

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF RELIGION AS AN ESSENTIAL COMPONENT OF THE MILITARY'S CULTURAL FRAMEWORK STRATEGY AND POLICY

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ABSTRACT

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For years, American diplomats have been trained to not discuss religion and have often excluded religious leaders from diplomacy. The United States military, to a lesser extent, has also tended to evade religion in conducting military operations and negotiations. Religious issues have been viewed as extremely volatile and therefore something to avoid. The tendency in Western culture to make religion private and individual is in sharp contrast with much of the world which views religion as communal and inseparable from all aspects of public life. In a conflict in which our enemies' religious ideology is the center of gravity, the avoidance of religion has given the United States an ideological disadvantage in military operations and in winning the hearts and minds of the local populace. While religion can fuel conflict, within the religious text, rituals, and traditions of every major religion there exists a wealth of resources for resolving conflict and building peace. Utilizing these resources is as essential as any weapon in our military arsenal in the planning of our military's strategy and policy.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF RELIGION AS AN ESSENTIAL COMPONENT OF THE MILITARY'S CULTURAL FRAMEWORK STRATEGY AND POLICY

Introduction

*Nothing to kill or die for, And no religion, too.
Imagine all the people, Living life in peace.*

John Lennon

John Lennon's lyrics in his song *Imagine* touch a belief held by many in Western culture that religion does more to incite war than it does to generate peace in the world. The emphasis in the U.S. on separation of church and state produces a tendency to compartmentalize religion as a private matter which produces a minimalist view, but the American perception of religion is ludicrous to much of the world.¹ This compartmentalization is evident in a recent survey published by Parade Magazine where 95% of the respondents believed in God and 59% believed that faith could help to solve their problems, but only 15% said that religion should be a key factor in political decisions.² This view, prevalent in the U.S., is not how most of the world, and the Muslim world in particular, views religion. The belief that religion could play only a destructive role in world affairs and therefore, ought to be kept out of world politics is a false assumption based on little careful empirical or analytical work. Equally neglected is observation of ways in which religion has aided peace, democracy, human rights and human development.³ Islamic ethicist Sohail H. Hashmi noted, "This face of religion, whether it calls itself Islamic, Jewish, Christian, Hindu, or Sikh is very much in view today all over the world."⁴

The inability to see the social and cultural importance religion can have a profound effect on the success in military operations. LTC James P. Wong in his article "Stability and Reconstruction In Afghanistan" pointed out that "A U.S. strategy that

acknowledges and respects the culture ... has a higher probability of acceptance by the population it is intended to influence”⁵ In most of the world, religion is an integral component of culture. The perception that religion is only a catalyst for war is flawed. Dr. Marc Gopin, who has pioneered religion and diplomacy in conflict resolution, stated: “There are other indicators from our current experience that suggest that religion will play a critical role in constructing a global community of shared moral commitments and vision.” Three successful leaders who implemented significant constructive change in the Twentieth Century were Mohandas Karamch Gandhi, Martin Luther King Jr. and Pope John Paul II. All three were religious men who stepped into the political arena to implement significant change in society.

Americans are well aware of the carnage a few fanatics inflicted our nation on 9-11 in the name of religion, but few Americans are aware of the millions who bring healing to our world in the name of religion every day, including thousands who brought healing to New York following the attack on 9-11. One religious denomination alone supplies over 85,000 trained volunteers, over 1/3 of the Red Cross’s volunteer force, who are trained and ready on a moment’s notice to bring healing in the aftermath of disasters all over the world. Our nation has the most powerful military force in the world, but military might alone will not bring peace or defeat terrorism motivated by religious ideology. We must expose the false assumption that violence is only the defender and deliverer of security.⁶ The best means of defeating a perverted religious ideology that motivates others to violence might be a healthy religious ideology that promotes peaceful conflict resolution. Dr. Chris Seiple President of the Institute for Global

Engagement who founded their Council on Faith & International Affairs noted, only the best of faith defeats the worst of religion.⁷

Background

In the spring of 2006 the six United States War College regional directors Dr. Craig Nation (Eurasia), Dr. Gabriel Marcella (Americas), Dr. Larry Goodson (Middle East), Colonel Bob Applegate (Europe), and Colonel Tom Dempsey (Africa) gathered to formulate the Analytical Cultural Framework for Strategy and Policy (ACFSP). It originally consisted of six dimensions of culture instead of the three presented in the current version.⁸ COL Jiyul Kim, while serving as an instructor at the U.S. Army war college in May 2009, wrote “Cultural Dimensions of Strategy and Policy.” Kim explored the three of the seven dimensions of culture in the ACSFP study which impact military operations: Identity, Political Culture and Resilience. This study will examine the significance of religion at the strategic level in the formulation, implementation, and outcome of policy in each of these three areas. This study examines the importance of religion at the strategic level in general, but gives particular attention to the War on Global Terrorism.

Identity

The role of Religion as a component in collective nation-state identity.

From the conversion of Constantine until the Enlightenment, politics and religion were intertwined in their role as the custodians of power in the Western world. The tendency of power to corrupt left its mark of skepticism on both institutions. The Enlightenment challenged the legitimacy of both authorities, but this allegiance of religion to the nation state has persisted to this day in most Western cultures. It is not

uncommon to find the American flag prominently displayed in churches throughout the United States. Likewise politicians do not separate themselves completely from their religious beliefs. President Clinton in the introduction to Madeline Albright's *The Mighty and the Almighty* wrote, "Religious convictions if they are convictions can't be pulled off like rubber boots."⁹ Clinton concludes that policy makers should not keep religion walled off from public life and could not if they tried.¹⁰

Our nation has always experienced some tension between religion and politics but for most part, our nation's history renders a healthy relationship between religion and state. An amenable relationship between religion and state is important to political stability. In the United States this consenting relationship between state and religion still exists, which is evident in the many Soldiers in a voluntary Army who are also religious. There must be some congruence between religion and politics if one is deeply religious and willing to die for one's country. The presence of military chaplains whose primary function is to ensure the free exercise of religion helps to cement this amiable relationship. Pro Deo Et Patria (For God and Country,) the motto of the United States Army Chaplain Corps, embodies this blend of religious belief and service to country.

It becomes difficult for a ruler to govern if the subjects feel that his actions are unrighteous based on their own religious beliefs.¹¹ The amount of influence religion has on political identity is determined by the allegiance of the religious to the nation-state.¹² Historically, the allegiance to the state by religious groups in the United States has been very strong. In recent years, however, this association of state and religion has begun to change. In the Western world the state continues the push to remove religion from public life which aggravates religious support for the nation state. The

support of its religious citizenry is at risk, if the campaign to sanitize the nation state from any religious identity continues.

In the Muslim world many countries are governed by authoritarian ruling elite who control the national interest. These leaders are viewed by many of their constituents as Western controlled puppets. For this reason many Muslims do not feel that the government represents their interest. As a result they often place their allegiance in their cultural and religious identities, not the state. Knowing this loyalty to their beliefs is strong religion is tightly controlled in these states.

The post-Cold War has resulted in unprecedented strides in global travel and communication such as the internet that has chipped away the ideological tie to nation-state and nationalism. This cultural homogenization, has connected a mixture of people and faiths that also threatens to fracture cultural and religious identities. ^{13 14 15 16 17}

These two conditions, mistrust in the state and a perceived threat from the world outside of the state, provides an in road for radical Islam whose aims are directed toward protecting religious and ethnic identity. Social Scientist Oliver Roy draws attention to the fact that “Neofundamentalism has gained ground among rootless Muslim youth, ... Many Muslims identify with their religious faith more than their nation-state.”¹⁸ Dr. Jeff Cozzens, World Religion specialist at the Directed Studies Office for the Armies Intelligence and Security Command, suggests that the US military’s paradigm of fighting a nation-state has hampered our ability in the War on Terror, which is a war of ideology. “The result is often tactical victories which result in strategic failures.”¹⁹ From his study of terrorist writings, Cozzens identified nine ideological matrices of victory, such as: “Victory is found in obeying the obligation to fight Islam’s

enemies, not in the outcome of the battle, and, “The institutionalization of a culture of martyrdom is a victory,” etc. It is important to note the tie of this ideology to religion. Because their identity is tied to an ideology, the ideology constitutes the enemies Center of Gravity, which they perceive as being in opposition to the Western concept of nation-state. This center of gravity cannot be bombed away, withered with sanctions regimens or kept out with fences.²⁰ In strategic planning the United States needs to adjust to the reality that we are not fighting a nation-state but rather an ideology which is won by winning hearts and minds, not in capturing strategic locations and body counts.

How Religious Identity affects a sense of purpose

COL Kim’s “Cultural Dimensions of Strategy and Policy” stated that identity defines existence, purpose, destiny, and sometimes, fate and provides a sense of self worth, dignity, and community.²¹ Religion is intrinsically amalgamated with one’s identity. In *Fides Et Ratio*, Pope John Paul II wrote, “...a cursory glance at ancient history shows clearly how in different parts of the world, with their different cultures, there arise at the same time the fundamental questions which pervade human life: Who am I? Where have I come from and where am I going? Why is there evil? What is there after this life?”²² Religion attempts to answer these questions and to bring unity to man’s purpose by clearing up the problems which perplex him and affording him a commanding point of view from which he may view his place in the world.²³ One’s identity is thus tied to a sense divine purpose. A common response to this awareness of divine purpose is worship: addressing a power that is able to influence what the worshiper accomplishes with his life. Worshipers believe a divine power is able to guide them to accomplish what they cannot do without divine assistance.²⁴ This belief in

divine purpose and guidance has a profound impact on personal and group identity. From this conviction emerges an ethical system which is determined by which actions are deemed acceptable and not acceptable to the divine being. These right-and-wrong behaviors form the basis of the worshiper's value system and are incorporated into the group identity. The consensus of religious values related to one's actions then brings stability to societies by forming the bases of acceptable and unacceptable behavior. The importance of religion's role in cultural stability is often over looked. The potential for violence is high when religious identity is challenged. The weighty role religion has on individual and community identity is evident. The danger of chaos when religious identity is challenged is real. Religion is not something to ignore.

What has occurred in much of Western culture, as pointed out by Edward L. Queen in *The Formation and Reformation of Religious Identity*, is that "Tolerance has become a social and moral value. This has resulted in a situation where, for most people most of the time, religious identity becomes nothing more than a privatized affair without deep connections to the historical traditions of the community of faith."²⁵ This sets the stage for conflict with cultures where religion is of prominent importance to community identity. For many cultures with a strong Muslim identity, Western tolerance of religious taboos such as seductive dress and sexual immorality are perceived as a threat to religious identity. Sayid Qutb, one of the most influential writers in the Muslim world, expressed this moral outrage. "The period of the Western system has come to an end primarily because it is deprived of those life-giving values which enable it to be a leader of mankind... Islam is the only system which possesses these values and way of

life.”²⁶ Western media, Hollywood movies in particular, contain ample substance to inflame response to this perceived threat.

The global jihad movement uses the threat to religious identity to further their cause. David Galula, in *Counter Insurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice*, stated, “The best cause for the insurgent’s purpose is the one that, by definition, can attract the largest number of supporters and repel the minimum of opponents.... The insurgent must, of course, be able to identify himself totally with the cause or, more precisely, with the entire majority of the population theoretically attracted by it.”²⁷ Jeff Cozzens explained that “the violence of nonstate combatants such as al Qaeda cannot be disentangled from their culture--that is, their attitudes, values, and beliefs--even while it also includes strategic political goals.”²⁸

Why religious identity is volatile

Just as religion fulfills the vital role of giving identity to communities and provides a sense of belonging, religion can also promote disunity that leads to conflict.²⁹ Jaco Cillers, who leads interfaith dialogs commented, “It is commonly understood that if you want calm, even-tempered conversations between groups, especially if they are from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds, you should avoid bringing up the topic of religion.” For this reason many bars in the US do not allow patrons to discuss religion or politics. Religious discussions between persons from different backgrounds can easily result in disagreements. Add a few beers into the mix and things can get out of hand. Chaplain (COL) Chester Lanious the Director of the Army Chaplain Center for World Religions explained, “An appeal to religion often galvanizes a population for action because it touches the emotional content of shared and common values.”³⁰

Chaplin (COL) Mike Hoyt Director for Chaplain Corps Operations, who worked with Religious leaders in Iraq, pointed out that “Religion carries in it a decisive loyalty factor that demands the attention of the soul and the behaviors that demonstrate such. There is a compulsion to act, a religious obedience, that is minimally (if at all) amenable to compromise and offers limited opportunity for cooperation.”³¹ Marc Gopin concurred that believers are “prepared to sacrifice everything for an ideal or belief, out of conviction that the righteous will triumph, either in this lifetime or the next.”³² This strong identification with the one’s religious community may create a sense of religious community that provides the basis for identifying those from other religious communities as enemies.³³ Religion is not the main issue, but it is a psychological breeding ground for fanatical response.

The claim of exclusiveness to truth is held by many religions. Any challenge to a religion’s exclusiveness is often perceived as an attack on the faith community and sacred value system. For one devout in their religious faith, religious beliefs are inseparable from personal identity.³⁴ The natural response when one’s identity is threatened is to fight. Not to do so can be perceived as a denial of one’s faith. The fear of losing one’s value system and way of life drives the religious violence of many religious communities around the world.³⁵ In a world where different religions come in contact with one another, breaking down the fear of the “other” religion maybe one of the most important challenges we face in the twenty-first century. There is unquestionably a connection to religion in many of the world's most violent conflicts both past and present; however, a closer examination reveals that it is often the misuse or misunderstanding of religion that becomes a catalyst for violence.

Examples of religion being falsely associated with violence

. In some cases religion is associated with violence that has little to do with religion. The conflict between Catholics and Protestants in Northern Ireland was political. It had nothing to do with religion, but since most Irish are Catholic and most of the British populace living in Ireland is Protestant, religion became a convenient way to identify the two sides. Religious practice then became a divisive issue. The term *Holy War* is often used to define the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians; however, the conflict centers over sovereignty, land, borders, water rights, freedom of movement, property rights, citizenship rights, demographics and government control.³⁶

Another common phenomenon where religion is falsely associated with violence is when religion is used to bolster a political agenda. Every political leader is astutely aware of the importance of religion. President George W. Bush ended every speech with “God Bless America.” Presidential Candidates Barack Obama and John McCain agreed to hold a debate with Rick Warren, one of the most respected pastors in America. It is common for politicians to seek religious endorsement for their political agenda. The danger comes when political leaders manipulate and pervert religious zeal to bolster their political agendas. The result may be referred to as *religious war* but in reality it is a false, deliberate, and cynical perversion of religion to gain a veneer of legitimacy to mask self and national interest.³⁷ An excellent example of this occurred in Bosnia, between 1992 and 1995 when Slobodan Milošević relied on primordial Serbian religious identity to demonize and exterminate thousands of Muslims.³⁸ Ethnic cleansing was carried out on the basis of religious identity, but Milošević’s agenda was purely political. Dr. Gopin explained that “religious militancy most often expresses itself as a

vehicle of promoting some national or ethnic interest, and it is amazingly capable of riding that horse of national or ethnic pride, and ethnic rage. It is astonishing how common the destructive use of religion is in political history, and how easy it is to shift whole cultures and religions toward militant state and ethno-national agendas.”³⁹

The most frequent reason religion contributes to conflict is the result of a misguided hermeneutical understanding of religious text. Maryann Cusimano Love, associate professor of international politics at Catholic University, explained: “The perpetrators of religious violence are generally minority groups acting without the blessing of the majority of their coreligionists, because these groups pervert religious teachings by overturning the religious injunctions against violence.”⁴⁰ Many of those who use religion to perpetuate violence are uneducated or any education they have is merely indoctrination. Their interpretation of what their religion teaches is extremely radical. Their identification with a charismatic leader is such that they accept that leader’s understanding of the faith. These leaders pick certain passages, often those considered problematic by more knowledgeable scholars, to usurp their religion’s traditional prescriptions against violence.⁴¹ In exasperation over this manipulation of scripture, Sheikh Hassoun Grand Mufti of Syria, stated in a conversation with Marc Gopin, “Extremists in both politics and religion were destroying the world.” Hussoun spoke again and again about how Islam forbids the killing of civilians and also the love that he has for Christians.⁴² In South Africa, The Dutch Reformed Church manipulated biblical references in serving its political interests in support of racial segregation, until apartheid was banned in the early 1990s.⁴³ Many churches in the United States did the same to support first slavery and then segregation. The importance of a vigilant

hermeneutic on the part of religious leaders of all faith groups is critical for religion to be an instrument of peace. Religious teachings can provide justifications for extreme action or for peace.⁴⁴ It is the task of religious leaders who interpret the text to determine the specifics of their religion and determine the contexts that aid peace and not war. That is why hermeneutics on the part of religious leaders play such a critical role in world peace.

For religion to bring peace its theology must be understood by its followers not as justifying conflict and violence but rather as a theological foundation for efforts to build harmony. For religious leaders to maintain their integrity, they must truly believe that it is the desire of God as revealed in the leader's faith tradition to bring peace to his creation. There is sufficient foundational doctrine in all the world's major religions to support this belief. Just as religion can be used to incite violence, hostility, civil strife, and terrorism, religion can also be a catalyst which stimulates peaceful solutions to conflict.⁴⁵ If faith is stereotyped as an ingredient that incites violence and war there is an unhealthy perception that religious conflict is inevitable and nothing can be done to prevent it. This attitude fuels those who avoid religion. No one looks at cancer and says that it is unrealistic to search for a cure.⁴⁶ Some religious actors are motivated by hate, but others are motivated by the power of love which embodies an amazing capacity to heal. Religion can certainly be exploited as a source of destruction, but the authentic expression of this dynamic force is discovered in building peace. Mark Gopin explained, "Religious moderates and peacemakers are the ones who can counteract the corrosive effects of religious militancy because they have the capacity to entice religious people into the larger community of humanity."⁴⁷ General Patton once stated, "When

you put your hand into a bunch of goo that a moment before was your best friend's face, you'll know what to do.”⁴⁸ The nobler way to honor your best friend is to resolve the conflict so that his or her face never has to become a bunch of goo. This is the calling of many who have seen enough goo.

The psychology of religious violence

There are several psychological problems that contribute to religious violence. Morton Deutsch in his *Handbook on Conflict Resolution* identified what he called “higher moral value,” where a victim of injustice feels moral justification for immoral actions against the perceived perpetrator of injustice.⁴⁹ Unjust behavior creates in the mind its victim a clear divide between good and evil: the perpetrator is evil; the victim's retaliation regardless of the consequences is perceived as just and right. Willard Gaylin in his book *Caring* proposed that “People who have been insulted, attacked, degraded, or have seen their kinsman killed just because of their identities, can become violent and destructive in defiant defense of their identities.”⁵⁰ Before healing can occur, individuals must clean out psychic and intellectual closets that have become moldy and mildewed from the pain and injustice they have experienced.

A second way in which religion affects the psychology of violence is related to group identity. Most religions provide an avenue for group identity. Usually when individuals participate in violence in the name of religion they are part of a collective group. Being the member of a larger group satisfies an intense desire to belong, to be accepted by other people, a trait common in every individual. C. R. Mitchell in “Psychological Dimensions of Conflict” described the psychological impact of group identity. “Group identification is often so strong that the values and objectives of the

group are internalized by individual members and become their values and objectives.”⁵¹ Violent actions that the individual would never do on his own are committed because the individual seeks approval and acceptance by the group. Group identity contributes to violence associated with nationalism, ethnocentrism, and racial prejudice. But in the same way group identity can influence positive moral behavior. There are many behaviors, particularly moral practices that individuals will indulge in individually but not in the presence of the larger faith group, therefore group. Therefore, group identity can encourage violence or peace.

C. R. Mitchell explained a third religious association with violence: “An inter-related cluster of emotions, attitude, prejudices and perceptual distortions accompany most forms of conflict, and lead to its continuation and exacerbation.”⁵² This is often the result of one having themselves been a victim or of having a family member who was a victim of violence. One of the worst traumas someone can experience is to be utterly powerless to defend family members who are the victims of violence.⁵³ Individuals and groups can develop an addictive need to repeat the tragedies of the past.⁵⁴ Dr. Gopin explained that religion groups can be healing or cause further psychological damage. “Religious institutions offer both comfort for those injuries (suffered from violence) and the magnification of their reality, perpetuating damaging effects and installing the hurts as permanent fixtures of life.”⁵⁵

The last motivator of conflict which affects the psyche is human need. When there are unmet human needs that are active elements in religious conflict, the result can be issues of psychological trauma, humiliation and shame and issues of empowerment that contribute to the conflict.⁵⁶

Religion as a resource in combating cultural violence.

Within every religion is a message of peace. Dr. Seiple noted, “Every culture has a mechanism—from cultural understandings of hospitality to various tenets of local religions—for engendering and ensuring respect for the other. These are the anchor points for solutions to religious freedom violations.”⁵⁷ The common universal greeting in Islam is the Arabic *As-Salāmu `Alaykum* (عَلَيْكُمْ السَّلَام). Hinduism echoes shanti, shanit, shanti- peace, peace, peace. The announcement of Jesus birth contained the message of peace and goodwill. Theologian Henry O. Thompson offered an interesting observation concerning Christianity in dealing with war and peace. “It is worth noting that interest in a just war seems to have been far greater than interest in just peace. It may simply be because wars have been such a common threat that theology of war has taken precedence over a theology of peace. However, the founder of the movement, Jesus Christ, did not order his followers to fight just wars. He called them to be peacemakers.”⁵⁸ For a peaceful solution to be sustainable it must come from the traditions of the local culture. This is what many mediators and negotiators do not understand when they try to impose Western models for reconciliation on non-Western cultures.

Political Culture

The influence of religion on morality and political power

In the Army Operations Field Manual FM 3-0, one of the stated objectives of Army operations in relation to non-governmental operations is “encouraging the establishment of democratic institutions and civil society.”⁵⁹ One of the stated security tasks of NATO is “the growth of democratic institutions and commitment to the peaceful

resolution of disputes.”⁶⁰ The foundation of Democracy is self determination by the governed. As explained earlier, religion is a key component of self identity, therefore it is inevitable that religious views play a role in democracy. Democracy is a blending of collective identities. In any political or social power, democratic or not, collective identity is more powerful than the sum of its individuals because it has the potential to mobilize collective political power.⁶¹ Religion interprets life and directs the religious community to respond in certain ways.⁶² For this reason when considering the forces that project power in operations, one must not only consider political and material resource, but faith and psychological forces as well. As an example, LTC Andrew J. Cernicky in his article on “Moral Power and a Hearts-And-Minds Strategy in Post-Conflict Operation” cited the significant influence Pope John Paul II had on the fall of communism in Eastern Europe.⁶³ Religious teachings and practices can affect perceptions and responses to development programs ranging from health to education to economic growth to humanitarian assistance.⁶⁴ LTC Cernicky noted, “Although ‘decisive’ combat power may win the fighting phase, it is usually not enough to secure the strategic objectives and win the peace. Success depends on the transformation from combat to peace and stability.”

The role of religion must be evaluated not only by how it influences the culture with which Soldiers are interacting, but also by how religion influences the Army’s culture. Cernicky observed that “The most critical factor for the successful outcome of post-conflict operations consists of moral power, expressed through the thoughts and conduct of soldiers and a mutual respect and rapport with the populace.”⁶⁵ In many cultures moral behavior imparts credibility. The capacity to apply moral power to win

hearts and minds comes from the conduct, behavior and actions of soldiers.⁶⁶ It is the Soldier's religion that provides the basis for moral behavior and religious faith properly interpreted strengthens right behavior.⁶⁷ The tendency in Western culture to personalize faith has led to a personalization of morality. From its inception, American democracy has been built on the foundation of the Judeo-Christian ethic as the standard for moral conduct. A better term for today might be Judeo-Christian-Islamic tradition. All three Abrahamic faiths share a rich tradition of overlapping ethics, and beliefs which include placing a high value on justice, compassion, mercy and forgiveness and offering the opportunity for repentance and a desire to live in peace.⁶⁸ The religious texts of Buddhism, Christianity, Confucianism, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism and Zoroastrianism all contain the central teaching that we are to respect others as we would respect ourselves. Respect for others is often upstaged in Western culture by "do your own thing" and "look out for number one."

In the fall of 1996, accusations of serious moral problems at Aberdeen Proving Ground brought national attention to a breakdown of morality in the military at a military base. The connection between religion and morality was evident in the investigation by the House National Security Committee. One of the main contributing factors mentioned in the investigation was the fact that Aberdeen had cut back on the number of chaplains assigned to training battalions and that no chaplain had been assigned to the training brigade where the morality problems occurred.⁶⁹ On January 13, 1998, the Army introduced seven core values that every Soldier is required to follow, but these values alone without a religious basis leave little moral foundation on which to anchor them. This leaves their application, to some extent, subject to personal interpretation.

For example, the Army official one line definition for “respect” is “treat people as they should be treated.” Many US Soldiers who entered Iraq, viewed the Iraqis whose homes they were requested to search as their enemy, so they treated them as they thought they thought their enemy should be treated. The actions of some Soldiers in the context of Iraqi culture were disrespectful. For example, touching an article of female clothing, which an American Soldier might do in complete innocence, would be highly offensive to a husband or father. In Iraqi culture failure to show respect and honor can abruptly turn a friend into an enemy. These actions turned many potential supporters into enemies. Before conducting an Arabic cultural sensitivity class for American Soldiers at the Jordanian Peace Operation Training Center in 2005, the Jordanian Army trainers asked Iraqi policemen what they needed to teach the Americans about Iraqi culture. Their answer, “You need to tell the Americans to respect God and to respect other people.”⁷⁰ The exclusion of religion excludes a core value of all the worlds’ religions; respect for God and other people.

The Army must uphold the free exercise of religion and cannot impose religious values on any Soldier, but it must ensure an environment in which religious values can be cultivated and honored. Madeleine Albright explained, “It is not necessary to believe in God to be moral, but religious faith properly understood does much to encourage and strengthen right behavior.”⁷¹ A person socially excluded without religious grounding is more prone to violence.⁷² When conducting military operations military leaders must be responsible for their Soldier’s moral behavior and train them to respect the local populace.⁷³ Cultural training is now required for military deployments, but commanders must continue to ensure that this training is taken seriously and continue to update the

training as cultures are constantly changing. Failure to do so can result in mission failure. There is a moral dimension to military operations that must continue to be considered in the formation of policy and strategy.⁷⁴

The influence of religion on allegiance to the state and transnational institutions

Religion influences culture and culture influences religion. The two are interwoven in the fabric of communities to the extent that it is impossible to separate one from the other. A good example of this is Bosnia and Herzegovina where most Muslim men drink plum brandy openly and Muslim women wear bikinis in public. No self respecting Muslim would do either in the Middle East. Yet the skyline of Bosnia's European style cities are dotted with minarets calling its citizens to prayer five times a day. Those same men and women answer the five calls to prayer.

Americans base their identity in a particular place such as nation, state, university or a particular community. Most of the world's cultures find their identity in their bloodline.⁷⁵ Where the bloodline identity is strong there is profound sense of cultural identity and allegiance to one's tribe, national identity decreases proportionately. Without a strong national identity, it is difficult to build strong central governments. Where weak or failed governments exist, it is easy for non state actors to have greater influence over malleable populations. Today's access to global information provides easy access to their messages.⁷⁶ Even though they may have a political agenda, these leaders often use religion in their appeal for support. Al Qaida is an excellent example. LTC Michael F. Morris, in his study of Al Qaida, identified our enemy in the War against Global Terrorism not as terrorism, but rather "a religiously inspired political ideology, the

specified end state of which is global hegemony.”⁷⁷ This is a binding identity totally devoid of allegiance to any state.

Religious Landmine/minds in Conflict

Scholar Michael Novak alleged “As matters now stand, the one word [that could not be used] in serious conversation without upsetting someone is ‘God.’”⁷⁸ Why is evoking the name of God a political mine/mind field. Religion has many dimensions that provoke numerous emotional responses, but there are three religious mine/mind fields that stand out. The most dangerous is a Hermeneutic that promotes violence often called Holy War. Both the Hebrew Bible and the Quran have passages that command genocide of idolatrous nations. Radical Jewish, Christian, and Muslim clerics insist on the implementation of this text. The use of religion to promote violence is not exclusive to the Abrahamic religions. Eastern and African indigenous religions have endorsed violence as well.⁷⁹ Radical religion is often in response to a perceived threat, possibility from another religion or from a secular source such as modernization. Some clergy have not yet reached the conclusions other clergy have reached that it is possible for religion to flourish in the midst of modernization.⁸⁰ Both Christian and Muslim radical clerics incorporate apocalyptic literature in their hermeneutic, promoting violence that will usher in a new age. Some Christian dispensationalists are not interested in peace and eagerly await the opportunity to bring on Armageddon.⁸¹ In some Islamic Apocalyptic writing, America is portrayed as the anti-Christ who is often personified in its presidents. At the end of this scenario is the appearance of the Mahdi who will liberate the Islamic world and uproot the American nation.⁸²

Christianity and Islam both affirm the equality and worth of all human beings. For our world to become a peaceful place for future generations, the message that affirms the value of human life must obscure radical interpretations which promote violence. An understanding of religion that affirms respect for other's religious identity, undercuts fanaticism. It is natural that most people of faith believe that their own religion is superior to others. It is important, however, that we respect the validity and value of other's faith. A seed for violence is in believing that one's own understanding of truth is absolute and that everyone must embrace this exact interpretation. No single human being possesses all the truth there is to know about God. Dr. Seiple stated, "The opposite of faith is not doubt but certainty ... we must realize that we cannot know the Absolute absolutely."⁸³ If you believe that you know all there is to know, then you will think others as less holy, less worthy, less deserving of respect.⁸⁴ The focus becomes one's own self rightness, we cross the threshold from respecting others to merely tolerating them.⁸⁵ This is the seed that leads to "othering" which easily excuses disrespect and eventually violence against the "other." Respect for the beliefs of others is critical in reducing conflict.⁸⁶ What this requires is another trait encouraged in every major religion—humility. The more the peacemaker models humility, the easier it is for the other to be humble. The ability to listen in silence to the soul of the other in silence emerges from the discipline of humility.⁸⁷ This ability to sincerely listen to one's enemies may well be what is most important in resolving conflict. Dr. Gopin who has extensive involvement with peacebuilding in the Middle East observed, "If one were to choose the two ingredients that are missing most from human relations in the Middle East, they would be humility and silence."⁸⁸ A hermeneutic that encourages listening to

the soul of the other must stand in contradiction to a hermeneutic that commands genocide of idolatrous peoples.

A second religions mine/mind field is proselytizing. When the members of one group feel an obligation to change the beliefs and religious behavior of the other group, it is likely that conflict will result.⁸⁹ In the Islamic countries of Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Egypt and Iran, proselytizing is illegal and carries a strict sentence. The United States Army Central Command General Order 1B issued to Soldiers deployed Iraq and Afghanistan prohibits “proselytizing of any religion, faith or practice.”⁹⁰ This issue raises a serious concern in relation to the bill of rights. “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech.”⁹¹ Freedom from Government intervention in the free exercise of religion and freedom of speech are core values that make our nation great. The right to discuss one's beliefs is a part of that right. Some religious groups, however, exercise this right in unethical ways. Dr. Seiple deals with this issue by differentiating between proselytizing and sharing. “Proselytism now connotes an asymmetrical power relationship, a quid pro quo where the one with more power and resources exerts an undignified influence over the one with less power and resources, thus using their power to coerce conversion. Sharing, on the other hand, suggests a relationship of mutual respect, a relationship where individuals are honored that people would care so much that they would share their faith with them,...even if they end up disagreeing agreeably about irreconcilable convictions.”⁹² Tactful sharing does not attack or diminish respect for the others faith and beliefs. Proselytizing as it is

understood today is offensive, and must be avoided when conducting peacemaking with religious leaders and their constituents.

The third religious mine/mindfield is civil religion where religion bows to the agenda of the state. Almost all politicians want the perception that God is on their side in political debate. There are many politicians of faith who legitimately seek to serve God in the political arena. The connection between religion and politics is inevitable. President Bill Clinton stated, “You can’t pretend if you’re a person of faith that religion doesn’t affect your politics.”⁹³ The danger comes when the boundaries between religion and state become so blurred that religion provides unconditional sanction for the actions of the state. This is always a temptation for military chaplains as they minister *Pro Deo Et Patre* wanting to believe that their our cause is always just. An appropriate understanding of the relationship between politics and religion was expressed by Abraham Lincoln. During the Civil War, Lincoln rejected the suggestion that he pray for God to be on the side of the Union, praying instead that the Union be on the side of God.⁹⁴ Greg Mortenson in *Three Cups of Tea* makes an interesting observation, “In times of war, you often hear leaders – Christian, Jewish, and Muslim – saying ‘God is on our side.’ But that is not true. In war, God is on the side of refugees, widows, and orphans.”⁹⁵ How refugees, widows, and orphans are treated is an excellent indicator of who is on God’s side. Military chaplains must on occasion take the role of the prophet and speak out against immoral and unjust actions.

Resilience

The influence of religion on cultural response to globalization

COL Kim defined resilience as capacity or ability to resist, adapt or succumb to external forces.⁹⁶ One of the greatest external challenges we face is globalization. Dr. Gopin described the impact of globalization, “We talk to each other, love each other, and live with each other, across the globe and across civilizations more than any time in history.”⁹⁷ Globalization does not mean that everyone is exposed to the same resources and sources of information. We are globally connected, but we are more limited in our selection. You have a FOX universe or an Al Jazeera universe.⁹⁸ Another result of globalization, especially in failed states, is that non-state actors have achieved greater influence over malleable populations.⁹⁹ Rather than unification and peace, globalization can bring exclusiveness and conflict.

As a result of globalization traditional world cultures that have existed for centuries now feel that their way of life, cherished for centuries, is being threatened by a combination of modernity, materialism, ethical relativism. These communities are afraid of losing the cherished values, they consider as critical to their community identity.¹⁰⁰

¹⁰¹ Dr. Seiple described the impact of globalization: “There has never been so much communication with so little connectedness. In this context, people yearn for meaning.”¹⁰² Seeking relationships of trust and respect many people turn to religion. Dr. Gopin described the result of this cultural and religious fractionalization: “People the world over are rebelling against the materialist homogenization, searching out the roots of their identities, exploring the uniqueness of their backgrounds and their original systems of meaning.”¹⁰³ Unfortunately, Some turn to radical Islam because it affirms

their cultural identity, formal religious observance, family values, and morality.

Unfortunately, in these radical America is portrayed as hegemonic and hypocritical power that wants to use globalization to exploit the world for personal advantage.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰⁵ How we posture our nation both in our dialog, and more importantly in our national policies to include our military operations is critical to those who weigh in the balance of who they will support. Religion plays a momentous roll in their decision, but religion is often omitted in discussion addressing the challenges of globalization. In the Afghanistan, and Pakistan Regional Stabilization Strategy published by the State Department, faith, religion Islam, and religious leaders are not mentioned.¹⁰⁶ Women are mentioned over 100 times and women's rights mentioned thirteen times. This is not to diminish the importance of women in Pakistan and Afghanistan, but to highlight the reality that most Afghans and Pakistanis are more concerned about religion than women's rights. Religious leaders who are critically important in influencing the cultural status of women are also omitted.

The omission of religion as a topic on the world stage has opened the door for radical groups who utilize rather than avoid religion. Holding the moral high ground is a key component to the goals of radical groups.¹⁰⁷ A Hezbollah Program reads "We are an *umma* (Muslim Community) that fears God only and is by no means ready to tolerate injustice, aggression, and humiliation."¹⁰⁸ Groups like Hamas and Hezbollah focus on providing for human needs and combating humiliation and injustice. Many Westerners wonder why these groups have such strong support. Given the choice between a state which could care less about his family and radical religious extremists who provide for their religious, physical and emotional needs, many Muslim men turn to the radical

group.¹⁰⁹ “The successful infusion of religious radicalism fills the void missing or empty in modern life. Human fulfillment is more elusive than material prosperity. Religious militancy offers community, belonging and fulfillment to rich and poor alike, connected to each other across the globe.”¹¹⁰ The 2009 Army Posture Statement recognized the importance of building rapport with indigenous communities and winning hearts and minds. “To secure lasting stability, the allegiance of indigenous populations becomes the very object of the conflict.”¹¹¹ Our enemies have recognized the importance of using religious faith in interacting with religious communities. The question is—do we?

The influence of religion on the global need for education

A second area where radical groups have excelled is in education. The spread of religious extremism is likely to take place through the medium of thousands of students in the Madrasahs for various Muslim countries.¹¹² In a conversation with Greg Mortenson, General General Bashir Baz of Pakistan expressed the strategic advantage of education. “You have to attack the source of your enemy’s strength. In America’s case, that is not Osama or Saddam or anyone else. The enemy is ignorance. The only way to defeat it is to build relationships with these people, to draw them into the modern world with education and business. Otherwise the fight will go on forever.”¹¹³ In many cultures the majority of the education is provided by religious supporters, Madrasahs are religious schools but most are teaching a radical, not a peaceful understanding of Islam. Teaching Holistic “seminary” theology strengthens the security of our nation and the world.¹¹⁴ Many Muslims are not as familiar as they should be with the scriptures of the Holy Quran and the teachings of the Hadith. “People need to be educated in the values of our own religion,” said Rahela Hashim Sidiqi, a senior adviser at Afghanistan’s civil

service commission. ... The main challenge, is "the lack of education about Islam itself, particularly in rural areas where culture and Islam are mixed. People don't see the difference between tradition and religion."¹¹⁵ The need for religious education is not limited to the followers of Islam. According to a 2007 poll by George Barna, fewer than half of all adult Christians in the United States can name the four Gospels.¹¹⁶ Many who consider themselves to be Christian find little time in their schedules for religious education. Faith communities that provide religious education must take responsibility for their members, ensuring that they respect those outside their own faith community.¹¹⁷ According to sacred Jewish texts in 70 AD, Rabbi Yohanan ben Zakai was informed that because of a Jewish uprising against Rome that either the Jewish Temple, the holiest site in Jerusalem, or the educational training center in Yavneh would be destroyed in retaliation. The choice was his. In choosing to save the educational center, Rabbi Yohanan ensured Jewish survival for thousands of years.¹¹⁸ The best first line of defense against religiously-motivated terrorism is properly trained pastors, priests, imams, monks, etc., who teach their flock the best of their faith.

The influence of religion on the global response to poverty

A second issue is poverty. The Armies 2009 Posture statement stated, "Globalization has increased the interdependence and prosperity in many parts of the world. It has also led to greater disparities in wealth which set up conditions that can foster conflict ...Increasing demand for resources, such as energy, water, and food, especially in developing economies, will increase the competition and the likelihood of conflict."¹¹⁹ The posture statement addresses one of the most critical challenges we will face in the twenty-first century. In an article on "Conflict Resolution as a Political

Philosophy” John W. Bruton wrote, “There are human problems to be solved, that no amount of coercion or repression can for long contain human developmental aspirations.”¹²⁰ Burton continued, “Satisfaction of human needs that are universal must be the ultimate goal of survivable societies.”¹²¹ The Muslim world includes some of the world’s most elite wealthy states and some of the most hopelessly impoverished. There are few countries in the middle.”¹²²

Admiral Eric T. Olson, commander of the U.S. Special Operations Command, uses the analogy of the US being a frog in a pot “worried too much about getting speared while the heat is slowly increasing to the boiling point.”¹²³ The United States must seek to improve the political and socioeconomic conditions that bolster Islamic extremism. Americans must broaden their cultural understanding of the religion of Islam and the Muslim world, and build relationships with non-extremist Muslims. South Carolina Congressman James T. Smith, who served in Afghanistan, made these observations. “Respecting human rights, providing security, fostering stability and creating goodwill results in a most unbreakable bond. With commitment, these types of bonds can reach far beyond the borders of Afghanistan. Global security challenges are increasing the demand for a unified approach that will strengthen developing nations and dramatically improve standards for those who are most vulnerable.... Helping others is not just a moral imperative – it serves US. security interests as well...., it also helps create an environment that is less vulnerable to terrorists.”¹²⁴

Religion is recognized as a source of global heat, but what is rarely acknowledged is the role religion plays in keeping the global pot from boiling over. Throughout history, it is religion that has spoken out against social injustice, violence

and persecution.¹²⁵ The role of religious prophets is to remind political leaders of their fundamental social obligations to human needs and aspirations. Social injustice was Mohammad's primary concern when he founded Islam. In fact, Islamic scholar Chaiwat Satha-Anand teaches that the true understanding of "Jihad means to stand up to oppression, despotism and injustice where ever it is committed on behalf of the oppressed."¹²⁶ 9/11 was a stark blow to the American dream—that the world views us as a shining beacon of democracy, freedom, and prosperity.¹²⁷ How we respond to our impoverished world will determine our ability to maintain that cherished image.

The importance of religion in relation to cultural moral standards

For the United States to convince the world's population, the majority of which is religious, that democracy and free enterprise are in their best interest it must also convince the world that they can adopt these values without compromising their religious convictions.¹²⁸ The fact is, many democratic Americans who practice free enterprise are individuals who are passionate about their religious faith. Those in developing nations where democracy and free enterprise are new need to be aware of this reality. We must also overcome our current bias to separate religious conviction from these values in our own culture. We have lost something valuable in our exclusion of religion. Marc Gopen explained, "The great strength of the original founders of the Enlightenment and its democratic-leaning institutions is that they brought to their political creations a kind of spiritual zeal. We have lost that zeal in the West, and we have done so at our peril and replaced it with a zeal for the marketplace."¹²⁹ Accepted behavior is based on profit margins instead of moral standards. The vast majority of the ideological founders of our nation were men of religious faith who never assumed that

the free market would satisfy all the aspirations of the human spirit. If all that America has to offer is the marketplace, and our enemies are promoting social justice based on religious belief, then who will a religious world support? If America were to offer social justice based on a hermeneutic that promotes peace instead of the violent hermeneutic of our enemy, then the world's perception might be different. Most of the world's population does not want violence but a violent faith is preferred to an ideology absent of faith. An Afghan stated to an US Army chaplain, "We had to fight the Soviets, they didn't believe in God." Religion is critical in building a world community that shares a moral commitment to conflict resolution.

Conclusion

It is dangerous to ignore religion as a component of Military Campaign Planning

The myth of liberal Western society is that religion creates world problems and the secular state and public institutions are the answer. The rational scientific method that emerged from "The Enlightenment" in Western civilization institutionalized a world view that what cannot be physically experienced by the senses is not real. Christianity's exposure to the Enlightenment engraved upon Western consciousness the marks of individual freedom, ideological tolerance and self-criticism. It secularized our values.¹³⁰ It is important to note that Islam did not experience this challenge from secularism until it confronted modernism in the Twentieth Century.¹³¹ The rational worldview led rise to the "social theory" that religion was based on primal superstitious views that would be replaced by science and technology. Secularist highlighted the destruction associated with religion in the world while ignoring religion's peaceful contributions to the world. This view persists with the secular left which defines religion as violent and buys into the

hermeneutic that terrorists want.¹³² The secular belief alleged that religion would cease to exist. The emphasis on materialism and secularism created a rational world that no longer looked to religion to explain who we are, what we do, how we live and how we look at the future.¹³³ But science is devoid of values and cannot answer the profound questions: Who am I? What is the purpose for my existence? Why is there evil? What is there after this life?" Science has no standard on which a value system can be built. This absence of religious values in the rational worldview has led to a profound sense of loss and unsettlement.¹³⁴

The Enlightenment did not replace the need for a belief in God. The vast majority in Western society believe in a divine "other."¹³⁵ Religion continues to play a significant role in Western cultures and is often dominant influence in the worldview of other cultures. Law, ethics, education, justice and many other civil functions are deeply influenced by religious belief. Standards of conduct in both public and private are based on religious concepts or directives of right and wrong.¹³⁶ Congressmen, sports heroes and celebrities often turn to faith when they are in trouble. The reality which liberal society must acknowledge is that religion is a part of the solution and the secular state and public institutions leave a void when religion is disregarded.

The National Security Strategy of 2006 identified religion as one of the most important elements in the current Global War on Terror.¹³⁷ The 2010 National Strategy 2010 Forum Review stated, "The US should engage religious leaders constructively. Many are moderates who believe that the Taliban is distorting Islam to further its objectives. The power and communications network of the approximately 20,000 madrassas should be used, rather than feared."¹³⁸ To leave religion out is to leave out

what is most critical component of existence for many citizens of Muslim nations. Take Afghanistan as an example. The ordinary Afghanistan citizen observes the rituals and the piety of Islam with regularity. Religious beliefs and practices are the very center of life.¹³⁹ Madeleine Albright reiterated the significance of religion in diplomacy.

“Diplomacy requires a clear grasp of what matters most to those we are trying to influence...At a time when religious passions are embroiling the globe that cannot be done without taking religious tenets and motivations fully into account.”¹⁴⁰ Using Western procedures in non-Western settings is short sighted. This is explained in “Rituals of Reconciliation: Arab-Islamic Perspectives” “While the Western third party relies on a secular idiom, guidelines from a specialized field, and personal experience, the Arab-Islamic process depends on explicit reverences to religious ideals, sacred texts stories, and moral exemplars, as well as to local history and custom.”¹⁴¹ It is common for people in the Middle East who regularly quote through the Quran. This becomes a barrier for Westerners who are uncomfortable with religion. In a letter to Dr Gopin, President Bill Clinton stated, “I agree fully with you that building a genuine peace between Israelis and Palestinians demands more than political agreements. It will require an understanding between religions, one that seeks to address the cultural dimensions of a conflict that has distorted perceptions and bred intolerance.”¹⁴²

Religion is a blind spot when Americans interact with other cultures. As Secretary of State, Madeline Albright felt that she lacked in religious principles the essential expertise in that she had in economics, nonproliferation and arms control.¹⁴³ For most of the ten years since Albright left office we have been at war with a religiously motivated enemy, but Western phobia of religion has not improved. J. Peter Pham

Senior Fellow and Director of the Africa Project at the National Committee on American Foreign Policy explains, “The problem with ... most of our foreign-policy establishment, ...is the near total disregard for even the *possibility* that religious beliefs still play an incredibly significant role in the lives of many around the globe.”¹⁴⁴ Jeff Cozzens, who studied the Global Jihad Movement extensively for the Army Intelligence Command Directed Studies Office, concurred: “Western governments generally struggle when it comes to approaching the belief-based framework that underpins the Global Jihad Movement. A primary reason is because realism, the long-dominant model for understanding and contending with the behavior of nation-states, is poorly suited to understanding and countering non-state threats motivated largely by belief.”¹⁴⁵ Government and military officials are often advised not to address the issue of religion, because religion is perceived as too complicated or sensitive.”¹⁴⁶ In a two-year analysis of engagement with religious actors in US foreign policy, the Center for Strategic and International Studies concluded that “miscalculating religion’s role led to failure to anticipate conflict or has actually been counterproductive to policy goals.”¹⁴⁷ This study concluded that “this failure kept officials from properly engaging influential leaders, interfered with the provision of effective development assistance, and at times harmed American national security.”¹⁴⁸ Policymakers and practitioners are wary of directly addressing religion due to several concerns: the separation of church and state, the prevalence of the realist worldview, a personal lack of expertise concerning religion and the failure to recruit individuals for government service who have background knowledge of religious issues.¹⁴⁹

COL Kim identified this problem in “Cultural Dimensions of Strategy and Policy.”

“Policymakers and strategists tend to view situations through their own cultural and strategic ‘lens’ with insufficient consideration and calculation of the ‘others’ perspective and interests.”¹⁵⁰ Western strategists and military planners have their normative operational procedures and strategies that cultivate programs and missions instead of people. Religious considerations are often left out intentionally. A good example is the policy of USAID concerning religion. In 1991 the United States Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit concluded that the Establishment Clause (separation of church and state) was applicable to USAID grants.¹⁵¹ For this reason, USAID excluded for years the use of religious language, customs, and overall knowledge of religion. There is indication that this is changing. USAID recently released a “toolkit” for religion, conflict, and peacebuilding. There is still, however revulsion to religion on the part of organizations which is not understood by religious cultures. Dr. Gopin observed that people in Iraq often quote the Quran in everyday conversation and USAID workers feel threatened.¹⁵² This attitude of USAID workers is typical of US organizations. Another example is the new Three D Security Concept which is currently a popular in policy and strategy. Three D Security promotes “Whole Community” coordination between the United Nations, Regional Organizations, International NGOs, Government diplomatic development and defense agencies, local governments and local civic society.¹⁵³ Where is the obvious omission? Those who may hold the most influence on the majority of a countries population – the religious leaders. When actors avoid religious groups in conflict prevention, conflict mediation and post-conflict reconstruction, their failure costs lives and lengthens wars.¹⁵⁴

The realist world view that has dominated the theory and practice of Western politics believes that religious ideas and actors are unimportant. Only the material military and economic power matter. Religious ideas are a private matter, not the concern of secular states.¹⁵⁵ A good example of the failure to involve religious leaders occurred in the early stages of Operation Iraqi Freedom. Inadequate strategic guidance that religion resulted in conflict with indigenous populations controlled by religious leaders.¹⁵⁶ Religious leaders are limited in that they don't control military forces and they usually don't make political decisions.¹⁵⁷ This does not mean that they do not have power. Religious leaders are often trusted more by citizens than secular government actors. Since most of the world's population actively practices religion, what religious leaders say and do has great influence on the actions of their followers. Any time a priest, rabbi, or imam of notoriety makes a public statement either in action or deed, there are people, sometimes in the millions, who potentially can be influenced by their words. Even in Afghanistan where Islam has little formal hierarchy or organization, religious leaders have significant prestige, particularly in focusing resentment against secular leaders.¹⁵⁸ Even in the United States with the wall of protection between church and state, it would be difficult to pass legislation if it were opposed by a solid majority of our nation's religious leaders. Within the text of their holy scripture and other traditions, religious leaders have a wealth of resources for building peace with one another even when the relationship between politicians and the population is strained and distrust prevails in society.¹⁵⁹

Dr. Gopen stated that "Religious peace actors may sometimes be accused of an excessive faith in the transforming power of emotions to the point of impracticality, but

elite representatives may be accused of excessive fear of emotions to the point of impracticality.”¹⁶⁰ It is intellectually dishonest for secular agencies to accuse religion of causing division while they do the same with their own agenda of building a society that imposes secular values and promotes the slow disappearance of religious, cultural, and ethnic divisions. It is their own personal prejudices that make it difficult for them to work with religious people in institutions, or to include in their policies religious worldviews. It is these prejudices that cause secular units to ignore religion as a valuable resource for resolving conflict and bringing stabilization. It is no accident that many Muslims characterize secularism as belief in a godless society—something inconceivable to them.¹⁶¹ The national security apparatus of the US government pays more attention to religion than in the past, primarily because world events have forced it upon them. It has been a harsh learning process of trial and error. The United States must move beyond this trial-and-error approach and build the capacity and framework required to understand and cope with the role that religion plays in world affairs today.¹⁶² We need to conceptualize global community that is not just tolerant, but also sacred.¹⁶³

The military has been more adaptive than the State Department and other government and civic organizations in understanding the importance of religion.¹⁶⁴ Lieutenant General Stanley McChrystal understands that counterinsurgency war is as much about civilian engagement as it is about firefights and military operations.¹⁶⁵ In Afghanistan principles guiding Combat Task Force Operations includes religion as one of the factors that influence battle space.¹⁶⁶ The military’s Human Terrain Map for Iraq includes a layout of communities by religious identity.¹⁶⁷ During OEF IV Task Force Spartan Commander Brigadier General John Nicholson believed that it was a mistake to

avoid religion when talking to the Afghan people. After consulting with his chaplain, he began to mention God in his weekly radio address. The response was very positive.

The Army Chief of Chaplains Major General Douglas L. Carver understood the impact religion can have on military operations, “World events repeatedly make it clear that policy-makers and those charged with implementing policy can make serious miscalculations in their decision making when they ignore or underestimate the influence of religion in world affairs.” Under his leadership the December 2009 Army Regulation 165-1 for Religious Support under roles and responsibilities of Chaplains as principle military religious advisor stated “Chaplains plan, coordinate, execute, and supervise all religious support activities and resources for the Commander, including, but not limited to— (a) Religious leader liaison (RLL), religious analysis, and religious support products for all plans and orders.”¹⁶⁸ Prudent commanders will utilize qualified chaplains in this role. Prudent chaplains will cultivate the soft skills of conflict resolution and develop their capacity to utilize these skills. Those who would neglect the importance of religion should heed the words of a Pashtu Poem to Babrak Karmal the Soviet installed leader of Afghanistan.

Babrak! Son of Lenin.

You do not care for the religion and the faith

You may face your doom

May you receive a calamity, o! son of a traitor.

O! son of Lenin.

The value of religion in recruiting and enhancing resistance and cultural resilience in the context of military operations.

"The battlefield isn't necessarily a field anymore. It's in the minds of the people."¹⁶⁹

Admiral Michael G. Mullen

From early feudalism to the present the primary means of governing by Western states has been through coercion, but power politics has often failed domestically and internationally.¹⁷⁰ Conflict resolution, when articulated successfully, can end discord without loss of human life and destruction of property. Secular negotiations rarely if ever acknowledge the ritualistic and symbolic systems of peacemaking that are embedded in every culture.¹⁷¹ This is where religion can be so helpful. Religion is both a resource and a mobilization force for reconciliation in many societies and engagement of religion and its leaders is crucial.¹⁷² There are also skill sets concerning compassion and healing that, historically, religious communities do best.¹⁷³

Just as differences in religion divide people, mutual religious tenets such as faith, prayer, scripture and worship connect religious people at deep emotional levels.¹⁷⁴ Dr. Mohammed Abu-Nimer, Islamic scholar and professor at American Universities International Peace and Conflict Resolution Skills Institute, believes: "Religious identity is one of the most powerful sources in shaping attitude and actions in a conflict zone."¹⁷⁵ Peace, human dignity, and social harmony serve as points of reference and sources of edification in Christianity, Confucianism, Hinduism, dialectical materialism, modern liberalism, and Islam.¹⁷⁶ All religions teach commitment to principals of love, compassion, honor and humility. When these tenants are practiced, they can have a powerful impact that can trump the power of radical ideology.¹⁷⁷ Most major faith groups have some way or another, promised peace as an outcome of the

implementation of its precepts.¹⁷⁸ An excellent example from Christian theology is Romans 12:20 -21 "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head. Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good."¹⁷⁹ Heaping burning coals comes from an embedded tradition of honoring your enemy; as a result he feels ashamed of his wrong actions against you.

Islam is also rich in resources for peacemaking. It is unfortunate that a radical understanding of Islam practiced by Islamic terrorists is often viewed by Americans as the norm. Indian Muslim Educator K. G. Saiyadain pointed out that "the central purpose of Islam is the promotion of peace and good fellowship in the world."¹⁸⁰ Sufi mystic M. R. Bawa Muhaiyaddeen provided this interpretation of Islam: "Islam sees its neighbors as brothers, not a different or separate. It does not kill others. It shows them love, compassion and patience, and gives them the wealth of absolute faith, patience, contentment, and trust in God."¹⁸¹ Sufism is considered a sect by many Sunni and Sufi Muslims, but Sufism does provide a peaceful model for the practice of Islam. Even among main-line Muslims, there is a tradition for promoting peace. Dr. Nimer understand that "Islam as a religion and as a tradition is replete with teachings and applications about peaceful resolutions of conflicts and thus provides rich resources for nonviolent values, beliefs, and strategies."¹⁸² Judaism in particular has communal values that facilitate conflict prevention and resolution.¹⁸³ Dr. Gopin pointed out that the Hebrew word *teshuva*, which could be translated as repentance, returning, transformation, or restoration ...the capacity to transform oneself or a community, is considered to be one of the most sublime elements of faith in a good forgiving God."¹⁸⁴

There is a utopian dimension in religious ethical constructs that demands rigorous acts of piety, which, if followed, often lead to caring relationships of such intensity and depth that conflicts are quickly resolved or may never even arise.¹⁸⁵ Sheikh Ahmad Kugtar, Grand Mufti of Syria stated, “We can appreciate the role of faith in God as being the most vigorous and active factor governing human behavior, for it urges human beings to unite, to cooperate, to love one another, to do away with all sorts of discrimination, racial, color, or tribal, and to congregate under God’s command.”¹⁸⁶

Start with Religious Leaders

Involving religion in conflict resolution begins with building relationships with religious leaders. Credible religious leaders hold the trust and moral authority from broad-based constituencies, and they are uniquely positioned to facilitate post-conflict reconstruction and reconciliation efforts.¹⁸⁷ Chaplain (COL) Lamar Griffin, while serving as Command Chaplain, Multi-National Forces – Iraq, supervised RLL between chaplains and Iraqi religious leaders. He observed that “Military chaplains and Iraqi religious leaders shared a mutual appreciation, each for the other, as representatives of an important, honored distinctive faith.” Additionally, the Iraqi religious leaders felt that the MNF-I Commander viewed religion as an important element of the Coalition efforts and actions in Iraq.¹⁸⁸ Earning the respect of religious leaders is a critical component for peacebuilding in many societies.¹⁸⁹ Winning the trust of the religious leaders is vital.

While religious leaders can act as unifiers rallying people around nonviolent action, they do not inherently serve in a unifying role. Therefore, one needs to understand whose interests religious leaders represent, as well as the power dynamics between the role of leaders and community members.¹⁹⁰ COL Kim noted in “Cultural

Dimensions of Strategy and Policy” that “Human beings, individually or collectively, do not always think and behave in rational ways. The concept of rationality itself is relative and is subject to differing conceptions and definitions based on culture.”¹⁹¹ Chaplain (COL) Hoyt who also served as Command Chaplain for Multi-National Force Iraq, noted, “The inability to predict outcomes or control religious actors raises the risks in political and military planning. Working in the domain of religion requires a degree of subjectivity, ambiguity and options built upon the potentials of trust and promise.”¹⁹² It is this unpredictability that causes many analysts to avoid religion, but totally avoiding religious leaders poses a greater danger and denies access to one of the greatest avenues for resolving conflict. How one approaches religious leaders and religion is critical to success. They must be respected and their involvement in the peace process must be viewed as a partnership not paternalism.¹⁹³ Chaplain (COL) Hoyt believed RLL offers “an opportunity to actuate strategic religious plans to build relationships of trust and increased understanding in the human dilemmas inherent in full spectrum operations.”¹⁹⁴ When dealing with reactionary leaders, it is important to appeal to their ideals respecting their religiosity, not their militancy or violence.¹⁹⁵

How commanders utilize religion cannot be viewed as hybrid means of intelligence gathering or just another tool in the commander’s kit bag. Sacred beliefs and emotions are not tools to fit into a kit bag.¹⁹⁶ It is better to view religion as a bridge built on a foundation of relationships which promote positive perception and enhance stability and respect. Peacemaking can have powerful effect, provided that great subtlety and respect is shown to all parties in the conflict.¹⁹⁷ Only this kind of bridge can lead to a nonviolent future with such groups. Religious leaders are the starting place

but not the only avenue for religions role in conflict resolution. Private religious citizens, unhampered by governments, and beholden to no one, have the greatest flexibility to maneuver impossible political situations.¹⁹⁸

Implementation of Religion in reconstruction in Stability Operations

Reconstruction has been the most difficult phase for the US in recent military operations.¹⁹⁹ Peace accords may stop the fighting, but they do not shape, sustain or rebuild the communities shattered by violence.²⁰⁰ States are more proficient at fighting wars than preventing post-conflict violence and completing reconstruction.²⁰¹ This is where religion excels. For states that have limited institutional capacity, religious peacebuilding is an important and underappreciated tool.²⁰² *Meaning, identity, and emotional support* can increase resilience in coping with adversity and facilitate mobilization to overcome it.²⁰³ There are numerous religious values, rituals, text, myths, metaphors and practices which provide indispensable resources to engage in conflict management, compromise, negotiation, and reconciliation.²⁰⁴

One might question the role of religion in providing a safe space considering the theological differences among religious groups, but spiritual spaces of meeting are not so much about theology as they are about deep emotional reactions to the other that are often absorbed into religious mythical constructs.²⁰⁵ The cultural world views of the parties involved in any conflict constitute an essential factor in understanding the causes, dynamics, and solutions of conflicts.²⁰⁶ Only when these differences are expressed can they be addressed. Religious interaction helps societies to work within the constructs of their own religions allegiances to positively influence their situations and bring about solutions.²⁰⁷ Dr Gopin described this process. “I have been stunned by

friendship, by the power of love across enemy lines, and the astonishing thing that two adversaries can do when they join their worlds and establish a whole range of new relationships. When two people from opposite banks build a bridge that meets in the middle, and when the traffic goes in two directions, the amount of positive shifts in relationships spreading in all directions seems to multiply geometrically.”²⁰⁸

Religions potential role in the War on Terrorism

Religious ideology is the glue that holds Al Qaida together. Al Qaida has an immense capacity for destruction by discrediting its ideological underpinnings.²⁰⁹ This study has discussed the fact the same religion Al Qaida uses to incite war can be a pathway to achieve peace in the hands of moderates. It is possible that the appeal of Al Qaida could be undermined by developing multi-source empirical data of instances where wonton self-interest, betrayal, racism, etc. are obvious and cannot be easily brushed aside as Western conspiracies.²¹⁰ We must look to new paradigms to defeat terrorism. Religion offers one of those new paradigms.

Recommendations

A common theme of all religious faith groups is that people must change to make their lives and the world better. To create a better world requires change. This study suggests these recommendations.

1. Military planners need to understand the enemies ideology as their center of gravity and consider the impact of military missions on that center of gravity.
2. Military commanders should continue to involve chaplains who are respectful in religious leader liaisons (RLL)

3. The military needs to continue and improve educating Soldiers in cultural and religious awareness in the locations where soldiers are deployed.
4. Military commanders need to ensure that soldiers have opportunity to participate in religious education opportunities that provides a moral based value system which teaches respect for others.
5. Religious leaders to include military chaplains cannot be told how to interpret their faith tradition but should be exposed to a hermeneutic that gives emphasis to the text and traditions within their faith that reveal a God who deeply loves all humanity and to give emphasis to those texts in the exegesis their faith.
6. Military and government public relations products need to acknowledge the elephant standing in the living room, and publicize the fact that the United States is a religious nation and that most Americans believe in God and are people of faith.
7. Those who have an instinctive aversion toward religion need to recognize the value of religious peacemakers as allies.²¹¹
8. In consultation with local religious leaders the military should incorporate prayer and religious ritual as a part of events where it would be appropriate to do so.
9. Madarasses and Seminaries that support peaceful interpretations of Islam need to be built and those that exist need to be supported. Especially in locations like Afghanistan that does not have an Islamic seminary.
10. United States must not 'rekindle its image as a beacon of light willing to assist the rest of the world in sharing the worlds limited resources.

The track record of religion in resolving conflict and restoring peaceful existence is far from perfect, but the role of religion in perpetuating conflict has been accentuated at the expense of religion's potential to facilitate resolution and healing. A glimpse of the impact of religion occurred following the fall of Baghdad. A Marine battalion commander invited community sheikhs to a dinner meeting. The battalion chaplain suggested beginning with a prayer. Given the highly sensitive nature of the environment and the danger in doing something wrong or offensive the commander could have easily ignored his chaplain's request but instead he allowed his chaplain to pray. Explaining that prayer was often given before important events in the United States, the chaplain gave a prayer. The chaplain's prayer was met with spontaneous applause from the audience.²¹² The chaplain had connected at a deep emotional level where only religion can connect.

Religion has the capacity to move the world community in a far better direction, in term of peace and conflict resolution.²¹³ Religion has played a significant role in four of the most noteworthy changes of the past century, the independence of India, the American Civil Rights Movement, the Camp David Peace Accords and the end of the Cold War. Gandhi taught that the success of non violence did not depend on the good will of dictators, but rather on the unfailing assurance of God. "Truth and non-violence are not possible without a living belief in God." In his book *Two Cups of Tea*, Greg Mortenson was surveying the possibility of digging a well in a very difficult location. A tent city had emerged due to the destruction from an attack by India on several villages in Pakistan. The refugees desperately needed fresh water. Mortenson's friend a Muslim Cleric, Syed Abbas contemplating the difficulty of the task stated, "We have to dig very

deep to the ground water and put in pumps, but with Allah's help, it is possible." With the difficult challenges facing our world, maybe it is time as a world community, that we recognize our need for God's help.

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