



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

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IN REPLY REFER TO

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31 Jan 03

Dear Colleagues:

Earlier this week, our Commander-in-Chief reported to the leaders of our government and the citizens of our country on the State of our Union. In less than an hour, President Bush laid out his vision for our Nation and set forth an ambitious plan for America's future.

He concluded by saying: "Americans are a resolute people who have arisen to every test of our time. Adversity has revealed the character of our country—to the world and to ourselves. America is a strong Nation, and honorable in the use of our strength. We exercise power without conquest, and sacrifice for the liberty of strangers..."

Our role in the Sea Services supports the President's vision: "Devoted to God and Country, we unite to deliver innovative, life transforming service throughout and beyond the Sea Services." We provide for the "First Freedom" embodied in the Constitution, the freedom of religion, and in doing so empower the men and women we serve to preserve (or restore) the liberty of strangers, whether down the street or around the world.

Over the past two years, we have been guided in our efforts by a Strategic Plan. Our Strategic Plan 2001-2007 allows us to monitor the hundreds of objectives we are implementing Corps-wide. As we move ever closer to combat in the Middle East, it is worth reminding ourselves that many of the objectives in the Strategic Plan focus specifically on "ensuring that religious ministry enhances current readiness:"

- Identify the elements of a Command Religious Program that every commander should expect from his or her religious ministry personnel.
- Develop religious ministry scenarios at Joint, Claimant and Force levels for real and computer-generated exercises.
- Integrate faith group characteristics, beliefs, histories and practices into unit training.

These are just a few of the hundreds of initiatives that are either in progress or complete, preparing us to serve effectively during times of peace and times of war. I am confident that extensive planning, training, and prayer have prepared us to offer powerful and life changing ministry to our service members as they go forth in harm's way.

Whatever may come of world events in the weeks ahead, may we consistently turn to God to give us the strength to serve. For, as the President has reminded us, "the liberty we prize is not our gift to the world, but God's gift to humanity."

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Barry C. Black". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

BARRY C. BLACK

Rear Admiral, Chaplain Corps
Chief of Chaplains