against terrorism look like?**

Answer: This will be a war with many unconventional fronts, to include diplomatic, economic, technological, moral and military. Religion must play and will play a significant role in this war, certainly from the perspective of the extremists.

Recommendation for CRPs:

- Chaplains should become familiar with the basic tenants of Islam.
- Chaplains should begin / continue JPME, either through correspondence or seminar programs.
- Chaplains should introduce the impact of faith in war as a topic of discussion with sea service members.

b. What are some specific ways that a war against terrorism would differ from conventional warfare?

Answer: The war against terrorism will focus around some centers of gravity different from conventional warfare. The “will of the American People” may be the one strategic center of gravity that remains pivotal regardless of what kind of war this becomes. The concept of waging war against a “Nation-State” versus an “Ideological-State” needs to be examined. There is not an agreement between the warring parties regarding “Rules of Engagement” and behaviors on the battlefield and probably never will be. Terrorists do not subscribe to the Geneva Convention. However, it is important for us to maintain the moral high ground regarding rules of engagement. Hostile actions will be random and less predictable. There will be greater casualties among civilians.

Recommendations for CRPs:

- Chaplains should re-familiarize themselves with Just War Theory.
- Chaplains should develop GMTs regarding moral behavior on the battlefield and co-facilitate with members of the line community.

c. What responses of the United States do you think would accelerate terrorist acts?

Answer: In many regards, the results of this war will hinge on public perception. Attacks on holy sites, use of tactical nukes, indifference to collateral damage, appeasement in negotiations, and the installation of “puppet governments” will accelerate terrorist acts.

Recommendations for CRPs:

- Chaplains should reinforce respect for all holy sites.
- Teach Just War Theory to war fighters.

d. What responses of the United States do you think would decrease terrorist acts?

Answer: The United States should continue to undertake economic actions that would hinder the financial support of terrorists. Likewise, we need to undertake a worldwide public relations campaign that would erode public support for terrorism and decrease hatred for the United States and its values. Overseas community relation projects are excellent forums for expressing goodwill. National policy makers acknowledge these activities as valuable and necessary. In addition to public relations issues the U. S. may need to develop a new paradigm regarding international affairs. Finally, the United

States needs to continue its claim for accountability and justice of the 9-11-01 perpetrators.

Recommendations for CPRs:

- Chaplains should immediately develop strong working relationships with command Public Affairs Officers.
- Chaplains should increase and improve community relations' projects overseas in spite of security threats.
- Chaplains should insure that community relation projects are acknowledged by the command PAO and local news media.

e. List at least five ethical issues that should be addressed in the war against terrorism.

Answer:

1. Just War principles compared to Holy War concepts.
2. Avoiding Collateral Damage regarding civilians, religious sites and cultural institutions.
3. Civil Liberties and the Issues of Prejudice in America.
4. The Dangers of Undesirable Coalitions.
5. The Motivation of War: Revenge, Reprisal or Justice?
6. Issues of Global Justice: Why are we hated?

Recommendations for CRPs:

- Establish GMTs.

f. What ethical questions might be asked by a commanding officer to his chaplain at this time?

Answer:

1. "Chaplain, can you explain the differences to me between the peaceful adherents of Islam and the fanatical Muslims?"
2. "Should we still have Islamic services in our command?"
3. "How are we going to treat our prisoners if they do not adhere to the Geneva Convention?"
4. "Are my Muslim service members going to remain dependable in war?"
5. "How do I prepare my troops for casualties...How will our troops respond if our shipmates are taken prisoner and tortured?"
6. "How will religion and faith help our side?"
7. "Is this [location, structure, personality] a legitimate target? Why or why not?"

8. “Should we schedule war ops on Holy Days? Ours? Theirs?” Implications?
9. “What is the proper procedure for caring for Muslim dead?”
10. “How can we strengthen our resolve in the field against suicide bombers or fighters?”
11. “How will suicide fighters impact our treatment of POWs?”

Recommendations for CRPs:

- Chaplains should begin discussing these issues with commanding officers immediately.

g. How might post-traumatic stress disorder be different in this war as compared to past wars?

Answer: Because of the secrecy of special operations many military personnel may not be able to talk about, or receive public accolades, for their actions on the battlefield. This required silence could affect the service-member in later years with negative impacts on work and family dynamics. Family Service Centers and chaplains may need to heighten their awareness of potential problems. Likewise, PTSD could also affect family members and civilians who experience stress from the uncertainties and dangers of this borderless war. Finally, service members can no longer deploy and feel their families are completely safe from foreign enemies. Truly, service members are now defending the Constitution against “all enemies foreign and domestic.” If terrorist acts of mass destruction continue and are specifically focused against military members or bases, this may become a significant issue among families. As a result of the Pentagon destruction and the anthrax scares there has already been a measurable exodus of family members from D.C. area bases.

Recommendations for CRPs:

- Chaplains need to work with Family Service Centers to develop new paradigms and matrix for PTSD.
- Chaplains should make contacts with SpecOps personnel now in order to establish future working relationships.
- Chaplains should ensure that personal security clearances are accurate and up to date.
- During pre-deployment briefs chaplains and facilitators should re-emphasize the necessity for home security measures.
- Chaplains should be alert for PTSD symptoms in both service members and family members.
- Special consideration or additional chaplain support may be necessary for returning and/or deployed Special Operations Units.

h. Who does one minister to in a war against terrorism?

Answer: Chaplains will make themselves available and accessible to any, friend or foe, which seeks hope, reconciliation, support and compassion.

Recommendations for CRPs:

- Deployable chaplains should start considering special needs of Muslim prisoners of war and develop ministry guidelines.
- Deployable chaplains should establish religious guidelines and procedures for handling Muslim dead.

i. Where and how does one minister in a war against terrorism?

Answer: One ministers in symbolic ways and places. Presence and touch will be two of the most significant “places of ministry.” Ministry in the commander’s office becomes more important than ever. Daily visibility in housing areas are assuring and comforting to children and spouses. Wearing the uniform in public places makes a statement of determination and resolve among citizens. Finally, chaplains will physically deploy wherever they are needed for ministry.

Recommendations for CRPs:

- Visitation routines should also include more time in housing areas.
- Be intentional regarding prayer. Offer prayer to / with commanders, family members, unit members.

j. What are some effective ways of ministering to Muslim military members at this time?

Answer: Chaplains are in agreement that Muslim military members are accorded the same religious accommodation rights as all military members. Public and private support of the religious liberty of Muslim military members is significant in what we do as chaplains.

Recommendations for CRPs:

- Facilitate Muslim-to-Muslim support. Contact local Imams to conduct worship opportunities aboard commands.
- During work space visits affirm the value of Muslims as team members.
- Provide a forum for Muslim members to share their personal disdain for terrorist actions.

- Ask Muslim members to explain their faith to members of their unit during GMTs.
- Treat all Muslim members as Americans.

k. What are some things that chaplains can be doing at this time to avert any backlash against military/family members of the Muslim faith?

Answer: There are a number of things that Chaplains can do. The most important thing is to be visible with Muslims. Likewise, chaplains should take care not to talk disparagingly about Muslims in private forums. Finally, chaplains should continue to emphasize that this conflict is against terrorism...not Islam.

Recommendations for CRPs:

- Purchase information about Islam and include it in literature racks.
- Offer ecumenical worship services throughout the year.
- Co-facilitate religious workshops or educational opportunities with Imams.
- Insure Muslim inclusion into your command lay program.

l. What are your greatest fears in a war against terrorism?

Answer: This question generated much discussion among chaplains. The greatest fear seemed to be a backlash among Muslim nations that widens the war into a continuation of the Crusades. A second major concern involves the loss of American resolve as the length of the war increases and our casualties grow. Some wonder if this is even a “winnable war.” Other fears include worldwide economic depression, the compromise of our civil liberties and the inability of our culture to return back to “normal life.”

Recommendations for CRPs:

- Emphasize the stories of journey and transformation in the lives of biblical characters and nations during preaching opportunities.
- Emphasize that change, even painful change, can be powerful in growth and development.
- Facilitate training opportunities that emphasize and celebrate commitment in all aspects of life, i.e., marriage anniversaries, school graduations, Boy Scout achievements, etc.
- Facilitate training opportunities that address financial planning.

m. What other questions should we be asking and discussing?

Answer: In general the answers to this question dealt with issues pertaining to both politics and quality of life. Concerns regarding our relationship and support for Israel were raised. Some referred to the oil-driven American lifestyle and how it embroils us in conflicts. Others addressed the preciousness of life, both the scope of its brevity and uncertainty as well as in its joys and challenges. In general most responses to this question dealt with broad generalities.

Recommendations for CRPs:

- Uncertain...reflection under process.

n. To what extent does religion play a role in the reality and propagation of this war...on both sides?

Answer: One of the stated goals of the terrorist leadership is the establishment of a world wide Islamic Theocracy. Many of the adherents and foot soldiers that are joining the side of the terrorists frame this conflict in terms of religious war. As this war continues the ideology of religion will become dangerously more central and focused, certainly from the perspective of Muslim nations. Christians will need to resist efforts to use language, loyalties of faith, or prejudicial attitudes in the prosecution of this war.

Recommendations for CRPs:

- Chaplains should continue self-study of the Koran and Islamic doctrine focusing particularly on teachings that encourage war or peace, justice, mercy and forgiveness.
- Chaplains should attend and encourage attendance at local schools or organizations that feature Islamic speakers or professors.

o. How do the principles of Just War Theory juxtapose with Holy War principles? To what extent will Just War Theory apply if we see American POWs mistreated in the media?

Answer: Just War Theory was developed to limit the escalation of war and the death and destruction that accompanies war. Most western countries and democracies adhere to its principles. The terrorist proponents of Holy War principles have both stated and expressed their flagrant disregard for Just War Theory. Most chaplains agree that the United States should maintain the moral high ground regarding the war against terrorists.

However, since many of these terrorists are classified as criminals some chaplains feel that the principles of just war theory do not apply to terrorists. Likewise, many agree that assassination of specific leaders is morally acceptable. As the war escalates POWs may serve as a focal point for

wrestling with this issue. One might well ponder the comparison of treatment between American service members and Taliban soldiers. Based on the experiences in Somalia this issue could become a real litmus test regarding justice and humane treatment on both sides of the conflict.

Recommendations for CRPS:

- Chaplains should familiarize themselves with the basic principles of Just War and speak frequently about morality in the battlefield.
- Chaplains should study the basic principles of Holy War.

3. **Summary:** To emphasize an earlier point, commanding officers and sea service members desire the insight of their chaplains. These questions and reflections are offered in order to enhance discussion, encourage the exchange of ideas and wrestle with ethical and moral issues that face us. Chaplains are also encouraged to share these questions and issues with professional colleagues and unit personnel. Please feel free to distribute this email. Additional issues, questions or responses can be sent to the following email address, james.r.fisher@cnet.navy.mil, or to Naval Chaplains School, Deputy Director, Naval Education and Training Center, 114 Porter Road, Newport, RI, 02841-1210, for inclusion in future distributions. Your thoughts are greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

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