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America's Traditional Warfare VS. Terroristic Warfare

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Abstract

The United States Army and the people of this country pride themselves on how we wage war. We use and have used the traditional form of waging war for numerous years and for many different reasons. Even when we have waged war against ourselves, there was honor in conducting the war. Terrorism is used to promote fear in people, try to tear down our military, confuse the nation's economic and political atmosphere of our daily lives. Therefore, as a nation should we use terrorism instead of traditional warfare to fight terrorism.

Bibliography

I entered the Army September 9, 1986 as a 19K Armor Crewman. My duty assignments include; Germany, Fort Stewart, Fort Knox, United States Army Recruiting Command, Fort Carson, and Fort Riley and the Republic of Korea. I held positions as a Driver, Gunner, Tank Commander, Recruiter, and Instructor Observer/ Trainer Controller. In August 2001, I was assigned as the Battalion Operations Sergeant Major for HHC, 2d battalion, 34th AR, Fort Riley KS. June 2002, I took responsibility as First Sergeant of C Co. 2-34 AR, 1st Brigade, 1st Infantry Division. Next, I was assigned as the First Sergeant, HHC, 2d Battalion, 34th Armor, 1st Brigade, 1st Infantry Division. I conducted numerous training exercises; National Training Center, local gunneries, force on force maneuver exercises and individual training. The leadership within the battalion changed very little. I assigned to Korea and was assigned as the B Company and HHC, 2d Battalion, 72d AR. In July of 2006, I signed in as a student at the United States Sergeants Major Academy.

Traditional Warfare vs. Terrorism

Throughout the history of our great nation, the question to use terroristic tactics or the use of traditional warfare and treatment of our enemies has been an ethical dilemma for our government. Senior leaders, congressional representatives, special staff to the president, Secretary of War, now the Secretary of Defense, generals within the nation's military, and the President of the United States have set the foundation of our nation's war making policy. How we as a nation would fight our battles and conduct ourselves with prisoners of war and their treatment. As we have seen, with the events of the last four to five years our nation has had to ask itself, why not fight like our enemies. The ethical dilemma I have asked myself and friends and family have asked me why we do not match tactic for tactic, use intimidation and torture to get the information that we need to win the fight. Our nation's war making policy and societies conscience does not allow us to be a nation of barbarism or that God as told us to blow up buildings killing innocent people or use the media to show executions in the name of war. The ethical dilemma that I am faced with is why not treat our prisoners of war with the same ruthlessness as our enemies have treated us. Why not simply fly a plane into Tehran, Iran or into North Korea and write it off has a political or holy statement. Terrorism is a form of warfare that our enemies have decided to use against us and our allies. Terrorism primary purpose is to place fear and intimidation into their enemies. The use of media has become the number one tool for our enemy. The information highway, the internet that reaches millions of people around the world is used to facilitate terroristic warfare. Our enemies use these forms to get the message out and try to change our tactics and political conscience. When the people of America see and hear about Soldiers, other victims suffering, and being killed at the hands of our enemies, the terrorist goal is to scare their enemy and change their point of view, while the instate being their

victory. Many terrorist believe that to die using this form of warfare is their guaranteed status as being a martyr for their cause and entry into heaven. First, I think we have to understand the history and the essences of terrorism. "Terrorism is theatre." (Huffman 1998) This is a classic statement and analogy by terrorism expert Brian Jenkins for such a complex phenomenon as terrorism. Terrorism, like a play, which can be viewed as a deliberate presentation to a large audience in order to spotlight a message and hold attention. The purpose and intent of such actions can have sinister impact on national, regional, and global populations. Modern media provides the stage, and audience attention is further engaged because random individuals are often targeted with principals on stage as victims. Moreover, like a play, the point of the experience is the feelings and attitudes of the audience, not the actors. (Military Guide to Terrorism 1998)

"Terrorism has a purpose that goes well beyond the act itself; the goal is to generate fear." (FM 7-100 2003). Terrorist acts or the threats of terrorism have been in existence for millennia. Despite a history longer than the modern nation-state, the use of terror by governments, and those that contest their power remains poorly understood. While the meaning of the word *terror* itself is, clear, when terror is applied to acts and actors in the real world of today. Meaning and intent can point in many directions. Part of this dilemma is due to use of terror tactics by actors at all levels in the social and political environments. (Military Guide to Terrorism 1998)

Distinction of size and political legitimacy of the actors using terror raise questions as to what is and is not terrorism. The concept of moral equivalency is frequently used as an argument to broaden and blur the definition of terrorism as well. This concept argues that the outcome of an action is what matters, not the intent. Simply put, car bombs on a city street or a jet fighter dropping a bomb on a tank are both acts of violence that produce death and horror. Therefore,

any military action is simply terrorism by a different name. This is the reasoning behind the phrase “One man’s terrorist is another man’s freedom fighter.” Such comments can promote a legacy of legitimizing the use of terror by successful revolutionary movements after the fact. (Military Guide to Terrorism 1998)

The continued growth in the causes and social views using terrorism, along with the flexibility of terror over the years, has added to the confusion. People looking to disrupt, reorder, or deny the common state of affairs have consistently looked for new and creative ways to accomplish their goals. Technology has driven terrorism to newer heights, although tactics and techniques used by terrorists have remained the same.

How does terrorism affect us as an Army and as a nation? The Army chief of Staff Peter Schoomaker is quoted as saying, “They’re (the terrorist) interested in tying us down militarily, but they are really working on defeating us informationally, economically, and politically, the other dimensions of National power.” (Schoomaker 2004) Terrorism is a violent, criminal political act under nearly every national or international legal system. The acts of terrorism on the United States have not caused significant damage and casualties normally associated with traditional warfare, terrorism produces a greater adverse psychological impacts and has a larger threat than accumulating numbers killed and material destroyed. The attacks of 9/11 and the anthrax incidents reported would make the American people feel that their sense of safety and security was vulnerable and we realized that we were not immune to acts of terrorism on our own homeland.

Traditional warfare uses the laws of warfare, established by the 1949 Geneva Convention, the rules when fighting a war that are acknowledged by the international community. The laws address the conduct of waging war. The laws allow military forces to complete the mission

without causing unnecessary suffering or destruction. The establishment of the laws also set the guidelines on providing humane treatment of prisoners and civilians. We as a nation and an Army recognizing that no matter what an individual captured during war still had human rights regardless of their prior conduct and beliefs. During the Civil War, President Lincoln issued General Order 100, which gave humane treatment to prisoners of war. General Author Mac Author issued General Order 100 again to the Pilipino combatants during the Philippine insurrection telling his Soldiers that all civilians and enemy forces are to be treated with respect and dignity. Today the big test of our beliefs and ethical morality has been the fight against the global war on terrorism. The country and the department of defense have had serious incidents that have questioned our ability to stay within the traditional framework set by the Laws of Warfare. The Aba Grab prison incident has shown the world that has a nation we do not condone acts of terrorism, there are a random select groups of people who through their own stupidity took illegal actions against detainees breaking the rules governing the treatment of prisoners of war. The Guantanamo Bay Military Prison Facility has been under numerous investigations for the treatment of detainees. The Supreme Court decided that the detainees were to be treated and entitled to the articles covered by the Geneva Convention no matter what they might have done or did not do. Traditional warfare has been conducted throughout recorded time. In biblical times, the forces faced off against each other with merely a sword and fought hand to hand, man against man. During the colonial period, British and American forces fought in linear formations and the best formation won. There was honor in waging war. World history remembers the heroes of the fights not the terrorists who put a bomb around his waist and blows up buildings with women and children to spread fear, confusion, and political views.

Summary

The United States Army prides itself on the ability to wage war without lowering itself to terrorism form of warfare. Although I have asked myself numerous times, why not use a form of terrorism such as torture to get the information we need to save lives. Traditional warfare will always be the way the United States and the American people conduct ourselves during times of war.

References

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