

The Air Force Chaplain as a Religious Liaison: Expanding the Role of the Chaplain for the 21ST Century.

ABSTRACT

This paper addresses the debate concerning the place of the chaplain in the role of a religious liaison. This is done by looking at some of the issues concerning religion in world affairs, particularly the marginalization in diplomacy and military operations. It demonstrates how religion does play a part in conflict resolution and how religious leaders are involved. It addresses Air Force, DOD and Joint Publications concerning the chaplain as a religious liaison and the critical issue of noncombatant status of the chaplain. It shows the chaplain's unique position in conflict situations within the realm of religion and calls for an expanded doctrine and formalized training in the area of religious liaison.

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Thesis

THE AIR FORCE CHAPLAIN AS A RELIGIOUS LIAISON
EXPANDING THE ROLE OF THE CHAPLAIN
FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

By

John. P. Kenyon, Chaplain, Major, USAF

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Master of Sacred Theology

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"The views expressed in this article are those of the author and do not reflect the official policy or position of the United States Air Force, Department of Defense, or the U.S. Government."

Preface

The topic of the chaplain serving as a religious liaison has and will be debated with fervor for many years to come. It is extremely important that the discussion continue to ensure the military chaplaincy continues to provide the First Amendment rights of the men and women serving in the Armed Forces of the United States today and in the future. This topic is much more than just a chaplain serving as a liaison to the religious community and leaders in the area of responsibility. It has much to do with the very fabric of our society and the presuppositions used by this culture.

As I prepared for this paper, one name cited continually was Douglas Johnston. It will be clear from the paper of his contribution toward this subject. It is important to realize the background of this individual which allows him to speak authoritatively to this issue. The following biographical material will highlight his credentials.

Dr. Douglas M. Johnston Jr. is president and founder of the International Center for Religion & Diplomacy. Educated at the U.S. Naval Academy and Harvard University, he has served in senior positions in government, business, the military, and academia, including six years at Harvard, where he taught international affairs and was founder and first director of the university's Executive Program in National and International Security. His most recent assignment was executive vice-president and chief operating officer of the Center for Strategic and International Studies, in addition to serving as project director of the Religions and Conflict Resolution Project. In government, he formerly served as director of the Office of Policy Planning and Management in the Office of the Secretary of Defense and later as deputy assistant secretary of the U.S.

Navy. He is principal author and editor of *Religion, the Missing Dimension of Statecraft* (Oxford University Press, 1994), *Foreign Policy into the Twenty-First Century: The U.S. Leadership Challenge* (CSIS, 1996) and *Faith-Based Diplomacy: Trumping Realpolitik* (Oxford University Press, 2003).¹

¹ This biographical material was taken from Johnston, *Faith-Based Diplomacy*, xx. and from Johnston, *Religion, The Missing Dimension of Statecraft*, xv.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The title of this paper, *The Air Force Chaplain as a Religious Liaison: Expanding the Role of the Chaplain for the 21ST Century* provides the purpose for writing this treatise. This is being done to focus the growing debate concerning the place of the Air Force chaplain in the role as a peace builder and a call to expand the doctrine and formalize training. This will then provide competency for chaplains who do come in contact with indigenous religious leaders which as present goes “beyond the traditional function of providing for religious and spiritual support of military personnel and their families ... this additional role of religious liaison could be viewed as an expansion of the traditional chaplain role of advisor to the commander.”¹

It is the hope of this author that the reader understands this is not to diminish in any way the overall purpose of the chaplain’s primary task to provide for the constitutional rights of our service men and women who wear the uniform of the Military Services of the United States. The purpose is to show this issue goes much deeper and the critical factor the chaplain can play serving as a religious liaison. The chaplain’s position allows great latitude in conflict situations within the religious realm, often overlooked, that can lead to peaceful resolutions of those conflicts. The following quote from Douglas Johnston clarifies this thinking, “Military chaplains serve at the cutting edge of US involvement overseas and are thus uniquely positioned to be helpful on an ongoing basis.

¹ William Sean Lee, Chaplain (Colonel) ARNG and others, *Military Chaplains as Peace Builders: Embracing Indigenous Religions in Stability Operations* CADRE Paper No. 20. (Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama: Air University Press, February 2005), 2.

Further, their multifaith experiences coupled with their considerable interpersonal skills are attributes that are particularly well suited to the complex challenges of engagement. Finally, they are a resource-in-being, with a longstanding religious mandate (which both avoids the battle of the budget and finesses any concerns about separation of church and state).”²

The focus in chapter two is to highlight three main issues concerning religion in world affairs. The first point will deal with the impact of religion on the world, particularly in areas of weak social institutions. The next will look at the pervading attitude toward religion by the intellectual. It will seek to establish some reasons for the marginalization of religion. This marginalization will then be looked at briefly in the structure of policy makers dealing in diplomacy and military operations.

In the next chapter the focus will be on how religion does play a part in conflict resolution both corporately, individually and how religious leaders are making a difference. It will highlight the impact of using religion as a vehicle for conflict resolution in those situations where it is appropriate. The discuss will then deal with military chaplains looking at the historical use in liaison duties as well as international chaplains’ involvement in religious liaison affairs. This section will conclude with the impact chaplains can have on conflict resolution as a whole.

Chapter four will focus on the present military doctrines of the Department of the Air Force, Department of Defense, and Joint Publications that govern joint military operations. It will first deal with Air Force guidance and how it addresses the issue of

² Douglas Johnston, ed. *Faith-Based Diplomacy: Trumping Realpolitik*. (Oxford: University Press, 2003), 25.

religious liaison. The focus will then move to the Joint Forces perspective and the doctrine which guides chaplains performing duties in the Joint environment. This section will then conclude with the critical issue of noncombatant status of the chaplain and how this is to be understood to minimize any possible conflict in this area.

In preparing to engage in this discussion it is important to keep in the back of our minds that the conflicts we are engaged in are very much a struggle of ideas. Thus, it is appropriate to give a quote by Paul R. Wrigley in the article titled, *The Impact of Religious Belief in the Theater of Operations*. He would say, “An operational commander, however well trained in the military issues, who is ignorant of or discounts the importance of religious belief can strengthen his enemy, offend his allies, alienate his own forces, and antagonize public opinion. Religious belief is a factor he must consider in evaluating the enemy’s intentions and capabilities, the state of his own forces, his relationship with allies, and his courses of action.”³ The choices made are important and will impact not only the present but the future as well. It is critical that commanders let the deliberation and focus encompass the entire spectrum on all the options before them. Finally, hear the words of a commander who even today is known for his military genius which subdued much of Europe. Napoleon Bonaparte would make the following statement, “There are only two forces in the world, the sword and the spirit. In the long run the sword will always be conquered by the spirit.”⁴

³ JP 1-05, *Religious Support in Joint Operations* (Pentagon: Joint Chief of Staff, 09 June 2004), I-1.

⁴ Tidd, Mark L., Chaplain, Captain USN, *The Power of Ideas: Religion and the Long War*. (National Defense University, 1 May 2006), 3.

CHAPTER TWO

STATE OF AFFAIRS

World situation

As our nation enters a new millennium, it stands engaged in a global war where asymmetrical warfare has become the norm. The end of the Cold War produced a shift where conflict, once centered on East-West confrontation, now has shifted to causes derived “from clashes of communal identity ... on the basis of race, ethnicity, nationality, or religion.”¹ The Joint Publication (JP) 1-05 elaborates further on this as it states, “Wars and conflicts in the 21st century are increasingly nonconventional and ideologically motivated.”² If these conflicts are ideologically based it becomes imperative for the United States (US) to clearly articulate its intentions in the many areas of global engagement. The mission of articulating US intention, to those in positions of authority and the general populace, is facilitated by many different players in many different ways. It is safe to say, the success or failure of this mission can have profound effect on achieving peace or continued warfare. As one reads the literature dealing with conflict and the possible solutions for peaceful resolution, one area that is often missing from the discussion or marginalized is the issue of religion.

JP 1-05 states that “religion plays a pivotal role in the self-understanding of many people and has a significant effect on the goals, objectives, and structure of society ...

¹ Douglas Johnston and Cynthia Sampson, ed. *Religion, the Missing Dimension of Statecraft*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 3.

² JP 1-05, *Religious Support*, viii.

while it may not be the primary catalyst for war, religion can be a contributing factor.”³ It further elaborates that this self-understanding can be used in the motivation and the justification in creating the support needed to meet the objectives of governments or groups; “achievement of an end being gained by using theological concepts as a means.”⁴ It can create great power in motivating individuals to self-sacrifice and giving beyond in what could be called supernatural effort. Chaplain Mark Tidd in a paper given to the National War College would state the following concerning the emotions that accompany conflict and the power generated if the overall motivating cause is religious in nature. He would say, “War unleashes the most profound passions, for it deals in ultimate things, in life and death, in horror and honor, in cowardice and courage. If that is true of war in general, it is even more the case when there is a strong religious element to the conflict, for then one truly is dealing in ultimate things, in obeying or disobeying one's understanding of God's demands and expectations, and thus in possibly gaining or risking the loss of God's favor.”⁵

The disintegration of Yugoslavia and the following war between the Serbs, Croats, and Bosnian Muslims (neighbors with same language and similar culture), though not religious, can only be explained by the religious identity of being Eastern Orthodox, Catholic, or Muslim.⁶ The situation in the former Yugoslavia illustrates well the material stated above and shows that the absence of strong social institutions

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Tidd, *The Power of Ideas: Religion and the Long War*, 2.

⁶ Johnston, *Religion, the Missing Dimension*, 22.

facilitates the defining of values for the community by the religious institution that becomes either a foundation of support or opposition against the rulers.⁷

Douglas Johnston, in a 2002 article called *We Neglect Religion at Our Peril*, also illustrates this well with the statement, “Religion is central to identity and gives meaning to people’s lives.”⁸ He would further say in the book *Faith-Based Diplomacy*, “Whether it is the root cause of a conflict ... or merely a mobilizing vehicle for nationalist and ethnic passions ... religion’s potential to cause instability at all levels of the global system is arguably unrivaled.”⁹ This potential of fanatical commitment to a particular ideology can have profound impact. Johnston would further illustrate this by stating:

As the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon so powerfully remind us, the greatest threat facing the world today is the prospective marriage of religious extremism with weapons of mass destruction. Massive amounts of money will be spent in the months and years ahead to defend against this threat, with the bulk of it going to counter symptoms and far less to addressing cause. The time has come—indeed, is long overdue—for taking concrete steps to inspire religious activity in more helpful directions. As the renowned religious scholar Huston Smith has noted, “the surest way to the heart of a people is through their faith.”¹⁰

Heart of the Matter

If Huston Smith statement is correct, it would seem the religious question should be one of the first things dealt with in a crisis situation. This is not the case, for “in the West, however, the rise of secularism following the Enlightenment [issue to be discussed later] has led us to act as though religion is not important for most people, or else that

⁷ Ibid., 24.

⁸ JP 1-05, *Religious Support*, II-1.

⁹ Johnston, *Faith-Based Diplomacy*, 3-4.

¹⁰ Johnston, *Faith-Based Diplomacy*, 3.

religion should be of only private interest.”¹¹ This is further articulated by Barry Rubin in his contribution to the book, *Religion, The Missing Dimension of Statecraft*. He stated the prevailing assumption, as far as US thinking toward the Third World, sees religion “as a declining factor in world politics” and would base this on three misconceptions.¹² It is important to understand these three points for they do form presuppositions by which our foreign policy is formulated and applied on the world stage.

In the first point Rubin states many Western scholars dismiss religion as the central identity of the community, yet it is “a central political pillar maintaining the power of any ruler—a major pole in determining the people’s loyalty—and as a key ingredient in determining a nation’s stability or instability.”¹³ The second point is the belief that the rise of modernization facilitating the decline of religion, yet Rubin minimizes this because modernization for many emerging states came packaged in colonialism causing many in the Third World to view it with suspicion.¹⁴ The third is the problem of seeing religion in a Marxist world-view as “the opiate of the masses” as opposed to the thinking expressed by Ayatollah Khomeini of “the masses are naturally drawn to religion.”¹⁵ Rubin developed this idea further by stating the position of Moses Hess, who saw the social impact of religion on a community, not as a drug but rather medicine in the following quote:

¹¹ Tidd, *The Power of Ideas: Religion and the Long War*, 3.

¹² Johnston, *Religion, the Missing Dimension*, 20.

¹³ Ibid., 20-21.

¹⁴ Ibid., 21.

¹⁵ Ibid.

The people, as the Scriptures say, have to work in the sweat of their brows in order to maintain their lives of misery. ... Such a people, we maintain, needs religion: it is as much a vital necessity for its broken heart as gin is vital for its empty stomach. There is no irony more cruel than that of those who demand from utterly desperate people to be clear-headed and happy. ... Religion can turn the miserable consciousness of enslavement into a bearable one by raising it to a state of absolute despair, in which there disappears any reaction against evil and with it pain disappears as well; just as opium does serve painful maladies.¹⁶

Indeed our perception as a nation can at times clouds our view of how other nations and peoples view the basic principals of life. The separation of church and state has “desensitized many citizens” to the fact many places in the world still operate “where the imperatives of religious doctrine blend intimately with those of politics and economics.”¹⁷ This issue even goes deeper into the very fabric of intellectual thinking were the Enlightenment created a lack of respectability to the spiritual disciplines. Johnston would say this thinking established presupposition that are applied to contemporary analysis of foreign affairs that disregard religion as a factor in politics and conflict as well as marginalizing religious leaders role in the solution.¹⁸

The following are historical examples of this bias being played out in different real world scenarios. Johnston would label this marginalization in many of the conflicts around the world as a “secularizing reductivism”.¹⁹ This was observed in the Vietnam war where the “acute tensions between the dominant Catholic minority, a resentful Buddhist majority, and several restless syncretic sects were largely ignored until Buddhist

¹⁶ Ibid., 21-22.

¹⁷ Ibid., 4-5.

¹⁸ Ibid., 9-10.

¹⁹ Ibid., 10-14.

monks finally had to resort to flaming self-immolations in public squares, precisely to attract the attention of Americans so greatly attentive to everything else in Vietnam that was impeccably secular.”²⁰ These acts woke the official policy makers to realize religious identity was vital in the perception of the government and a Buddhist president would be a stabilizing factor to help the situation.²¹ The conflicts in Sudan and West Irian were other areas where the central causes were said to be racial, regional or colonial when the real issue was Animists and Christians resisting Muslim governments which supported “proselytization with straightforward forced conversions and in the Sudanese case, with attempts to impose Islamic law, which allows only a choice between conversion and death to unbelievers and a degraded status for ‘peoples of the book’ such as all Christian denominations.”²²

This bias can have profound effect on how the US conducts policy and resolutions in a conflict situation. It is in the Iran revolution that Johnston goes on to show how disastrous this assumption can be as it distorted not just the details but the core of the policy.²³ The neglect of the religious dimension had US officials (even the president) calling for a broader basis for the shah’s regime, improved income redistribution, and anti-corruption measures to defuse the growing tension; items the shah did with no avail to his eventual overthrow by Khomeini.²⁴ Johnston goes on to say Khomeini’s regime

²⁰ Ibid., 11.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid., 12.

“was less ‘broadly based,’ no more redistributive, and if anything more corrupt than its predecessor,” yet easily remained in power “because of the purely religious authority of its leadership and because of the pervasive religiosity of its public conduct.”²⁵ The refusal to admit the issues were focused on Westernization, and thus the US as the leading Western power, would perpetrate the mistake that the revolt was political in content and only religious in form.²⁶

It is important to establish this is not seeking to say every international crisis that occurs has a deep religious conviction tied to it. Every situation can have a myriad of issues enflaming the fires of war and unrest. The focus is to show and establish the marginalization religion receives as a possibility in conflict resolution.

Diplomatic Focus

The impact of religion on matters of international affairs is significant. It would seem prudent for policy makers in the Department of State to be addressing the religious issue as foreign policy is established and executed. Dr. Elliot Cohen, an eminent scholar who serves in the Policy Planning Staff Office of the Secretary of Defense, confirmed this by stating “that the preeminent and most crucial issues of our time is inclusion of religion in the development of US foreign policy as an element of national power and the incorporation of indigenous religious groups and religious leaders for stability

²⁴ Ibid., 12-13.

²⁵ Ibid., 13.

²⁶ Ibid., 13-14.

operations.”²⁷ It should also be noted that the book *Religion, the Missing Dimension of Statecraft* is now a part of the training (required reading) for the US Foreign Service Institute.²⁸ Yet, the general consensus among the literature being written concerning this is religion is limited, if included at all, in the diplomatic arena. “David Smock, PhD, director of the Religion and Peacemaking Initiative at the US Institute of Peace in Washington, DC ... states that religion is often ignored by US diplomats and policy makers in developing and implementing foreign policy.”²⁹ A position he endorses because he believes “religion defines the cultural identity in many societies ... [and] the United States must embrace it as a means toward conflict resolution and as an enabler toward long-term stability.”³⁰ Johnston would also cite this bias in addressing how the State Department suppressed the reports of Ayatollah Khomeini’s ability to overthrow the Shah “at higher levels by a combination of dogmatic secularism and economic determinism” as it dealt with the crisis.³¹

This lackadaisical approach is seen even within the Department of Defense (DOD). In the pamphlet, *Military Chaplains as Peace Builders*, it records former Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld response to how well the DOD involved indigenous religious leaders in the stabilization process as: “Overall we are not doing a good job ... of trying to include religious leaders to show respect for the faith as part of

²⁷ Ibid., 3-4.

²⁸ Johnston, *Faith-Based Diplomacy*, 7.

²⁹ Lee, *Military Chaplains*, 8.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Johnston, *Faith-Based Diplomacy*, 4.

stability operations.”³² Johnston in a presentation to the Department of State would state, “There were instances early-on in the [Iraq] conflict where modest investments on the religious side could have had significant payoff on the security front, but those investments were not made for fear of running up against the establishment clause.”³³

The question of why there is an oversight in this area must be asked. Johnston gives some answers in the first chapter of *Religion, the Missing Dimension of Statecraft*, where he speaks to a dichotomy illustrated below.

Table 2.1 Conflict Chart³⁴

	Conflict related to:	Receptive to compromise
1.	Power politics, tangible material interests	Yes, usually divisible
2.	Nonmaterial identity-based	No, often resistant, not divisible

In the first case “the classical tools of diplomacy” work where the diplomat who was accustomed to the “old East-West context of nation-state politics” could apply those concepts.³⁵ This was not the case of the second where one must grasp “the emotional stakes of the parties ... deeply rooted in history” predicated on “their respective interpretations of first principles such as self-determination, justice, and freedom” to adequately deal with the conflict.³⁶ It is self-evident the use of one set of diplomatic tools would not work on the other model.

The issue is further complicated by the position of the US in the area of the

³² Lee, *Military Chaplains*, 8.

³³ Editorial, “Iraq the War at Four: Love Your Muslim as Yourself,” *Christianity Today* (April 2007): <http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2007/april/11.27.html>, (accessed March 15, 2008).

³⁴ Johnston, *Religion, the Missing Dimension*, 3-4.

³⁵ Johnston, *Religion, the Missing Dimension*, 3.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

separation of church and state. The reason of speaking to this is not whether it is wrong or right but rather to show it is so ingrained within the culture “that it left many of us insensitive to the extent to which religion and politics intertwine in much of the rest of the world.”³⁷ A good example of this is given by Col William Flavin, retired, of the Peacekeeping and Stability Operations Institute at the US Army War College in Carlisle, Pennsylvania. From what he has seen, because of the prevailing assumptions, the US defaults to the thinking of separation of church and state while Islam integrates them which gives religious leaders often more power than political leaders; yet, often they are excluded from the “axes of power” considered for stabilization planning and implementation.³⁸ In the final analysis it creates a blind spot in the nation’s statecraft. Johnston would conclude this mindset could if not already have fostered “costly foreign policy choices.”³⁹

It is of interest to see the response to religious militancy with the establishment of the State Department’s Office of International Religious Freedom (1998), military chaplains assigned to the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor and Navy training chaplains in religion and statecraft for conflict-prevention capabilities; despite these, religious imperatives remain limited in US foreign policy.⁴⁰ A major reason for this phenomenon is given by Jonathan Fox who asserts “this separation is that the social

³⁷ Ibid., ix.

³⁸ Lee, *Military Chaplains*, 7.

³⁹ Johnston, *Religion, the Missing Dimension*, ix.

⁴⁰ Johnston, *Faith-Based Diplomacy*, 3.

science and international relations disciplines largely have antireligious roots.”⁴¹ It should be noted, this is not to denigrate the position, this is only to establish the fact of what one trivializes normally does not figure into the deliberation or final solution for problem solving. A good example of the reluctance of the diplomatic experts to incorporate religion, and how religion can create a bridge to dialogue, is seen in an incident that began Douglas Johnston on his move toward faith-based diplomacy. In 1987, three US citizens (Congressman Tony Hall was one of the three) meet (no previous contact) with the prime minister of Mauritius who was a Hindu while traveling in Africa; accompanied by the American Ambassador to Mauritius.⁴² In the course of the conversation, the problems of reconciling differences between people and the failure of normal methods brought the suggestion from these three that maybe Christ’s approach could be used as a successful model.⁴³ This suggestion brought two responses: from the Ambassador, uneasiness and discomfort while the Prime Minister responded positively which lead to a discussion on “the relevance of religious values in the reconciliation process,” “an almost identical sequence occurred in a meeting a week later with the president of the Senate of Malaysia, a Muslim.”⁴⁴

A look at a more recent crisis will help to put this into perspective. As an Islamic nation, the importance of religion being a part of the political process and governing body

⁴¹ George Adams, CDR, CHC, USN, *Chaplains as Liaisons with Religious Leaders: Lessons from Iraq and Afghanistan* (Washington DC: United States Institute of Peace, March 2006), 6.

⁴² Johnston, *Religion, the Missing Dimension*, ix. These men, Congressman Tony Hall, Douglas Coe and David Laux were associated with the National Prayer Breakfast in Washington DC.

⁴³ Johnston, *Religion, the Missing Dimension*, ix.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

in the affairs of Iraq are known, yet no concerted effort to address the religious issue was seen. The Coalition Provision Authority (CPA) which governed Iraq before the election and installation of a new Iraqi government, had no policy on interaction with religious groups or religious leaders; no policy to guide relationship with indigenous religious leaders in the reconstruction; and a laissez-faire approach to constructing an inter-religious form.⁴⁵ This reluctance seems interesting in light of the 135 tasking considered necessary for the rebuilding of the nation, 19 were religious or impacted by religious culture (14 percent of the total); three labeled as ‘critical,’ five as ‘essential,’ and 11 as ‘important’.⁴⁶ It can be seen the religious element is not addressed in a systematic way even while it continues to be a major issue in the lives and affairs of many in the world today.

⁴⁵ Lee, *Military Chaplains*, 9-10.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

CHAPTER THREE

THE RELIGIOUS FACTOR

Religion and the Peace Process

The question that needs to be asked and answered at this point must be: can religion play a part in the peace efforts. Conflicts today (ethnic and nationalistic) are proving to be resistant to diplomatic compromise and are necessitating a different approach from state-centered philosophies to a more centered understanding of the human dimensions of conflict resolution.¹ A subject Edward Luttwark handles quite remarkable in *Religion, the Missing Dimension of Statecraft*. In the chapter, *The Missing Dimension*, he shows how parties are able to concede, not to the enemy, but to the authority of religion which makes concessions (seen as unacceptable) politically feasible because they are in deference to the faith.² “By thus reducing the vulnerability of rulers and governments on each side to accusations of weakness, the range of politically feasible negotiating positions is expanded, more options for solution become available and the chances of reaching a settlement are increased accordingly.”³

Several leading US state officials have recently spoken to the impact of religion and the need not to neglect its potential. Madeline Albright, former Secretary of State during the Clinton administration, in an interview dealing with her new book that is titled *God and Diplomacy* would make the following observation. She asserts that if economic

¹ Johnston, *Religion, the Missing Dimension*, 7.

² Ibid., 17.

³ Ibid., 18.

advisors are used by the Secretaries to advice on the issues of jobs and trade on the diplomatic landscape so too religious advisors should be used as well along with better understanding of religion by diplomats.⁴ Likewise former President Carter would also assert that religion plays a factor in motivating the players from a personal basis. An example of this is given in the foreword to *Religion, The Missing Dimension of Statecraft*. President Carter reminds the reader religion has been a catalyst for war but states many religious persons and communities have demonstrated the power it has to facilitate peace.⁵ He recounted the peace talks at Camp David between Menachem Begin, Anwar el-Sadat, and himself; all deeply men of different faiths (worshipped separately) but joint appeal for prayer was called for as discussions began.⁶ President Carter's following words shows his understanding of the part religion played in the successful resolve of that meeting. "Each of the principals at Camp David recognized peace to be both a gift from God and a preeminent human obligation. As the mediator of the talks, I am convinced that to have overlooked the importance of religion for both Sadat and Begin would have resulted in failure to understand these two men. Such a failure could have had a pervasive and incalculable impact."⁷ This can also have an impact with religious institutions playing a major factor in the process. He would recount another incident where the church, as a trusted agent, was able to be the mediating factor that

⁴ Saum, Steven Boyd, "An Interview with Madeleine Albright," *Santa Clara Magazine* (Fall 2006): <http://www.scu.edu/scm/fall2006/albright.cfm> (accessed March 15, 2008).

⁵ Ibid., vii.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

played a major role in the reestablishment of democracy in Zambia in 1991.⁸

As President Carter concluded his remarks, he challenged both religious and political leaders with these words. “Religious representatives need to exercise their moral authority and mobilize the vast human resources of their communities in the service of peacemaking. The rest of us, in turn, must recognize the informal and formal, to cooperate with religious leaders and communities promoting peace with justice.”⁹ Rabbi Marc Gopin, director of the Center for World Religions, Diplomacy, and Conflict Resolution at George Mason University would go a step further. He writes, “Whatever one discovers in the roots of war must become a principle part of recovery, growth, and the visioning of new civilization ... if religion, culture, ethnicity are all implicated, then they must be vindicated, and those that hold fast to them must find a sure and true way to engage the new civilization.”¹⁰ “Just as setting a controlled fire is often an effective counter to an out-of-control fire, so too can religious reconciliation be an effective instrument for dampening the flames of religious fanaticism.”¹¹ It must be a dual thrust of policy-makers and religious leaders moving together toward the solution. “Policy-makers must first recognize the importance of that aspect of freedom in order to play a constructive role in such a debate. At the same time, the challenge for religious leaders is to lead their communities in such a way that the members of those communities also respect the rights and obligations of others to determine their own religious

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid., viii.

¹⁰ Lee, *Military Chaplains*, 7.

¹¹ Johnston, *Faith-Based Diplomacy*, 6.

convictions.”¹² This concept can be illustrated from an account that involved a situation in the present conflict in Afghanistan. The scenario involved the efforts between an Army National Guard Chaplain and Afghan village elders and imams. The collaboration of these individuals in renovating twenty-six mosques contributed directly toward discrediting Taliban and al Qaeda propaganda that was stating US intentions were to destroy Islam.¹³

There are those who have taken that challenge of mobilizing the religious resources impacting not just a local area but impacting nations and the world. One does not have to go far to see those religious leaders who did make a profound difference; Mahatma Gandhi, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Archbishop Desmond Tutu are household names.¹⁴ “There is, however, a growing cadre of spiritual actors at a different level ... sometimes in the realm of official mediation and sometimes in the anonymous, behind-the-scenes realm of track II (nonofficial) diplomacy, these third-party interveners are making their mark on negotiation and conflict resolution.¹⁵ Often these individuals can reach the subnational groups which bear the burden of the inequities and insecurities with better impact than the political leaders.¹⁶

¹² Tidd, *The Power of Ideas: Religion and the Long War*, 9.

¹³ Adams, *Chaplains as Liaisons*, 9.

¹⁴ Johnston, *Religion, the Missing Dimension*, 4.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid.

Military Chaplains as Religious Liaison

The historical precedent for chaplains being used as a religious liaison is easily established. There is the example of the Spanish-American War where Gen John J. “Black Jack” Pershing in the Philippines used his chaplain to negotiate with Catholic clergy and Muslim leaders to ease the conflict.¹⁷ In more recent times, General Schwarzkopf used US Central Command Chaplain (Col) David P. Peterson as his religious liaison to the Saudi Arabian religious authorities which played a critical part in the successful execution of the war “while allied with the Muslim nation of Saudi Arabia.”¹⁸ In a personal interview with Chaplain Peterson he recounted his initial meeting with the general in charge of religious affairs with the Saudi military; disregarding advise not to met with him his Chaplain Peterson was greeted by, “I was wondering when someone was going to come and see me.”¹⁹ Peterson would also recount how General Schwarzkopf said there were three items he needed to keep the Coalition together and Chaplain Peterson was to take care of the religious one; General Schwarzkopf saw religion as one of those three items.²⁰

In the Balkans, US Army general Wesley Clark used his senior command chaplain, Rabbi Arnie Resnicoff, extensively in a liaison capacity promoting goodwill with religious communities and clerics of the region. General Clark’s actions showed his understanding the role religion played a major part in the stability of the region; the

¹⁷ Lee, *Military Chaplains*, 15.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Dave Peterson, telephone interview by author, April 25, 2008.

²⁰ Ibid.

chaplain's position continues to be listed as the liaison between military and religious leaders "involved in preacemaking and reconciliation activities."²¹ In Iraq, the formation of an Inter-Religious Council (IRC) by the chaplain of the US Army 1st Division directed by the commander, Brigadier General Martin E. Dempsey was credited to have decreased bombing attacks upon his forces.²²

This concept of using chaplains for liaison duty is not limited to the US as Canada, South Africa have embraced the concept, establishing doctrine and policy to direct the religious liaison capacity.²³ Each of these military services is committed to this and papers have been written dealing with the concept. Padre (Maj.) S. K. Moore, CD, of the Canadian Forces Chaplain Branch, in his paper, *The Ministry and Theology of Reconciliation in Operations*, speaks of the distinct role the chaplain plays with the civilian counterpart in stability operations.²⁴ Likewise two South African Defense Force Chaplains, Ignatious Fumaneklie Gqiba and Sybrand van Niekerk wrote, *The Role and Influence of Chaplains in the South African National Defense Force (SANDF)*, describe there efforts for stability in the region.²⁵ The volatility of region has produced "a practice of mediation for peace and stability that became authorized in South African constitutional law and defined in military doctrine."²⁶

²¹ Ibid., 15-16.

²² Ibid., 16.

²³ Ibid., 18-19.

²⁴ Ibid., 19.

²⁵ Lee, *Military Chaplains*, 20.

²⁶ Ibid.

Chaplains have rank without command (Title 10 USC, sections 3581, 5945, and 8581), and function in the dual roles of religious leader and personal or special staff officer.²⁷ It is because of this combination Johnston believes the military chaplain can be an impact player in conflict resolution. He would articulate this in the following quote.

With appropriate training, the role of military chaplains could be expanded to include peacemaking and conflict prevention. Through their personal interactions with local religious communities and selected NGOs ... they would be able to develop a grass-roots understanding of the religious and cultural nuances at play in any given setting and at times, possibly provide a reconciling influence in addressing misunderstandings or differences with these communities. Perhaps more importantly, they could advise their commanders on the religious and cultural implications of command decisions that are either being taken or that should be taken.²⁸

Johnston realizes the importance of the decisions the commander is making and feels the chaplain can make a difference.

The chaplain is a person who has committed to a life based on the faith they possess. The ability “to understand the significance of gestures and rituals, especially spiritual ones, and utilize them in making connections with local religious leaders” is an ability to bridge the gap of misunderstanding.²⁹ Chaplain George Adams in his pamphlet *Chaplains as Liaisons with Religious Leaders: Lessons from Iraq and Afghanistan* would state “all of the chaplains in this study, on some level, used such symbolic acts to enhance their relationships with their civilian counterparts.”³⁰

This capability of the chaplain can play a role in what is called Multi-track

²⁷ JP 1-05, *Religious Support*, I-2.

²⁸ Johnston, *Faith-Based Diplomacy*, 25-26.

²⁹ Adams, *Chaplains as Liaisons*, 8.

³⁰ Ibid.

diplomacy which is essentially a multi-disciplinary view of peacebuilding; “each track in the system, including religion, brings with it its own perspective, approach, and resources, all of which must be called on in the peacebuilding process.”³¹ In this approach some of the efforts are official while others are between individuals or groups; the chaplain’s track is not one of a negotiator but as a link of communication between the military and the religious leaders.³²

The ability to interact with indigenous counterparts can also have other benefits. These bridge-building efforts of chaplains can reap significant benefits to US and Coalition Forces by fostering greater understanding and even save lives. In Iraq, Chaplain (Col) Frank E Wismer II would testify that where chaplains and commanders liaison with indigenous religious leaders, actions against coalition forces decreased.³³ In other theaters of operation, US chaplains having the same faith as local religious groups were solicited as goodwill ambassadors by a ministry of presence; in Kosovo an Orthodox US Army chaplain meet with local Orthodox clergy and in Afghanistan a Muslim US Army chaplain prayed with the community at the local mosque.³⁴

The benefits can even touch the ideological battle being waged. This was illustrated in actions of Commander Emilio Marrero who sought to use his role as a Christian chaplain to create bridges with various respected holy men in Iraq.³⁵ He plainly

³¹ Ibid., 22.

³² Ibid.

³³ Lee, *Military Chaplains*, 3.

³⁴ Ibid., 16.

wore the cross on his uniform against advice of others who suggested that he keep a low profile; his actions have helped mitigate one of the greatest myths among Iraqis that Americans are secular and therefore, devils, infidels, or nonbelievers.³⁶ Adams in his pamphlet would record numerous acts by the chaplains building bridges to understanding; the collection of rituals (whether giving a prayer, organizing Ramadan feasts, or arranging for a burial), gestures (drinking coffee before a gathering or creating a more collegial approach in meetings), and acts (renovation of mosques) that built relationships of trust and collaboration between the U.S. military and the local populace.³⁷

³⁵ Ibid., 3.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Adams, *Chaplains as Liaisons*, 37.

CHAPTER FOUR

MILITARY STRUCTURE

Air Force perspective

The focus now moves to the military structure and how the Air Force chaplaincy defines its mission along with how the Joint Forces doctrine give guidance to the mission for chaplains serving in that capacity. It is important once again to stress the imperative that the Air Force Chaplaincy never loses sight of the basic mission of providing for the free exercise of religion of those serving in the Armed Forces of this nation. That mission is defined by the Department of Defense Directive (DODD) 1300.17 which states, “The Department of Defense places a high value on the rights of members of the Armed Forces to observe the tenets of their respective religions.”¹ This directive establishes guidance to optimize the accommodation for military personnel to exercise their constitutional right of religious expression. The mission is clear and as this paper seeks to expand the role of the Air Force chaplain, it must not take from or minimize that primary mission in anyway.

The role of the Air Force chaplain is shaped by the Department of Defense (DOD) guidelines as previously mentioned. In looking at these documents that establish and govern the military chaplaincy it is important to see the core processes that define the institution. DODD 1304.19 directs the basic duties of the mission for the Chaplaincies of the Military Departments. The directive establishes three taskings:

¹ DODD 1304.19, Appointment of Chaplains for the Military Departments. (Pentagon: Department of Defense, June 11, 2004), 2.

Table 4.1 DOD Chaplaincy Core Processes²

	TASKINGS
1.	Advise and assist commanders in the discharge of their responsibilities to provide for the free exercise of religion in the context of military service as guaranteed by the Constitution.
2.	Assist commanders in managing Religious Affairs
3.	Serve as the principal advisors to commanders for all issues regarding the impact of religion on military operations

It is important for this discussion to see AF Chaplain Service doctrine and how the AF meets these objectives. In knowing the parameters, one then can see how the expanded role for the AF chaplain as a religious liaison fits within these directives.

The first tasking as previously mentioned is the main focus for the Air Force Chaplain Corps and is stated in Air Force Policy Directive (AFPD) 52-1. This responsibility of advising and assisting commanders is shared by all AF chaplains but is the primary focus, from the Chief of Chaplains at the strategic level all the way down to the tactical level of the Wing/Installation chaplain, as they serve on a commander's support staff. The chaplain's purpose is to ensure the commander meets their requirement "to provide comprehensive religious support to all authorized individuals within their areas of responsibility."³ This is clearly seen in the formulation of the AFPD 52-1 as it reiterates the commitment to "the rights of its members to observe the tenets of their respective religions."⁴ Section 1 further defines this commitment as "all authorized individuals" are established stating "the Air Force Chaplain Service provides spiritual care and the opportunity for Air Force members, their families, and other authorized

² Ibid., 2.

³ Ibid.

⁴ AFPD 52-1, *Chaplain Service*, (San Antonio: AF Publishing, 2 October 2006), 1.

personnel to exercise their Constitutional right to the free exercise of religion.”⁵ This is done because the institution realizes that “spiritual health is fundamental to the well being of Air Force personnel and their families and essential for operational success.”⁶

The second tasking, assist commanders in managing religious affairs, is addressed by the core competencies (section 1.1) and by the core processes (section 1.2). The core competencies establish “spiritual care and advice to ... leadership” as paramount to mission accomplishment.⁷ The core processes give three responses to ensure mission success. It states “The Chaplain Service (1) conducts religious observances, (2) provides pastoral care, and (3) offers advice to leaders on spiritual, ethical, moral, morale, and religious accommodation issues.”⁸ It should be noted that these competencies and processes also impact the other two taskings and are not limited to this point.

As one now moves to the third tasking it is here the justification for the expanded role of the AF chaplain as a religious liaison can be justified. AFD 52-1 clearly articulates DODD 1304.19 when it says that along with the directive to assist commanders “in providing free exercise of religion in the context of military service”⁹ it also states chaplains will “serve as the principal advisors to commanders regarding the impact of religion on military operations”.¹⁰ This role as advisor is further developed

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

within the AF chaplaincy core competencies and core processes outlined in sections 1.1 and 1.2 of the AF policy directive. In these sections (1.1) the chaplain will advise Air Force leadership and (1.2) give “advice to leaders” on numerous issues that affect the well being of those who are serving under the pastoral care of the chaplain and under the authority of that commander.¹¹

The chaplain is to be, as a staff officer serving on the personal staff of the commander, an advisor concerning religious affairs. This advice is internal to the unit but the governing instructions do not prohibit advice on the external, in fact there are those which speak specifically to this issue. The following is quoted from section 5 of Air Force Instruction (AFI) 52-101, and is titled Advising Leadership. It states Chaplain Service “personnel advise military leaders in all matters pertaining to religious conviction and expression, and the accommodation of practices arising from religious faith, ethical decision-making, and moral reasoning.”¹² It goes further to clarify specific areas that will be addressed reminding the chaplain this must be “consistent with their role as visible reminders of the Holy.”¹³ These areas are as follows:

Table 4.2 Commander’s Briefing Items for Chaplain¹⁴

	Subject to brief
1.	Analysis of religious demographics and associated requirements.
2.	Updates on spiritual health of community and opportunities for religious expression.
3.	Advice regarding public prayer, memorials, prayer at official functions & meetings, visits by ecclesiastical endorsing agencies, and relations with civilian religious leaders and communities.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² AFI 52-101, *Planning and Organizing*, (San Antonio: AF Publishing, 10 May 2005), 8.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

The last section of point three clearly establishes the position of religious liaison for the commander to the “civilian religious leaders and communities” which are outside the confines of the base. Though the chaplain deals with the community at home base, the focus of the debate must be directed toward our chaplains serving with the aerospace expeditionary forces in the deployed setting as this is now the norm for AF operations.

AFI 52-104 deals exclusively with the heart of what the Air Force now embodies. The US Air Force is an expeditionary force ready to go anywhere at anytime. AFI 52-104 establishes in section 1.1.1.3 that chaplains will serve as expeditionary combat airmen (ECA).¹⁵ It should be noted that chaplains as a rule, deploy as a member of a Religious Support Team (RST) that consists of a chaplain and a chaplain assistant; the chaplain is a non-combatant, the chaplain assistant a combatant trained “for defensive tactics only” as personal protection for the chaplain.¹⁶ This is noted because if the AF chaplain does engage in religious liaison duties, then the chaplain assistant role will need to be addressed (the scope of this paper is limited to the chaplain). The chaplain will deploy with their military units to fulfill their mission as stated above.

This AFI which concentrates on the readiness of the AF Chaplain Service provides several areas of guidance concerning the joint environment that many chaplains will be deployed to support. Chapter one of the AFI establish guidelines for AF chaplains in the deployed setting and establishes Joint Publication (JP) 1-05, *Religious Ministry Support in Joint Operations* as the document “for the Armed Forces of the United States

¹⁵ AFI 52-104, *Chaplain Service Readiness* (San Antonio: AF Publishing, 26 April 2006), 4.

¹⁶ Ibid.

regarding religion and religious support in joint force settings and operations.”¹⁷ This section goes on to speak of ministry principles that are needed as Chaplain Service personnel perform as RST members formulating ministry plans based on needs and commander’s mission requirements.¹⁸ Chapter two of the AFI addresses several positions that AF chaplains would fulfill within the Joint Task Force (JTF). In this section it establishes responsibility to the commander and the advisory role; the JTF Chaplain/NCOIC “are responsible to the deployed commander”, the Air Force Forces Command Chaplain (AFFOR/HC) “serves as principle adviser to the Air Forces Commander and the Deployed AEF and/or AFFOR Senior Chaplain gives “advice to leadership based on needs assessment.”¹⁹ The Instruction does not specifically address liaison position but does establish the use of Joint Publications for guidance.

Joint Forces Perspective

The process by which the US engages in military operations, on a normal basis, is from a Joint Force perspective. DODD 5100.1 states the AF will “organize, train, equip, and provide forces for the conduct of prompt and sustained offensive and defensive combat operations in the air and space ... to defend the United States ... in accordance with doctrines established by the JCS ... except as otherwise assigned herein.”²⁰ There are numerous publications that coordinate this effort and one is specifically directed at

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid., 5.

¹⁹ Ibid., 8-9.

²⁰ DODD 5100.1, *Functions of the Department of Defense and Its Major Components* (Pentagon: Department of Defense, 1 August 2002), 21.

religious support. This publication is Joint Publication 1-05 which bears the appropriate title of *Religious Support in Joint Operations*. This publication asserts the fundamental responsibility of Chaplain Service personnel in supporting the directives of DODD 1300.17, DODD 1304.19 and DODD 5100.73 to provide for the free exercise of religion in the Military Services and support to commanders.²¹ Once again the focus or the necessity to provide the constitution rights of our Service men and women must never be minimized.

Yet it is within the Joint Publications that the full justification of the religious liaison is developed. Section 1 states, “Religious support includes the entire spectrum of professional duties that a chaplain provides and performs in the dual role of religious leader and staff officer, assisted by enlisted support personnel.”²² Religious support in joint operations has two main points, both of which are stated in AF Directives. It does however expand the ‘advice to leadership’ portion that was stated in the above section. This expansion is “providing commanders with professional advice regarding the dynamic influence of religion and religious belief in the operational area.”²³ This expanded role is further developed in section 2. It says the Joint Force chaplain (JFCH) will function as advisor concerning “moral and ethical decision making” and “on the religious dynamics of the indigenous population in the operational area” for those in command and leadership positions.²⁴ In fact, the section concerning the RST, gives the

²¹ JP 1-05, *Religious Support*, I-2.

²² Ibid., I-1.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid.

best overall description of the reason for the chaplain to “assist the joint force commander (JFC) to nurture the living, comfort the wounded, and honor the dead” and “provide advice to the JFC.”²⁵

In chapter two titled *General Principals of Religious Support* the picture continues to be developed concerning the chaplain’s duties and the role of religious liaison. As stated before the JFCH has two main tasks. The following chart illustrates this well.

Table 4.3 JFCH Tasks²⁶

DIRECT RELIGIOUS SUPPORT FOR MILITARY PERSONAL	RELIGIOUS SUPPORT OVERSIGHT AND REGARDING RELIGION
Providing and/or Performing	Advising
Rites, Sacraments, and Ordinances	Religious Organizations and Doctrine
Religious Services	Religious Practices and Customs
Religious Education	Importance of Worship and Holy Places, Shrines, and Other Religious Sites
Pastoral Care/Counseling	Indigenous Religious History, Culture and Ethics
Management and Administration	Humanitarian Aid and Liaison with Nongovernmental Organizations as directed
Ethical/Moral Living	
Managing Lay Leader Programs	Ethical/Moral Issues
Promoting Spiritual Fitness	

The first column is ensuring the free exercise of religion central to the institution of the military chaplaincy and the second column is the area of advising leadership. Once again there is further development of what advising leaders entails. It should be noted this is what is expected of the Air Force chaplain assigned to a joint billet.

The sections of JP 1-05 cover the different topics but can best be summarized as

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid., II-4. The following table is constructed from material found in the diagram on this page.

what the commander expects, wants or needs to succeed in fulfilling the objectives for the AOR. In section one the chaplain must be ready to advise in several areas that could include liaison activities: religious support of enemy POWs, detainees, liaison with chaplains of multinational forces, and appropriate civilian religious/humanitarian organizations.²⁷ Section 3 deals with tasks and proficiencies and has a list of items the commander must address to ensure religious issues of significance, cultural sensitivities and ideology of allies and foe will not adversely impact military operations.²⁸ The list of items for the commander are (1) Religion Within the Operational Area, (2) Other Activities Within the Operational Area (humanitarian organization, etc.), (3) Religious Elements of International Law, (4) Ethical Decision Making and Moral Leadership, (5) HN [host nation] Considerations.²⁹ It is primarily in number 5 that the duty of liaison is clearly stated. It says, “The JFCH, after careful consideration and only with the JFC’s approval, may serve as a point of contact to HN civilian and military religious leaders, institutions, and organizations, including established and emerging military chaplaincies, through the CMOC [civilian-military operations center].”³⁰

Joint Publication 5-00.2 gives probably the best picture of liaison duties as the chaplain serves at a high level in the JTF. Once again the concept of Joint doctrine gives the cohesiveness of unity of effort that “provides military guidance for the exercise of authority by combatant commanders and other joint force commanders and prescribes

²⁷ Ibid., II-1.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid., II-2-II-3.

³⁰ Ibid., II-3.

doctrine and selected tactics, techniques, and procedures for joint operations and training.”³¹ Section 3a of the Joint Pub 5-00.2 directs that these “doctrine and selected tactics, techniques, and procedures and guidance established in this publication apply to the commanders of combatant commands, subunified commands, joint task forces, and subordinate components of these commands.”³² It goes on to state in section 3b that any conflict between joint doctrine and individual Service doctrine is to be resolved with the joint publication taking “precedence for the activities of joint forces unless the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff ... provided more current and specific guidance.”³³

Joint Pub 5-00.2 goes on to show how the chaplain serves within the command structure of the Joint Task Force. The following diagram shows the chaplain is a vital member of the commander’s personal staff.

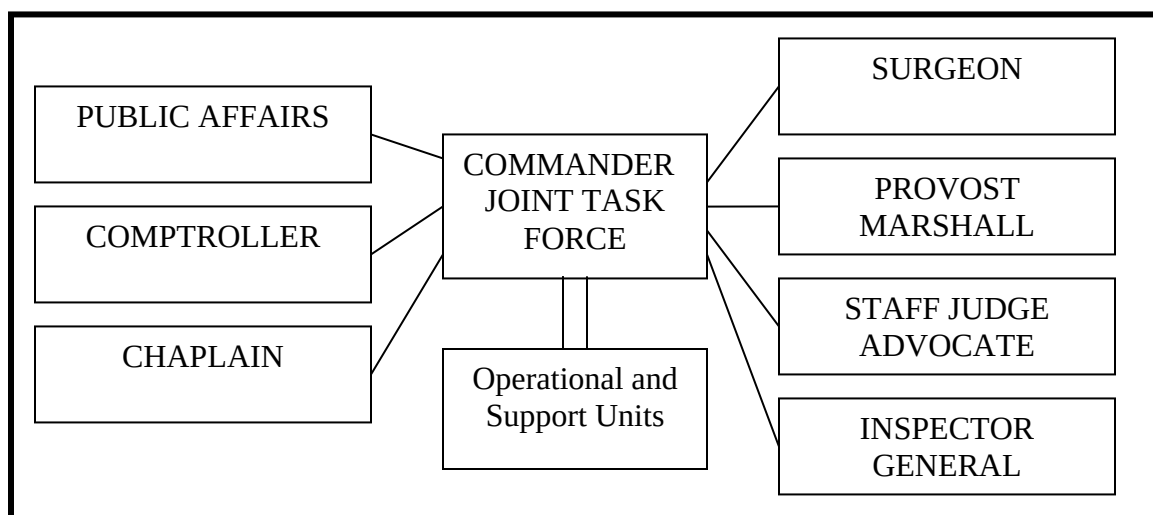


Figure 4.1 Commander Joint Task Force Personal Staff³⁴

³¹ JP 5-00.2, *Joint Task Force Planning Guidance and Procedures* (Pentagon: Joint Chief Staff, 13 January 1999), i.

³² Ibid.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ibid., II-3. This is taken from a section of the chart that shows the structure for the CJTF.

The chaplain's duties reflect those same responsibilities seen before. All religious support is to be planned and implemented within the Joint Task Force (JTF) as well as advising of issues concerning the moral, ethical, quality of life and religious ministry support issues.³⁵ The guidance goes on to flesh out the ministry support tasking. The chaplain will develop plans, identify the requirements and organize the religious ministry support teams to carry out these plans.³⁶

It is within the third process of organizing the religious ministry support teams the religious liaison concept is addressed. The duties of liaison take on several different dynamics and cover a wide range of religious personnel in the AOR.

Table 4.4 JTF Chaplain Requirements³⁷

	Religious personnel	requirement
1.	Chaplains of international forces	Maintain liaison
2a.	Host nation religious leaders	Maintain liaison
2b.	Local religious leaders	Interact
3a.	Nongovernment Organizations (NGOs) with religious affiliations	Conduct liaison
3b.	Private Organizations (PVOs) with religious affiliations	Conduct liaison

Items 3a and 3b are done in coordination with the CMOC and involve the spectrum of distribution of supplies provided by religious sources to advice on religious organizations wishing to support detained persons.³⁸ The rest deal with the liaison duties the commander may require in dealing with the myriad of issues within the AOR.

³⁵ Ibid., II-16.

³⁶ Ibid., II-17.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid.

Noncombatant Status

A major point in this debate is centered on the issue of the noncombatant status of the chaplain. This is a critical element for the institution of the military chaplaincies. This issue is not predicated on personal preference or U.S. sentiments concerning chaplains; it is founded on what is called the Law of Armed Combat (LOAC). The principal foundation for the purpose of LOAC is the “desire among civilized nations to prevent unnecessary suffering and destruction while not impeding the effective waging of war”.³⁹ “LOAC regulates the conduct of armed hostilities” and is established by the Geneva Conventions of 1949 along with international law; binding upon U.S. military personnel.⁴⁰ This issue is of such importance that DODD 2311.01E establishes procedures the Secretaries of the Military Departments will implement to train all members of “their duties and responsibilities ... to prevent violations of the law of war.”⁴¹

LOAC clearly defines the difference between the combatant and the noncombatant; this goes hand in hand with the concept of what constitutes a legal military target. The chaplain, though a member of the military, is not a combatant and thus is illegal to engage as a lawful target. The possibility of the chaplain engaging in military operations would jeopardize the noncombatant status of all chaplains and would essentially be a violation of LOAC; “violations of the law of war ... are subject to court-

³⁹ Rod Powers, *Law of Armed Conflict (LOAC): The Rules of War*. <http://usmilitary.about.com/cs/wars/a/loac.htm> (accessed February 2, 2008).

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ DODD 2311.01E, *DOD Law of War Program* (Pentagon: Department of Defense, 9 May 2006),

martial jurisdiction.”⁴² JP 1-05 also provides guidance for chaplains, first clearly articulating a chaplain “shall not bear arms” nor “participate in combatant activities that compromise the noncombatant status.”⁴³

AFI 52-101 provides not only the framework but the details as well for noncombatant status. In section 2.1 of this AFI, it states no chaplain will “perform duties incompatible with their faith group tenets, professional role, or noncombatant status.”⁴⁴ Section 2.1.3 further elaborates this status will not be compromised by placing any chaplain in a duty status that would compromise their noncombatant designation.⁴⁵ The specific details of this are shown in section 2.1.3.1 which states chaplains “do not and will not bear arms” nor “transport or carry weapons and/or ammunition under any circumstance.”⁴⁶ The Air Force, to ensure the noncombatant status, directs in section 2.1.3.2 the wearing of the “Geneva Conventions brassard (armband)” as well as carrying “the Geneva Conventions Identity Card (DD Form 1934) to identify themselves as noncombatants” (training, deployed and combat operations).⁴⁷

Yet, one can be unarmed and still be involved in combat operations. The thinking in this area is clarified in section 2.1.3.1. Here it states the “chaplains must also avoid engaging in other traditional combatant activities, e.g., assisting in planning military

⁴² Ibid., 5.

⁴³ JP 1-05, *Religious Support*, II-1.

⁴⁴ AFI 52-101, *Planning and Organizing*, 2.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 3.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 3-4.

actions, conveying military intelligence, and directing response to hostile fire, etc.⁴⁸ The focus of the question must be directed at the ability for the chaplain to act as a religious liaison for the commander yet not compromise the noncombatant status. Chaplain George Adams in his pamphlet, *Chaplains as Liaisons with Religious Leaders* would ask two questions and give examples to illustrate this.

The first question is: what can you tell the commander. The chaplain serving as a liaison will be dealing with many people and information will be constantly flowing back and forth with the chaplain as the conduit. A good example is given by Adams of a chaplain dealing with a situation in Afghanistan that puts this into perspective. The chaplain, in conversation with a mullah, learned since the US was only building secular schools and not *madrasses* (religious schools) fueled the perception of the US as anti-religious; this information passed along allowed the commander to address the issue.⁴⁹ The point to grasp here is the “feedback from the mullah was not related to combat operations ... it provided an awareness of wider issues in the AOR.”⁵⁰ Adams would further elaborate on this saying, “this information is not tactical; rather, it is situational awareness that can be utilized to build bridges with the general population.”⁵¹

The second question deals with what to do when the chaplain has information on enemy threats. The aspect concerning this question has to deal with information being actively sought or passively obtained. Adams would say NWP 1-05 confirms the

⁴⁸ Ibid., 3.

⁴⁹ Adams, *Chaplains as Liaisons*, 17.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Ibid.

“chaplain’s noncombatant status does not prevent him from conveying information that can save the lives of military personnel or civilians.”⁵² This does not imply the process to be an easy thing to do and any chaplain acting as a religious liaison must be extremely aware of this. This was demonstrated by Chaplain Carlos Huerta of the 101st Airborne who purposely did not visit with imams with other personnel who were seeking military information.⁵³ “In contrast, the chaplain talked with imams about their concerns and spiritual issues—not about information useful to intelligence.”⁵⁴

As this topic is concluded it is safe to say this is an extremely complex issue and is not to be taken lightly. It requires diligence and significant thought to ensure religious liaison duties would not cause a violation of LOAC.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Ibid., 16.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

It is clear with the end of the Cold War, religion is playing a part in the conflicts throughout the world. It seems the present state of policy and interaction at the national levels are not addressing this issue. As proposed above if conflict has religious roots it should have religious solutions. The reluctance of many to cross the divide of state and religion place the chaplain in a unique situation. “The Chaplains ... as both clergy and military officers occupy a unique space that blends a secular status and a religious one. This position makes them well suited to serve as intermediaries between the military and religious leaders in areas of conflict and post-conflict stabilization.”¹ The chaplain is significantly equipped to play a major role in building the bridges to understanding at the midlevel structure of a society.

It is also important to remind ourselves “the reluctance of the US to engage in addressing religion fuels the perception by those nations, who do not separate church and state, as another example of showing the godlessness of the West.”² The implications of this not only affect the US but also for those in these conflict regions seeking to create a new beginning. The statement made in the pamphlet, *Military Chaplains as Peace Builders* shows the greater significance. It states, “Victory for moderate Muslims over an extremist minority vying for control in many Muslim nations depends upon the United States effectively filling the “information gap.” Miscommunication can lead to

¹ Adams, *Chaplains as Liaisons*, 6.

² Lee, *Military Chaplains*, 7.

misunderstanding and misperceptions of US intent and plans. Stability operations require a parallel campaign resulting in national institutions committed to freedom, tolerance, and basic human rights for all citizens.³ This arena of the religious understanding must not be neglected and in the final analysis there are few capable of doing this. The military chaplain has the advantage of the development of skills to deal with divergent religious thought from living and working in the pluralistic setting on a daily basis. A good example to illustrate this comes from a meeting by the 3rd Air Force commander with representatives from several North African nations and from Nongovernmental Organizations (many were Islamic). The commander took his chaplain to that initial meeting and when the chaplain was introduced it was clear those in the room were very much impressed with his presence.⁴ This led to other meetings for the chaplain with these agencies; clearly the presence of the chaplain showed these individuals the perception of the US as antireligious in its policy and conduct was not correct.⁵

The fact Air Force chaplains are serving as liaison should lead us to reassess training procedures to provide training in conflict resolution. The co-location of the Military Services Chaplain Schools can greatly enhance this training as the other Services deal in this matter more than the Air Force. It ultimately is not a question of do we embrace the concept of religious liaison but how do we deal with it.

The focus of the answer to this question is found in JP 1-05. The section on the

³ Lee, *Military Chaplains*, 8.

⁴ Chaplain, Colonel Carl Andrews, telephone interview by author, former USAFE Command Chaplain, February 22, 2008

⁵ Ibid.

Joint Perspective give detail on some of the requirements the JFCH would be providing for the commander. As previously stated the duty of religious liaison is tied to the core process of advising leadership. The standard progress of duties change as the chaplain gains in rank and responsibility; the basis concept is as the chaplain gains rank there is a shift from chaplain functions to more staff officer and functional manager duties.⁶ The following chart illustrates this well.

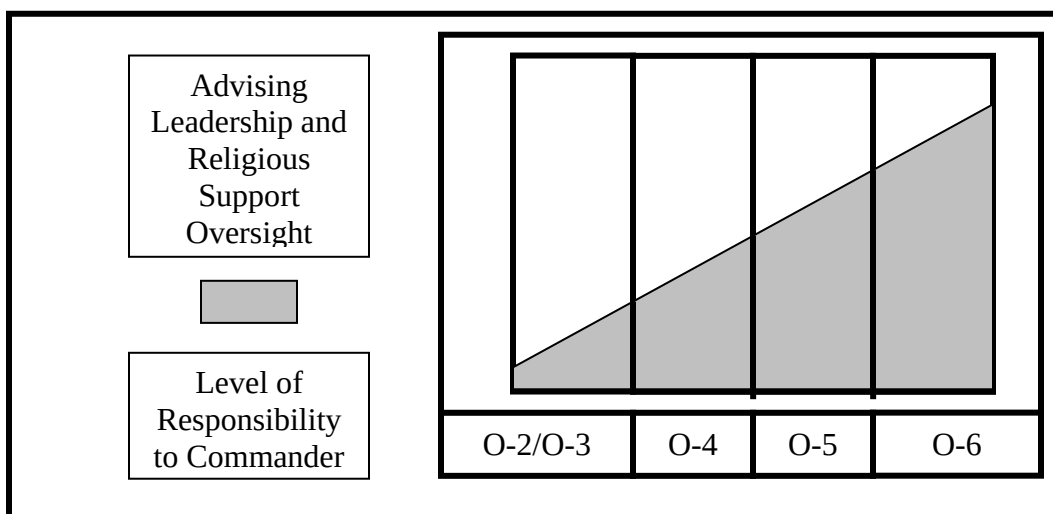


Figure 5.1 JFCH Level of Advising Leadership⁷

This then by default would place liaison duties in the upper realms of the rank structure. There is much wisdom in these duties being reserved for our more senior leaders. The suitability of one to this should also be taken into consideration as billets are filled to meet the requirements. The care of placing the right person in the right position should continue to be the norm, particularly in filling joint billets. It is vital we define the limits and institutionalize it to insure success in an extremely difficult duty. It also needs to be

⁶ JP 1-05, *Religious Support*, viii, II-5.

⁷ Ibid., II-5. This chart is developed from a similar chart that gives the proportionality of direct ministry support and ministry oversight.

clear the duty of liaison is not a negotiator but instead to be seen as a “bridge builder.”⁸

It is critical that criteria be formally established concerning the role and function of the religious liaison. The consolidation of all three Military Chaplain Schools will greatly enhance these efforts. The lessons learned from the Army and Navy can be readily accessible and the possibility of joint ventures in providing this training are real possibilities. The Pamphlet, *Military Chaplains as Peace Builders* though looking at the requirements for the best suited staff member for religious liaison duty gives a good summation of necessary skill set for liaison duty and should be the foundation for necessary training in this area.⁹

The likelihood of senior chaplains engaged in liaison activity is a given. It can happen at anytime. It is vital our chaplains are ready for the task commanders will be looking to them to fulfill. This very thing is recorded by Adams, recounting Major General David H. Petraeus direction for his principal staff members to engage civilian counterparts as a part of the stability operations that began in March 2003; in combat or stability operations, many other military personnel will be called upon to interact with the civilian populace, and chaplains must be prepared to do the same.¹⁰

The noncombatant status of the chaplain must never be taken lightly. It is to be handled with the utmost care. The very fact AFI 52-101 has guidance for those who violate it shows the concern the Air Force has in this area. It states, “Violations of the chaplain’s obligations as a noncombatant constitute a dereliction of duty as well as a

⁸ Adams, *Chaplains as Liaisons*, 8.

⁹ Lee, *Military Chaplains*, 13-15.

¹⁰ Adams, *Chaplains as Liaisons*, 13.

failure to meet Air Force standards with resulting consequences.”¹¹ The provision even calls for possible UCMJ action for those who do not comply with this directive.¹²

Often in this topic the safety of the chaplain is a topic of concern. It should be understood that safety concerns should not only be directed toward the chaplain but more importantly with the indigenous religious leader. “As a result of meeting with chaplains, some religious leaders in Iraq and Afghanistan faced intimidation, violence, or assassination.”¹³ It is vital that an operational risk assessment be conducted before any liaison work is done.

It is appropriate to conclude this paper with a quote from Douglas Johnston. “It is important that the chaplains’ expanded functions relating to faith-based diplomacy not be allowed to undermine their primary task of providing spiritual counsel to the men and women of the commands. This will be a fine line to walk; but in the US European Command ... chaplains are already serving as a bridge to other military and civilian communities. Thus, in addition to their ongoing function of addressing human casualties after conflict has erupted, they could become an important tool in preventing its eruption in the first instance.”¹⁴

¹¹ AFI 52-101, *Planning and Organizing*, 4.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Adams, *Chaplains as Liaisons*, 8.

¹⁴ Johnston, *Faith-Based Diplomacy*, 25-26.

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