

Ethics Paper

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60

Good job Bob!

Ethics Paper

Define the Problem

During the most recent 10th Special Forces Group deployment, a few detachments were given the mission to plan the raid of a small village. The problem was, once we had detainees, where were we going to take them for interrogation and how to get this information back quickly so we could act on it. This village was a known insurgent stronghold and responsible for conducting ambushes on American convoys. We had photos from Al Jazeera of several men in this village standing over the bodies of dead Americans. Along with the SF detachments, we had the Iraqi Special Operations Force and everyone was looking for some payback.

We had 25 detainees being held for further questioning, prior to the mission being completed. One of the detainees had a sketch map of the ambush site as well as missing military gear from one of the convoys. Looking at the photos revealed that he was one of the men standing in one of the pictures from Al Jazeera. He had information on the other people that we were looking for. The unit needed this information if we were going to find the other individuals that had conducted the ambushes.

Know the Relevant Rules

There are rules that govern how detainees are to be treated. You must use your judgment and apply the Laws of Land Warfare. The Geneva Convention sets out standards for the humane treatment of detainees. Some officials have declared that the Geneva Convention does not apply to all detainees. This creates too much confusion. Therefore, if you use the Geneva Convention as your guideline, you can't go wrong.

Also, the Rules of Engagement are clearer now than they ever have been. Had the detainee pointed his weapon at any member of the assault force, he most certainly would have died on the spot. But he was a coward, like most of the insurgents, and when we blew his door open, he dropped his gun and begged for mercy. He was no longer a combatant and the rules of engagement had to be followed.

Develop and Evaluate Courses of Action

A battlefield interrogation was conducted first to determine what information we could acquire on site. This worked very well because of the Iraqi Special Operations Force. The detachment's interpreter would question the detainee while hooded Iraqi Soldiers stood by. Detainees many times would give up their neighbors and even family members out of fear.

The two Courses of Action in this situation involved where to send the detainee next. The first choice was to send him to the Abu Ghraib Detention Facility. In many instances, it took too much time to get usable information to go after additional targets. Many of the insurgents had been told, if you did not talk for three days, you would be released.

The second choice was to send them to an Iraqi-controlled Detention Facility run by the Iraqi Police. Because the Iraqi Special Operations Force was under our unit's control, information from the Iraqi Police would take much less time to be passed back to the unit. Results were much quicker with the Iraqi Police. But the way that they got the information was unclear. There were allegations of prisoner abuse, and not the kind that you saw in the media about Abu Ghraib.

Choose the Course of Action That Best Represents Army Values

The unit decided to put its own interrogators at Abu Ghraib. This allowed the detainees to be controlled throughout the inprocessing until the time they no longer had valuable information. It safeguarded them from other prisoners and allowed us to control and maintain complete security.

This allowed all information to be gathered by our interrogators and then it was passed directly back to the units that needed it for follow on missions.

The Army value that best represents the course of action that we took is duty. Duty is based on doing what is morally and professionally right.

Special Forces Soldiers conduct missions in isolated areas while immersed in the cultures of indigenous people who may not have the same values and ethics. This often presents unique and challenging ethical situations. Special Forces Soldiers must balance their ethics with those of the host forces while still focusing on mission accomplishment and battlefield success.