DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF NAVAL OPERATIONS
2000 NAVY PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20350-2000

IN REPLY REFER TO
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Dear Colleagues,

May the Lord grant you peace.

What is 'Commander's Intent'? The Joint Planning Process dictates that a commander must clearly communicate his or her intent as to the why and how of an operation. The commander is to do this through a clear and concise statement of the mission's overall purpose, acceptable risk, and resulting end state. As a chaplain I am not a Combatant Commander, but as Chief of one of the Navy's premier Corps I desire to communicate to you my intent as the Chief of Navy Chaplains. Here then is the 'Chief's Intent.'

This intent flows out of a planning process conducted with the senior leadership of the CHC and RP communities, a process initiated with an executive offsite held in May of this year. Senior Chaplain leadership from all of the services, forces, and claimancies identified initiatives for this administration's strategic vision. We continued this process on the 18th and 19th of August, a watershed event in the history of our Chaplain Corps. The newly instituted Religious Requirements Oversight Council (RROC) met to study the overall mission of the Department of Defense, the Department of the Navy, and the Department of Homeland Security, to consider their attendant impact upon the mission of the Chaplain Corps.

In short, the military is on the cusp of a transformation to meet the demands of a new reality and the global war on terrorism and the new requirements of other factors impacting the national defense strategy. The RROC engaged in a dynamic discussion of transformational ministry, the state of the Chaplain Corps, and the most effective means of meeting the ministerial needs of the People of God in the Sea Services. Successful administrations limit the scope and number of their strategic initiatives in order to realistically accomplish the most critical tasks in the course of its tenure. This is accomplished through the prioritization of initiatives and then in the development of an execution plan to fulfill those strategic initiatives.

The final two pages of this letter contain a bulletized list of the strategic initiatives for easy reference. It is my intent to post these initiatives to a common web site to enhance understanding and communication throughout the Corps. The RROC has recommended that this administration adopt the following initiatives as the main thrust of our ministry and institutional development over the next four years.

United States Navy Chaplain Corps'
Strategic Initiatives
September 03 to September 07

1. Facilitate operational readiness by transforming all sea service ministry:

- *Facilitation:* Enable commanders to meet their constitutional responsibilities in facilitating the religious freedoms of personnel and families.
- *Standardize Ministry:* Create and implement standardized ministry templates and accompanying metrics for all commands to ensure delivery of comprehensive religious ministry for all sea service personnel.
- *Delivery of Ministry:* Develop practical and reliable means to ensure the effective and efficient delivery of ministry across the sea services.

Discussion: Facilitating the command mission includes enabling commanders to meet their constitutional responsibilities in facilitating the religious freedoms of personnel, their families, and all qualified Department of Defense, Department of the Navy, and the Department of Homeland Security personnel. The RROC identified the necessity of creating and implementing standardized ministry templates for all billet types to ensure the delivery of comprehensive religious ministry to all sea service personnel. Leveraging the success of our Chaplain Corps Strategic Plan, we will develop practical and reliable means to ensure the effective and efficient delivery of ministry across the Sea Services.

2. Enhance operational readiness through spiritual and moral/ethical advisement and training:

- *Spiritual/Ethical Awareness Training:* Provide critical spiritual and moral/ethical awareness training for Commanders and their staffs.
- *Transforming Military Personnel:* Assist in transforming military personnel, through Character Development and Core Values training, into leaders who contribute to a just society.
- *Professional Skills and Competencies:* Ensure all Chaplains are provided the skills and competencies required to provide competent spiritual and moral/ethical advisement to their commands.

Discussion: Since its inception, the Chaplain Corps has provided spiritual and moral/ethical advise to its Sea Service commands. Religious Ministry Teams remain committed to enhancing command operational readiness through appropriate spiritual and moral/ethical advisement and training. Consequently, we are afforded splendid opportunities to provide practical and relevant spiritual and moral/ethical training for Commanders, their staffs, and their units. We assist in transforming military personnel into exemplary citizens and leaders who contribute to a just society through Character Development and Core Values training received in all accessions and professional development programs. The senior leadership of our Corps will strive to ensure that all Chaplains and RPs are trained with the skills required to provide appropriate spiritual and moral/ethical advisement and training.

3. Enhance operational readiness of combatants through holistic renewal and transformational ministry:

- *Transformational CREDO:* Continue CREDO transformation to meet the operational needs of the Sea Services.
- *CREDO as Corps-wide Ministry:* Train and enable all RMTs to provide and participate in CREDO ministry programs.
- *Return and Reunion Programming:* Chaplains were the first to provide return and reunion programming. We must take the lead once again to provide this critical programming in the war on terrorism. Chaplains will work closely with PERS 6 and MCCS to fulfill this critical requirement in war and peace.

Discussion: This initiative is inspired by, and builds upon the rich contributions of our creative and visionary predecessors. Chaplains were the Navy's first teachers on ships, preparing midshipmen intellectually and ethically for their professional responsibilities. Our predecessors were the first to institute command fitness initiatives. We think back to the transformational vision of our forerunners who addressed issues of race relations, drug, alcohol and spousal abuse, to name a few. Chaplains instituted the first pre and post deployment programs and, in a transformational way, linked family readiness with operational readiness that led to the establishment of family service centers.

After Vietnam, Chaplains addressed the post combat needs of warriors and then the personal and spiritual needs of all through CREDO. CREDO's mission is now transformed to meet the operational and emergent needs of the Sea Services. Recent additions to CREDO programming, *Mobile CREDO* and the *Warrior Transition Program*, show CREDO's critical relevance to the operational forces at war. Now we must continue to transform CREDO from a ministry provided by a few, to a ministry provided by all.

4. Transformational alignment of all religious ministry to an operational emphasis:

- *Realignment of Billets:* Realign all Chaplain and RP billets to enable operational ministry and operational support. This initiative will help to identify and meet the spiritual, ethical, personal, familial, and professional requirements of the men and women we are called to serve.
- *Career Management Plan/Revolution in Training:* Institute a Career Management Plan through transformational realignment to include the following:

  - Creation of the first-ever *Career Management Plan* with accompanying philosophy and execution strategy.
  - Implementation of a *Chaplain Career Progression Plan.*
  - Continued incorporation, and the full investment of Chaplains and RPs into the *Navy's Revolution in Training.*
  - Continued development of a *Standardized Professional Skills and Capabilities Manual* for all Chaplains and RPs.
  - Continued transformation of RP training for both the 'A' and 'F' schools emphasizing the RP role as an offensive combatant.

- Institutionalizing the training vector model as it is developed.

Discussion: The Chaplain Corps does not own billets; it manages billets for the Sea Services and the line commanders who do own them. It is our responsibility as a Corps to recruit the best possible candidates, to provide training to meet the requirements of our specialized military ministry, and to place Chaplains at assignments commensurate with their rank and abilities. This initiative is quite ambitious; it encompasses the entire spectrum of the Chief of Navy Chaplains' Title 10 responsibilities.

Where do we go from here? To assist the RROC in gaining feedback regarding the four Chaplain Corps' initiatives and other topics critical to the health and transformation of the Chaplain Corps, the Chief of Navy Chaplains will release a monthly ***White Letter***. This is a departure from our traditional mode of Corps-wide internal communications. The intent here is to create a dialogical forum for chaplains to offer insights, recommendations, and lessons-learned in a wide range of professional topics. Your input to this entire process is critical and welcome, and will play a significant and vital role in the development of future policy, guidance, and a standardized glossary of professional terms. My next letter will introduce ***White Letters*** and offer an explanation of how we will proceed with this project.

To conclude, the ethos of our calling is service. Each of us is called by God to serve God's people by providing them with the most professional and selfless military ministry possible. Our Chaplain Corps Seal captures the essence of our service—***VOCATI AD SERVITIUM,*** 'Called to Serve.' We are called both to celebrate our ethos of service, and to live it daily among the men and women of the Sea Services. May God grant us the abilities, perseverance, faith, and strength of character to fulfill this great ministerial mandate and provide all with visionary ministry.

This is truly an exciting time to be a part of the Navy's ministry team! I continue to solicit your prayers, support, and contributory service in helping our corps realize these four critical and transformational initiatives for the sake of the men and women we serve, the services who rely on us to facilitate ministry, and the Chaplain Corps we are privileged to serve.

Your servant,

Louis V. Iasiello
RADM, CHC, USN
23rd Chief of Navy Chaplains

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