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# Military Chaplains as Peace Builders

## Embracing Indigenous Religions in Stability Operations

Chaplain (Col) William Sean Lee, ARNG
Lt Col Christopher J. Burke, USAF
Lt Col Zonna M. Crayne, ANG

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**Lee, Burke, and Crayne**

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# Military Chaplains as Peace Builders

## *Embracing Indigenous Religions in Stability Operations*

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## Foreword

If the reader is up-to-date on good ideas for restructuring the Air Force, the worth of this study will be immediately apparent. On first blush, *Military Chaplains as Peace Builders: Embracing Indigenous Religions in Stability Operations,* especially the first phrase, seems like a feeble topic unworthy of our attention. What these three researchers—Chaplain (Col) William Sean Lee, Lt Col Christopher J. Burke, and Lt Col Zonna M. Crayne, all Air Force Fellows—did during their assignment to Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government is make suggestions that bring the chaplain business into the twenty-first century.

Religion and culture in general have been long neglected by planners, policy makers, and diplomats. Our experience in Phase IV, or the constructive phase, of Operation Iraqi Freedom has clearly exposed this inattention as a serious flaw in bringing peaceful development to Iraq. These authors suggest that military chaplains can be a part of a better solution. It is not a case of trying to proselyte; it is rather one of engaging local religious leaders to facilitate the stabilization process.

Currently, US military chaplains not only provide religious and spiritual support to military personnel and their families, but also train to conduct religious area analyses and assessments, primarily for the purpose of advising the commander on indigenous religious culture and practices. The thesis of this paper is to suggest an expanded role as religious liaison, wherein the chaplains would have a direct interface with local religious groups and religious leaders. The chaplains would develop a dialogue, build relationships, promote goodwill, and even help create formal inter-religious councils. The authors recommend changes affecting doctrine, training, and assignments that are necessary to facilitate this expanded role of chaplains.

Commanders often have a military lawyer and intelligence officer by their side when addressing operational decisions. Chaplains of the future should be equally important to the commander conducting stability operations. Our leadership must be comfortable in the understanding that an individual does not have to become religious in order to understand religion.

*Military Chaplains as Peace Builders* was written as part of the Air Force Fellows research requirement. The College of Aerospace Doctrine, Research and Education (CADRE) is pleased to publish this study as a CADRE Paper and thereby make it available to a wider audience within the Air Force and beyond.

DANIEL R. MORTENSEN
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## About the Authors

Chaplain (Col) William Sean Lee is an Army chaplain serving most recently as State Area Command Chaplain providing supervision and training to all chaplains and assistants in the Maryland National Guard. Deployed to the Pentagon after the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks, Chaplain Lee coordinated the deployment of chaplains throughout the United States and the world in support of the global war on terrorism. Chaplain Lee has also served as Division Support Command Chaplain for the 29th Infantry Division (Light), chaplain for the 136th Combat Support Hospital, and chaplain for the 115 Military Police Battalion. He is a graduate of the US Army War College and holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in religion from Carson-Newman College and a Master of Divinity degree from Southeastern Seminary. He is a board-certified chaplain through the Association of Professional Chaplains.

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Lt Col Zonna M. Crayne is an Air Force communicator who most recently headed up the Information Operations and Technology section at the Washington Air National Guard (ANG) State Headquarters. She made significant contributions in developing a new mission in the information operations area for the state of Washington. As squadron commander, she led the initiative to create the first Information Warfare Aggressor Squadron in the ANG. Colonel Crayne is a graduate of the Squadron Officers Course. She holds a bachelor's degree in math/computer science from Eastern Washington University and a master's degree in computer science from Pacific Lutheran University.

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Chapter 1

# Introduction

To help illustrate the vital role military chaplains can play as peace builders, let's begin by examining a fictional but plausible scenario. The US intelligence community is surprised to learn that a fundamentalist religious group calling itself the "Sword of Allah" has seized control of both weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and their delivery systems in the moderate Islamic Republic of Korastan. The Korastani military is a probable source of aid from sympathizers within its ranks. The long-suspected possession of nuclear materials and delivery capability of Korastan has been confirmed independently through both Department of State and Department of Defense (DOD) contacts with Korastani government officials.

Of greater immediate concern to the United States is confirmation of chemical and biological weapons and portable delivery systems also seized by Sword of Allah operatives. These weapons could be used against US and coalition military members in neighboring countries. These portable weapons systems have been relocated to undetermined sites. Though US and coalition military forces could survive an attack with minimal casualties, the civilian population is not nearly as prepared or trained for such an attack.

Two audiotaped communications have been received from the Sword of Allah indicating their intent and demands. The first communication stated their plan to immediately launch the full arsenal of WMD against both US and coalition military forces in neighboring countries if their demands are not met. A similar threat was made against the "Jewish puppet of the Great Satan," the nation of Israel, if any military action were taken against them. Their demands are for all Western powers to immediately withdraw from Muslim lands, the United States pay war reparations to injured Muslims of $500 billion through the Muslim World Congress, and the United States immediately discontinue any military aid to Israel.

Three hours later, a second communication arrived at Al-Jazeera broadcasting network stating a strike would be launched

within eight hours unless the United States demonstrated a sincere respect for the Sword of Allah and its demands. This respect must be indicated by a response delivered through those who "understand the peaceful religion of Islam." The Sword of Allah would welcome martyrdom for their righteous cause.

Department of Defense and Department of State are working together in consult with the United States Institute of Peace to craft a response. Additionally, consideration is given to the issue of geography in formulating a negotiating team. Israel and its Arab neighbors are in a high state of military readiness. US and coalition military forces in countries bordering Korastan are experiencing increased attacks and unrest. These attacks are by civilians incited to action by local clerics who view this situation as possible divine judgment on the "God-less West."

This scenario is all too realistic. It is not meant to focus on any specific religion, but to simply draw an illustration. Islam and the current situation the United States is encountering in Iraq are used as examples throughout this research paper. However, other religions and geographical areas of conflict are equally applicable. To avoid this scenario becoming an actual event, the United States must embrace religion as a diplomatic partner. To ignore this fact is to ignore reality. This paper is a step towards ensuring this plausible scenario never occurs.

## Chaplains as Religious Liaisons

The doctrinal role of US military chaplains must be expanded to allow for formal inclusion of indigenous religious groups and religious leaders into stability operations. This additional role for chaplains beyond the traditional function of providing for religious and spiritual support of military personnel and their families might best be described as the role of religious liaison. This additional role of religious liaison could be viewed as an expansion of the traditional chaplain role of advisor to the commander. There are current examples of US military chaplains functioning in this expanded role.

Chaplains of the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) regularly meet in Iraq with religious leaders. Chaplain (Capt) John Stutz states that one of the biggest issues is the constant bombardment of misinformation about coalition forces and what

they are doing for the local populace. According to Stutz, "The problem is they are usually getting the wrong information about something or they're getting no information." Stutz further states, "Our job is to make sure the facts are given to these leaders so they can disseminate it to their communities."[1] Chaplains can provide facts about US forces' intent and current efforts as well as clarify misinformation. Accurate information will provide increased understanding and build trust between the local populace and military forces.

Chaplain (Col) Frank E. Wismer II states that in areas of Iraq where chaplains and commanders engage indigenous religious leaders, coalition forces have had some success in decreasing anticoalition actions.[2] Commander Emilio Marrero sought to use his role as a Christian chaplain to create bridges with various respected holy men in Iraq. He plainly wore the cross on his uniform against advice of others who suggested that he keep a low profile as a Christian chaplain. His actions have helped mitigate one of the greatest myths among Iraqis that Americans are secular and, therefore, devils, infidels, or nonbelievers. This openness in faith proved to be a valuable asset and offered many opportunities for positive exchanges between US military forces and indigenous religious leaders.[3]

Chaplains have expressed the importance that all religious groups be represented in efforts to engage religious leaders. Chaplain (Maj) Dean Bonura of the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division, states that his Unit Ministry Teams (UMT) held numerous meetings with various religious leaders across multiple faiths, from Shiite and Sunni Muslims to Armenian and Roman Catholic bishops and priests. These meetings with religious leaders have proven essential in assisting the coalition mission.[4] US Air Force chaplains and assistants deployed in theater with air expeditionary groups also recognize the importance of "doing their part to win the hearts and minds of the Iraqis." For example, while accompanying Office of Special Investigations (OSI) agents on humanitarian missions, chaplains were able to work among local populations.[5]

Dr. Elliot Cohen states that the preeminent and most crucial issue 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 operations.[6] Notably, US policy and practice goes to great lengths to respect the value of religion for US citizens. However, US policy and intentional practice often fail to recognize the importance of indigenous religions when conducting military operations. The intention to consider and embrace religion in planning for stability operations could be the determining factor between a rapid, constructive result and a destructive, long, and costly process.

## Overview

To address the above policy issue, this paper is organized in the following manner. Chapter 2 highlights indigenous religious groups and religious leaders as an element of national power and how that translates to the importance of religion in stability operations. It further illustrates DOD's role during initial stability operations including selection of local leadership.

Chapter 3 discusses why chaplains are the best choice to serve as religious liaisons and provides an analysis of a given group of candidates, based on defined criteria, validating the selection. Numerous historical references emphasize that chaplains are the best choice as religious liaisons during stability operations. Examination of past conflicts shows the extensive range of value added by chaplains. Examples are also cited of how other countries integrate their chaplains into the role of religious liaison.

Chapter 4 looks at modifications required for military chaplains to successfully serve as a religious liaison with indigenous religious groups. These include changes to authorization levels for chaplains, as well as necessary doctrinal enhancements and additional training requirements plus actions required to transition responsibilities from the military chaplain to other organizations.

Chapter 5 highlights recommendations of this research paper and identifies responsible agencies. It further identifies potential objections to the issues put forth, develops responses to those objections, and suggests areas for future research that would continue the steps taken with this paper.

## Notes

1. Joshua M. Risner, 40th Public Affairs Division, (unpublished paper).
2. Frank E. Wismer II to W. Sean Lee, e-mail, subject: "RE: Contact and Information request," 1 December 2003.
3. Emilio Marrero, "From the Rivers of Babylon," *Navy Chaplain*, July 2003, 1–2.
4. Dean Bonura, "Chaplains Forging Alliance with Local Religious Leaders," *Ironside*, 21 November 2003, 14.
5. Reginal Woodruff, "Chaplains Go Where Needed," *Air Force Link*, 21 January 2004, http://www.af.mil/stories/story.asp?storyID=123006403.
6. Elliot A. Cohen, interviewed by author, 6 November 2003.

Chapter 2

# Religion in Stability Operations

Rabbi Marc Gopin, director of the Center for World Religions, Diplomacy, and Conflict Resolution at George Mason University 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."[1] Gopin's statement identifies religion as a necessary element in conflict resolution when it is part of the dynamic of conflict.

Religion is best viewed as a force useful in stability operations rather than an issue to disregard or overcome. Often the United States attempts to avoid religion in an effort to respect the personal dimension of faith. Nations that do not separate church and state perceive this attempt at respect as dismissive, thereby furthering the perception of the "God-less West." The United States adheres foundationally to separation of church and state, while Islam adheres to the integration of politics and religion. In the Muslim world, religious leaders are often more powerful than political leaders. However, they are often not included in the "axes of power" considered for stabilization planning and implementation by the United States according to Col William Flavin, retired, of the Peacekeeping and Stability Operations Institute at the US Army War College in Carlisle, Pennsylvania.[2]

Support of indigenous religious groups and religious leaders can greatly impact the success of US foreign policy. They must be included as the stabilization process is developed to realize long-term stability. Politicians and diplomats need to understand and embrace the importance of indigenous religious leaders. Current US foreign policy does not always identify religion as a consideration in stabilization operations and planning.[3]

David Smock, PhD, director of the Religion and Peacemaking Initiative at the US Institute of Peace in Washington, DC, also advocates that religion defines the cultural identity in many societies. He also states that religion is often ignored by US

diplomats and policy makers in developing and implementing foreign policy. However, the United States must embrace it as a means toward conflict resolution and as an enabler toward long-term stability.[4]

In the Western world, religious beliefs and the clergy who sustain them are still an influential force. However, this influence is not on par with the much higher degree of power normally afforded clergy in many countries where religious leaders and congregations form a wide association of influence that communicates to a large number of citizens. This impact is especially relevant where government is weak and lacking a central authority powerful enough to enforce the rule of law. In those situations it is often clergy and networks of congregations that contribute significantly to local stability.[5]

In relating foreign policy and the conduct of military operations in the Islamic world, the United States must recognize that maintaining stability and building peace require that we accurately communicate our plans and intentions to all levels of Muslim society. It is through communication and understanding that we may win the hearts and cooperation of the local populace. 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 misunderstandings 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.[6]

Opposition forces often employ an asymmetric strategy using religion, religious symbolism, and religious misinformation as tools for recruitment and enlisting support. Recognition of this strategy affords the United States an opportunity to develop a strategic and operational response.[7] Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld, responding to an inquiry about how well the Department of Defense intentionally brings indigenous religious leaders into the planning and implementation process for stability operations, stated: "Overall we are not doing a good job . . . of trying to include religious leaders to show respect for their faith as part of stability operations."[8]

## Role of Military Leadership

Military operations are conducted in four phases, with Phase IV being stability operations. Preferably this phase begins with official cessation of hostilities and ends when the situation is stable and secure for transition to the Department of State. Phase IV of Operation Iraqi Freedom posed unique challenges due to continued violent opposition to the presence of US forces. Attacks on the civilian population by groups vying for power produced continuing instability and difficulty in transitioning control from Department of Defense to Department of State. L. Paul Bremer III, the former diplomat and counterterrorism official who led the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) beginning in May 2003, expressed confidence that Iraqis can build a democracy that values religious and political freedom.[9]

US military forces in hostile areas are the primary on-scene resource to carry out stability operations. Although the State Department plays a major role in coordinating the development of freedom and democracy in a post-conflict nation, it can do so only within the context of security provided by US armed forces. US military commanders on the ground are responsible for securing the safety, welfare, and livelihood of the local population. It is tactical combatant forces in theater who conduct initial governance operations and remain on the ground in oversight until the political transition essential to stability or peace efforts is complete.[10]

DOD is effectively in charge not only of the military aspects of the counterinsurgency, but also of reconstruction work and political development. In most provinces, US military officers selected local government officials representative of their respective populations.[11] US military officers in Iraq spend much of their time meeting with local sheiks and apportioning the thin funds at their disposal for rebuilding. It is not unusual for US Army officers to go out in the morning on a patrol and return in the afternoon for an internal meeting about dispersing small grants to local health clinics. Clearly the burden of responsibility for stability operations remains with the military commanders on the ground in Iraq.[12]

Leadership of the 1st Armored Division, located in eastern Baghdad, committed itself to building a partnership with local

religious leaders to enhance the CPA's mission to stabilize the city. They recognized the significant role religious leaders would play in a mission committed to stabilization and peace for the region. The unit began forging alliances through neighborhood advisory councils and via networking from existing contacts with indigenous religious leaders, thereby establishing rapport for further dialogue.[13]

For Iraqis, religion has been tied to the political process and governing body. The CPA currently has no policy regarding interaction with religious groups and religious leaders and generally has a laissez-faire approach to building an interreligious forum. Furthermore, there is no articulated or written policy that guides the CPA's relationship with indigenous religious leaders in the reconstruction of Iraq. Lack of these policies may be due to a Department of State misinterpretation of the US principle of separation of church and state as applicable to US foreign policy. Additionally, it may relate to the practice of prohibiting the endorsement of a specific religion as a matter of US policy or practice.[14]

Indigenous religions and religious leaders are critical factors to be included in stability operations. Conrad C. Crane and Andrew W. Terrill of the Strategic Studies Institute at the US Army War College state that any "culturally-based efforts by the United States to assume away differences between Americans and Iraqis can only doom the effort for rebuilding."[15] It is important to note that even without a formal US policy or strategy to assess religious issues for inclusion in stability operations, Crane and Terrill cite 19 of 135 tasks considered necessary to the reconstruction of Iraq—three "critical," five "essential," and 11 "important"—that are either religious in focus or are impacted by the religious culture. Having established that religion is a key defining element in culture that is essential for consideration in stability operations, the question of who will address the issue and how they will do so must be explored.

**Notes**

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13. "Local Religious Leaders Create Alliance," *Coalition Scimitar*, 21 November 2003, 9, 12.

14. Frank E. Wismer II, e-mail: "RE: Contact and Information request" to W. Sean Lee, 1 December 2003.

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Chapter 3

# Chaplains in Stability Operations

In his book, *Faith-Based Diplomacy: Trumping Realpolitik*, Dr. Douglas Johnston advocates the use of military chaplains in stability operations. He states that the multifaith experience and extensive interpersonal skills military chaplains possess are attributes perfectly suited for the inclusion of religion into stability operations.[1] Dr. Johnston, president of the International Center for Religion and Diplomacy in Washington, DC, further states in his article, "We Neglect Religion at Our Peril," that military chaplains can develop in-depth understanding of the religious and cultural distinctions in a given environment through their personal interactions with indigenous religious communities.[2]

Military chaplains are uniquely suited and positioned within the US military structure to function as the initial component resource to provide for inclusion of local religious groups into stability operations. For comparison purposes, figure 1 contrasts the most likely candidates among US military personnel for religious liaison when evaluated against the criteria defined below. Although figure 1 is specific to US Army personnel,

| Y | Training | Skills | Credentials | Accessibility | Final Ranking |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Civil Affairs | Limited | Yes | Yes | No | 4 |
| Chaplain | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | 1 |
| Intel (S-2) | Limited | No | No | Yes | 5 |
| Personnel (S-1) | Limited | Yes | Limited | Yes | 2 |
| Judge Advocate | No | Yes | Yes | Yes | 3 |

X = Criteria Categories
Y = Personnel Evaluated

**Figure 1. Religious liaison selection based on battalion staffing**

other military services have similar candidates that can be evaluated by the same criteria.

Criteria as they relate to the role and function of religious liaison were generalized into the basic core areas of training, skills, credentials, and accessibility. Training criteria included general knowledge of major world religions, faiths, practices, and beliefs. Also critical is the impact of religion on society and sensitivity to religious customs and nuances. Skills criteria were identified as negotiation, religious diplomacy, and consensus building. While arguable, credentials criteria were defined as how the officer's title or functional description might be perceived by the local population. While not precise, this criterion can be assessed within acceptable limits of predictability through a perceptive study of indigenous religious history and culture. Accessibility criteria were defined as being quickly and consistently available to the battalion commander for religious liaison.

The battalion was used as the representative group for evaluation since it is the normal-size military element conducting Phase IV operations. Personnel most likely to possess abilities related to liaison activity were identified from the battalion headquarters and the next highest headquarters at brigade level. Likeliness to possess liaison skills was determined based upon the traditional training and function of the officers selected. The best candidates were determined to be the judge advocate general, personnel officer (S-1), intelligence officer (S-2), battalion chaplain, and the civil affairs officer.

Using the criterion parameters stated earlier, a synopsis of each officer's evaluation follows. The civil affairs officer possesses skills and credentials, but has limited training and virtually no accessibility to the combatant commander. The intelligence officer is readily accessible to the commander, but has limited training and no necessary skills or credentials in the area of religious liaison. The personnel officer possesses both skills and is accessible, but has limited training and credentials. The judge advocate general possesses the necessary skills, credentials and accessibility to the commander, but has no training for religious liaison tasks. Military chaplains have the training, skills, credentials, and accessibility.[3]

Based upon the analysis of each military specialty's doctrine and training compared against the established criteria, it is clearly apparent that the initial proponent group responsible for inclusion of indigenous religious groups in stability operations should be military chaplains assigned to combat elements.

## Historical Precedents Involving Chaplains

During the Spanish-American War, Gen John J. "Black Jack" Pershing used his chaplain in the Philippines as a liaison to negotiate with Catholic clergy in the north and Muslim leaders in the south in an attempt to ease hostilities. During the post-World War II Nuremberg trials of former Nazi war criminals, a US military chaplain was assigned to provide religious support for war criminals. This facilitated increased cooperation of criminals with authorities due to the unique trust engendered through the military chaplain relationship. The symbolic and actual success of these trials was crucial to the stability and reconstruction of post-war Europe.[4]

During Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm, Gen H. Norman Schwarzkopf recognized the importance of appointing military chaplains as religious liaisons to work with indigenous religious leaders. General Schwarzkopf designated US Central Command Chaplain (Col) David P. Peterson as his representative to communicate and coordinate with Saudi Arabian religious authorities. Chaplain Peterson became instrumental in fostering friendships among indigenous religious leaders, facilitating successful execution of the war while allied with the Muslim nation of Saudi Arabia.[5]

During his tenure in command of stability operations in the Balkans, US Army general Wesley Clark used his senior command chaplain, Rabbi Arnie Resnicoff, extensively to function in a liaison capacity. Chaplain Resnicoff was tasked to promote goodwill with and among religiously conflicted communities and representative clerics. According to John Brinsfield, PhD, US Army Chaplain Corps historian, employing the chaplain as a religious liaison was verification of General Clark's understanding and intent that coordinating with these groups and individuals was essential to long-term stability in the region.[6] The 2001 position description for the Stabilization Force Theater Chaplain

continues to specifically designate the chaplain for liaising between military and religious leaders "involved in peacemaking and reconciliation activities."[7]

During Operation Iraqi Freedom, Brig Gen (select) Martin E. Dempsey, commander, US Army 1st Armored Division, successfully increased the safety of his forces. He directed his chaplain to form an Inter-Religious Council (IRC) of local clerics. This effort was an attempt to increase force protection by easing the perceived hostility of local clerics. The IRC was to begin dialogue aimed at increased understanding and decreased hostility toward US military operations. General Dempsey took this action based upon his assessment that roadside bombings of coalition troops were linked to opposition to coalition activities voiced by local Muslim clerics. A measurable decrease in the incidence of roadside bombings followed the first meeting with local clerics in October 2003.[8]

In some theaters of operation, individual chaplains having the same faith as indigenous religious groups were solicited to build goodwill among the local populace through the ministry of presence. Ministry of presence is a traditional, defined function of the chaplain usually associated with ministry among US military troops. However, in these theaters of operation, the traditional ministry of presence role was successfully expanded to interface with local populations on the subject of religion. In Kosovo an Orthodox US Army chaplain interacted with local Orthodox clergy to promote understanding and confidence toward US military operations.[9] In a more subtle attempt to promote a basis for trust and cooperation with US Army operations in Afghanistan, a Muslim US Army chaplain prayed with Muslims in the local mosque at the appointed hours.[10]

## Value Added by Chaplains

Other examples exist to illustrate how chaplains have been drawn on by visionary commanders to connect with indigenous religious leaders and communities to increase success and reduce risks in stability operations. However, employment of chaplains for this mission is not a universal practice. The value added by chaplains' involvement depends upon the degree of secularization of a society and the number of religious

groups in the society. The greater the secularization of society and the more monolithic the religious demographic, the less need to use chaplains for incorporation of indigenous religious groups and religious leaders to ensure successful stability operations. The reciprocal is also true. Figure 2 depicts this relationship between the use of chaplains as religious liaisons and the variables of secularization in a society and number of religious groups within that society. Post-conflict, or stability operations, in five US conflicts illustrate this principle: the Philippines (Spanish-American War), Japan (World War II), Somalia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, and Iraq.

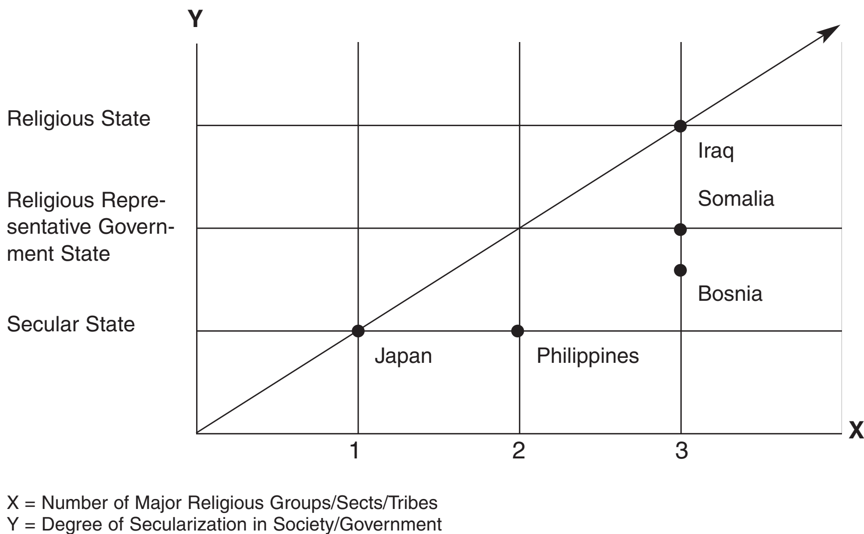


**Figure 2. Value added of chaplain as religious liaison**

As an example, the Philippines during the Spanish-American War was a secular society with a Catholic majority and a Muslim minority. In this situation chaplains had an intentional but limited role as negotiators between Catholics and Muslims to promote stability. In addition, General Pershing made sure his troops were informed on local culture and customs and had a basic knowledge of the Quran. General Pershing could himself conduct lengthy conversations about religion with local imams.[11]

Japan was a secular society at the end of World War II (the belief in the emperor as divine notwithstanding) with a pre-

dominantly Buddhist, monocultural population. It was not necessary for chaplains to act as religious liaisons with local communities to promote stability. Religious belief that allowed for "divine wind" kamikaze suicide attacks also allowed for a citizenry subservient to US policy for reconstruction after the war. The populace was conditioned to obey the emperor's direction to accept defeat and submit to American military authority.[12]

During Somalia operations it could be argued that the first US administration had success in humanitarian operations by including tribal leaders, while disregard for tribal leaders during the second US administration led to failure.[13] Overall, Somalia operations could have benefited from chaplain intervention to liaison with tribal leaders due to the lack of secularization in the society.

Bosnia-Herzegovina continues to be a secular society in practice, but dominated by ethnic politics defined by multiple religious identities. A history of atrocities in the name of religion and a lack of religious homogeneity in the culture continue to compound the cost and difficulties associated with stability operations and nation building.[14] Chaplains are having an influential and effective role in acting as liaisons to indigenous religious groups to promote peace and long-term stability.

When current hostilities started, Iraq was initially a nominal Islamic, but practically secular state. Now Iraq seems to be quickly transforming into an Islamic religious state contested by the various Shiite and Sunni sects. Although a sense of Iraqi national identity does exist, it does not override these religious, tribal, and ethnic identities. Currently in Iraq the role of chaplains is still emerging as religious liaisons for stability operations. The employment of methods used and practices observed is occurring by chance. The role of religious liaison needs to be planned and implemented through a deliberate design of foreign policy and subsequent military doctrine of the United States.[15]

## Foreign Military Use of Chaplains

The use of chaplains for interaction with indigenous religious groups and religious leaders by foreign militaries further demonstrates the value of doctrinally establishing this role for US military chaplains in stability operations. The most relevant foreign

military examples are from Canada and South Africa, along with recent developments in Norway. These nations have recognized the value of using unit chaplains in a religious liaison capacity. Formalizing the process in an effort to produce consistent success, they are developing doctrine and policy to support and direct this chaplain function.

In his paper, "*The Ministry and Theology of Reconciliation in Operations,*" Padre (Maj) S.K. Moore, CD, of the Canadian Forces Chaplain Branch, describes the integrated position and function of Canadian Forces chaplains in stability operations. Padre Moore states "as clergy in a theatre of operations, Canadian Forces chaplains have a distinctive role to play in interfacing with their civilian counterparts."[16] In describing the chaplain's role in relating to indigenous religious groups and populace, he explains that their operations are permeated with the philosophy of reconciliation. This philosophy is the understanding that long-term stability can only happen in societies when true reconciliation occurs between conflicted groups. To attain reconciliation, the conflicted groups must enter into dialogue that acknowledges wrongs, offers and receives forgiveness, and mutually agrees upon a shared future as a society.

Canadian forces are primarily deployed in support of stability operations. This practice has allowed their chaplains extensive opportunity to understand the link between dialogues with indigenous religious leaders and identifying crucial humanitarian support needs. Together they form a foundation for communicating the mission of stabilization forces in the reconciliation process leading to long-term stability. Further, this dialogue with and between indigenous leaders allows for "opportunity to share their story . . . acknowledging their pain and suffering, and . . . assist these religious and community leaders to . . . start the journey of reconciliation."[17]

Canadian chaplains find ease of movement among the population essential to advising the commander of probable humanitarian assistance projects that would strengthen reconciliation and stability operations. Access and freedom of movement are believed to be possible due to the high degree of influence and respect given to indigenous religious leaders and transferred to military chaplains serving in populations

where these stability operations occur. Recognizing the importance of gaining and integrating support of indigenous religious groups and religious leaders for stability operations, Canadian Forces chaplains are used and militarily trained as the key resource tasked with this mission.[18]

A paper by South African Defence Force Chaplains, Ignatious Fumaneklie Gqiba and Sybrand van Niekerk entitled, "*The Role and Influence of Chaplains in the South African National Defence Force (SANDF)*," describes the successful integration of chaplains in SANDF for internal and regional stability operations. Due to the long history of intertribal conflict in South Africa, the SANDF chaplains developed a practice of mediation for peace and stability that became authorized in South African constitutional law and defined in military doctrine.[19]

Internal religious advisory boards became the training ground and template for a chaplain religious liaison role by the SANDF when operating in regional stability operations. Chaplains trained in peace and stability operations accompany the two motorized infantry battalions employed by SANDF in peacekeeping missions. The chaplain functions as the "specialist in regard to religion, mediation, and negotiation between Peace and Stability Operations (PSO) forces, non-governmental organizations and religious groups."[20]

The ability to transcend borders, as well as religious and political differences, to function in the role of negotiator between opposing parties is facilitated by the chaplain's religious status. His reputation allows for dissemination of accurate information, exertion of positive influence, and mediation aimed toward reconciliation and peaceful coexistence among indigenous religious groups and religious leaders. SANDF chaplains are also trained to coordinate efforts for effectiveness with other multinational PSO chaplains in the area.[21]

Norway has also begun to codify the operational role of the chaplain in stability operations. Increased Norwegian participation in international peacekeeping operations since the 1990s has led to greater use of chaplains. According to Chaplains Nils Terje Lunde and Bard Maeland of the Norwegian Defense Forces, chaplains are used to sustain contact with indigenous religious

leaders as "a way of contributing constructively to conflict resolution."[22]

Historical examples and current foreign military practices give points of reference in which to frame and understand an emerging doctrinal role for US military chaplains to serve as religious liaisons in stability operations. The question now becomes not if the US military should follow suit, but how to go about implementing the program.

### Notes

1. Douglas M. Johnston, *Faith-Based Diplomacy: Trumping Realpolitik* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 25–26.

2. ———, "We Neglect Religion at Our Peril," United States Naval Institute *Proceedings* 128 (2002): 3, 50.

3. US Department of the Army, Legal Services, Army Regulation (AR) 27-1, *Judge Advocate Legal Services*, 1996; US Department of the Army, Field Manual (FM) 27-100, *Legal Support to Operations*, 2000; US Department of the Army, AR 165-1, *Chaplain Activities in the United States Army*, 2000; US Department of the Army, FM 1-05, *Religious Support*, 2003; US Department of the Army, AR 381-10, *United States Army Intelligence Activities*, 1984; US Department of the Army, FM 34-8-2, *Intelligence Officers Handbook*, 1998; US Department of the Army, AR 600-8-103, *Battalion S-1*, 1991; US Department of the Army, FM 41-10, *Civil Affairs Operations*, 2000; and US Department of the Army, FM 3-05.401, *Civil Affairs Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures*, 2003.

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6. John Brinsfield, interviewed by author, 19 November 2003.

7. Chaplain Position Description, Headquarters Stabilization Force (Bosnia), 25 September 2001.

8. Greg Jaffe, "Army Finds Good Information in Short Supply in Guerrilla War," *Wall Street Journal*, 6 October 2003, A1+.

9. David M. Brown, interviewed by author, 20 November 2003.

10. Ibid.

11. Conrad C. Crane and Andrew W. Terrill, *Reconstructing Iraq: Insights, Challenges, and Missions for Military Forces in a Post-Conflict Scenario* (Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, US Army War College, 2003), 12.

12. Ibid., 15–16.

13. Chuck Harrison, "The Limits of Type D Coercive Diplomacy in Somalia" (master's thesis, United States Naval Postgraduate School, 1995).

14. Scott R. Appleby, *The Ambivalence of the Sacred* (New York: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2000), 63–80.

15. Donald Reynolds, telephone interview by author, 22 February 2004.

16. S. K. Moore, "The Ministry and Theology of Reconciliation in Operations" (unpublished paper, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada, 2003), 26.

17. Ibid., 9.

18. Canada National Defence, *Civilian-Military Cooperation in Peace, Emergencies, Crisis and War* (Ottawa: Queen's Printers, 1999), 5–7.

19. South Africa, *The Bill of Rights of the Constitution of South Africa*, Act No. 108, 1996, chap. 2, sec. 15; South Africa Department of Defence Instruction, *Religious Policy*, 2000.

20. Ignatious F. Gqiba and Sybrand van Niekerk, "The Role and Influence of Chaplains in the South African National Defence Force" (unpublished paper, 2003), 13.

21. South African National Defence Force Chaplain Service, (Pretoria: Department of Defence, 2000).

22. Nils T. Lunde and Bard Maeland, "From Nation-building to Peacebuilding: A Half Century with the Norwegian Military Chaplaincy" (unpublished paper, 2003), 11.

## Chapter 4

# Modifications to the Chaplain Service

The first issue that must be addressed is authorization for chaplains. Title 10 of the *United States Code* provides the legal foundation for military chaplaincy. As approved by Title 10, every branch of the US military has designated chaplains to provide for the religious and spiritual support of military members and their families, and to ensure the constitutional right of every military member to free exercise of their religion. Military chaplains are trained and prepared to specific standards through civilian and military education to enable them to respectfully facilitate the practice of religious traditions and faith for all military members without violating their own beliefs.[1]

Current authorization for chaplain numbers and assignments needs to be modified for successful inclusion of indigenous religious groups and religious leaders for stability operations as described in this paper. Although this section addresses US Army requirements, similar chaplain adjustments would be necessary for the other military services. US Army figures are critical to stability operations since they conduct the preponderance of stability operations. The current force structure assignment doctrine for Army chaplains, known as the "Forward Thrust Doctrine," directs for chaplains to be deployed at a ratio of one per battalion with a ministerial responsibility the size of the battalion area of operations.[2]

To successfully support the chaplain's current responsibilities and provide for the added tasking of inclusion of native religious groups and religious leaders into stability operations, authorized chaplain assignments should expand. Unit strength should be increased, adding one chaplain in the grade of major assigned to division level. This new position will be specifically tasked with the mission of religious liaison to be employed in stability operations. A paper generated from discussions held at the Pearson Peacekeeping Centre and written by Emma Kay and Maj David Last also advocates for a senior chaplain in a similar role.[3]

This additional chaplain resource would serve primarily as an informational and operational support to battalion-level chaplains. Also, this chaplain would be responsible for ensuring successful implementation of battalion-level transition plans. These plans transition established IRCs to civil affairs units or appropriate nongovernmental organizations (NGO) or religious nongovernmental organizations (RNGO) that agree to be involved.

Civil affairs unit chaplain authorizations should be one chaplain assigned per unit with the primary function of coordinating with the indigenous religions and maintaining the IRCs transitioned from the combat unit chaplains. Given the greater experience and training of chaplains to address the religious dimension of conflict, the potential access afforded as members of the clergy, and the opportunity to build relationships as noncombatants, the function of chaplains in stability operations complements the function and mission of civil affairs units.[4]

According to William Flavin, the increased number and assignment of chaplains would also support the need for commanders to "establish mechanisms at the combatant command and operational task force levels to support harmonization" through "extensive liaison activity" to coordinate efforts aimed at achieving stability operations objectives.[5] Further, this coordination would allow for post-conflict planning below the historical headquarters level at echelons above corps and closer to the current and latter twentieth century norm of smaller-scale American military interventions. The resulting structure would help to avoid the possibility of winning the war tactically and operationally, but losing the peace strategically through inadequate planning.[6]

## Adjusting Doctrine and Training

Department of Defense policy and doctrine for the role of chaplains must be expanded to encompass the role of religious liaison to the local populace in initial stability operations. Currently, US military chaplains are trained to conduct religious area analyses and assessments, but primarily for the purpose of advising the commander. The expanded role as religious liaison would allow for chaplains to directly interface with local religious groups and religious leaders with the goal of developing dialogue,

building relationships, promoting goodwill, and creating formal IRCs. To successfully accomplish this mission, military chaplains would require additional training in core competencies.

Core competencies necessary to facilitate the functional role of religious liaison must enable the chaplain to develop an IRC that accurately reflects the indigenous religious demographics. The IRC could be a resource for the combatant commander to apply toward successful stability operations. Expanded competencies could then be incorporated into the functional action model of Assess, Plan, Implement, and Evaluate (APIE). Table 1 organizes the required chaplain core competencies within the APIE model and connects their use to production of desired outcomes related to the IRC.

**Table 1. Required chaplain competencies and inter-religious council outcomes**

| | Competencies | | Inter-Religious Council Outcomes |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Assess** | **Understand —** | Religious demographic | Defines representative groups on IRC |
| | **Identify —** | Religious groups and religious leaders | |
| | **Determine —** | Religious impact on conflict | |
| **Plan** | **Coordinate —** | Indigenous religious contacts network | Determines individual representatives on IRC in synchronization with military operations |
| | **Synchronize —** | IRC formation with commanders intent and Phase IV planning | |
| **Implement** | **Interface —** | With indigenous religious groups and religious leaders | Direct group process toward acceptable outcomes |
| | **Negotiate —** | With groups toward consensus | |
| | **Recommend —** | Action to commanders | |
| **Evaluate** | **Evaluate —** | IRC effectiveness | Develops responsive dialogue based upon shared IRC and military concerns |
| | **Modify —** | Group membership and process | |

Assessment phase competencies would include three steps. First is to *understand* key beliefs, history, percentage of the population, and representation in government and society of those groups that impact stability operations. Second is the ability to *identify* the primary indigenous religious groups and religious leaders. The third step is to *determine* whether religion is a root cause of conflict or a vehicle for nationalism and ethnic passions.

The planning phase competencies would include two steps. First is the ability to *coordinate* contacts with the indigenous religious leaders and communities. The second step is to *synchronize* the plan for local contacts and the formation of the IRC with the military staff. This council would be synchronized with the combatant commander's intent—to include time, location, and desired outcome for meetings. In a multinational operational area, coordination must occur between US military chaplains and other coalition chaplains located in the area to avoid redundancy of efforts.

The implementation phase competencies would include three steps. The first step would be to *interface* successfully with indigenous religious groups and religious leaders resulting in their participation in the IRC. The second step would be to *negotiate* issues toward consensus with diverse and often conflicted religious groups. The third step would be to *recommend* courses of action to the combatant commander based upon outcomes from IRC meetings. Recommendations would also include a plan for the transition of the IRC to civil affairs units or NGOs and RNGOs for continued operations, thus allowing for continuity.

Finally, the evaluation phase competencies for chaplains functioning in the role of religious liaison would be to *evaluate* the effectiveness of the IRC on an ongoing basis. Chaplains would also need to *modify* the membership and agenda of the IRC to ensure the combatant commander continued effectiveness for promoting stability.

Once the mission-specific core competencies are established, training through the military chaplain schools must be modified to include curriculum that will incorporate these additional core competencies. Other modifications to training will be based on measurable proficiency in the core competencies and measurable

results in the successful interaction with native religious groups and religious leaders.

Incorporating the recommended training and measured follow-up will improve support for the initial liaison efforts with the indigenous religious communities. This support will lend itself to the establishment of an effectively functioning local IRC. The IRC will become the channel of communication between indigenous religious groups and religious leaders and the military commander for stability operations. It will also provide a network for the indigenous people to voice concerns, identify issues, and to harness interreligious cooperation. This cooperation is invaluable in ensuring a lasting peace and religious freedom.[7]

## Transitioning Responsibility

When the conflict area becomes stable and safe for noncombatant forces to enter, a transition of responsibility must occur. At that point, it will be the responsibility of the combatant commander and staff to involve the chaplain as religious liaison to plan and implement a transition. Ideally, unit chaplains would then transition IRC responsibilities and relationships to military civil affairs units that follow. Traditionally, civil affairs units are responsible for the dual roles of liaising with local authorities and coordinating with NGOs. However, changes in the staffing of civil affairs units and a struggle to redefine their institutional identity have marginalized these units and therefore reduced their effectiveness.[8]

Though a chaplain is often part of civil affairs units, there is no guarantee that there will always be a qualified chaplain accessible to continue the religious liaison role. Reductions in the number of chaplains in civil affairs units after Desert Storm have left many without one. Furthermore, their role in civil affairs units has changed from primarily religious liaison to the community to primarily religious support of unit members. This limited role reduces the possibility of successfully transitioning the existing IRC to a civil affairs unit.[9]

Given the reduction in number and change in role of chaplains in civil affairs units, the transition of the IRC from the combat unit chaplain might better be made to an NGO or RNGO. This transition will depend upon their skills, experience, training, and

accessibility in the area of operations and assessed ability to function in coordination with the military for stability operations. The chaplain would evaluate the appropriateness of available NGOs and RNGOs for a transition based in part on the requirement to be sensitive and respectful of local religious groups and to avoid any appearance of proselytizing. It is important to differentiate between NGOs and RNGOs in functioning ability due to NGOs being nonsectarian in nature, while some RNGOs cannot function in a nonsectarian fashion due to their constituent mandate and mission statement. Again, chaplain training would require competency to differentiate between those NGOs and RNGOs appropriate for inclusion.

The US military and government have historically coordinated with NGOs for stability operations, but have not yet effectively coordinated with RNGOs for stability operations. Prof. Julia Berger of Harvard University's Hauser Center for Nonprofit Organizations comments on the usefulness of RNGOs. She observes that while current Western mentality may limit religion to private life, RNGOs demonstrate a unique mixture of religious beliefs and sociopolitical activism throughout all levels of society that would relate well to the Muslim world where religion and society are fully integrated.[10] The 2001 World Conference on Religion and Peace acknowledged, "Religious communities are, without question, the largest and best-organized civil institutions in the world today . . . bridging the divides of race, class and nationality. They are uniquely equipped to meet the challenges of our time: resolving conflicts . . . promoting peaceful co-existence among all peoples."[11]

If chaplains are not accessible in civil affairs units, then RNGOs would be the best candidates for transitioning IRCs from initial military combat unit chaplains. Such a transition would ensure continuity and accessibility of the IRC for ongoing stability operations for two reasons. First, religious groups and religious leaders often have a respect for other avowed religious representatives. Second, there are RNGOs representing every major faith group. A limited listing to illustrate this coverage includes the International Buddhist Foundation, World Jewish Congress, Catholic Relief Services, World Vision International,

Muslim World League, and the International Center for Religion and Diplomacy.

Provided the chaplain has the core competency of awareness related to these groups, these RNGOs would serve best for a transition from the established IRC in the absence of a chaplain in the civil affairs unit. Whatever the ultimate coordination with or responsibility of NGOs or RNGOs, it is clear that these groups could provide a virtual network of transition and support for developed IRCs. Further, it is a natural "fit" for military chaplains to work in close coordination with NGOs and RNGOs to facilitate humanitarian operations.[12]

**Notes**

1. *United States Code (USC)*, Title 10, subtitle B, pt. I, chap. 307, sec. 3073; *USC*, Title 10, subtitle C, pt. I, chap. 513, sec. 5142; *USC*, Title 10, subtitle D, pt. II, chap. 843, secs. 8546, 8547.1.

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5. William Flavin, "Planning for Conflict Termination and Post-Conflict Success," *Parameters* 33 (2003): 106.

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7. Douglas M. Johnston, "We Neglect Religion at Our Peril," United States Naval Institute *Proceedings* 128 (2002): 15, 18–19.

8. Chris Seiple, *The U.S. Military/NGO Relationship in Humanitarian Interventions* (Carlisle, PA: Peacekeeping Institute Center for Strategic Leadership, US Army War College, 1996), 186.

9. US Department of the Army, Field Manual (FM) 3-05.401, *Civil Affairs Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures,* 2003; US Department of the Army, FM 41-10, *Civil Affairs Operations,* 2000.

10. Julia Berger, "Religious Nongovernmental Organizations: An Exploratory Analysis," *Voluntas* 14 (2003): 16.

11. World Conference on Religion and Peace (2001), "Religions for Peace" http://www.wcrp.org/RforP/.

12. McLaughlin, The Chaplain's Evolving Role, 32–33.

Chapter 5

# Conclusions and Responses to Potential Objections

It is apparent that religion will remain a defining element in many societies for the foreseeable future. As the United States conducts foreign policy and military operations, it must assess and consider the impact of religion in societies to achieve success in operations and long-term stability in a region.

As noted earlier, failure to do so is at our own potential peril. Successful incorporation of indigenous religious groups and religious leaders for stability operations will enable a greater chance for achieving US foreign-policy goals and long-term stability in areas of operation.

## Recommendations

Implementing the recommendations in table 2 will achieve the necessary operational changes. Table 2 also lists those agencies responsible for performing the modifications. These proposals would result in a necessary shift in organizational culture for policies to be implemented strategically, operationally, and tactically. Although the agencies listed in table 2 are specific to the US Army, other military services have corresponding agencies to address the transformation.

A major paradigm shift is required to understand the relationship of religion to US foreign policy and military operations. As this paradigm shift occurs, it will be validated by the Department of Defense embracing religion as a factor of foreign national power to be assessed in mission planning and operations. Leadership will intentionally designate religion as a categorical imperative in intelligence operations, information warfare, threat-level assessment, defining the operational battle space, mission planning, and execution in conducting stability operations.

Doctrine must be developed to define how inclusion of the religious component will occur and what form it will take in individual military services, joint US operations, and joint international operations. Doctrine development and formulation can

**Table 2. Recommendations for required changes and responsible agencies**

| Recommended Changes | Responsible Agencies |
|---|---|
| • Doctrinally expand chaplaincy role to include religious liaison function in stability operations | • Headquarters, Department of the Army (DA) |
| • Identify religion as a defined axis of power to be evaluated in planning and implementation of US foreign policy | • Department of Defense (DOD)<br>• Department of State |
| • Establish doctrine for inclusion of religious component in planning and operations across range of DOD operations | • Each military branch<br>• Joint Forces Command |
| • Authorize one chaplain per civil affairs unit in specified role of religious liaison | • G-3, Headquarters, DA |
| • Authorize additional chaplain slot at division-level headquarters in role of religious liaison support | • G-3, Headquarters, DA |
| • Field religious information virtual network for commanders' and chaplains' operational use | • US Army Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) |
| • Identify, recruit, and assign chaplains for religious liaison role | • US Army Chief of Chaplains Office |
| • Train chaplains to standard as religious liaison | • TRADOC Military Schools System |
| • Train officers and noncommissioned officers in religious awareness and utilization of chaplain as religious liaison | • TRADOC Military Schools System |

best be accomplished within an interagency planning context. Military and nonmilitary input would allow for the strongest and most relevant doctrine. Nonmilitary agencies should include, but would not be limited to US Institute of Peace, US Agency for International Development, and US Department of State.

The functional role of military chaplains should be expanded to include the role of religious liaison during stability operations. The role of religious liaison must be defined in official doctrine and delineated to conform to current standards and parameters of operation. Doctrinal mandate and delineation would mitigate operational risk and protect chaplains in their roles as religious liaisons. Continuing to allow or use chaplains to function unofficially as religious liaisons without the protection of doctrinal mandate incurs too great a risk. Chaplain training must ensure that each chaplain has the competencies necessary to perform this mission and that each chaplain meets a standard that denotes and guarantees strict tolerances within acceptable margins of error.

All civil affairs units at least one chaplain slot should have whose primary mission is to coordinate with indigenous religious groups and religious leaders. An additional chaplain should be assigned to the headquarters of division-size units to support battalion chaplains and to facilitate transition of IRCs from battalion chaplains to civil affairs units or NGOs. A virtual network of information on religious groups, religious leaders, regional religious history, NGOs, and RNGOs should be developed and fielded for use by commanders and chaplains. Further, chaplain recruiting and assignments of military school instructors and division-level chaplains should be targeted toward subject matter experts with the training and skills for a religious liaison. Chaplains with these skills and experience will be critical to the success of the religious liaison role and further success during stability operations.

For chaplains to be effectively used in this expanded role of religious liaison, training on the expanded chaplain's role and utilization must be integrated into officer training programs at all levels. Also, officer and noncommissioned officer training should include basic understanding of the role of religion in cultures, its impact on all phases of combat operations, and beliefs of major world religions. Supplemental training should also be provided

on specific areas of concern in preparation for possible combat operations.

It is imperative that future officers who command combat operations understand the fundamentals addressed in this paper. Commanders often have a military lawyer and intelligence officer by their side when substantial decisions are being addressed. In the future, chaplains will be just as important to a commander conducting stability operations as currently are intelligence and legal personnel. Military leadership must be comfortable with embracing this added value by understanding that an individual does not have to become religious to understand religion and appreciate its importance in stability operations.

These recommendations would doctrinally establish the chaplain as religious liaison to interface with indigenous religious groups and religious leaders in stability operations. This policy implementation would also assist the US military in transforming the asymmetric, soft power of indigenous religious influence into a significant source of power for mission accomplishment, peace, and long-term stability.

## Roadblocks to Implementation

The policy changes recommended in this research paper could be implemented only with considerable care and institutional energy due to the sensitive, personal, and potentially volatile nature of religious issues. Any attempt to integrate religious actors is potentially risky given the often deep ethnoreligious tensions between and among them. In some settings, cooperation by indigenous religious leaders with any officers of the US military may be readily perceived as collaboration with the occupiers.[1] However, if the US military accepts the inevitable necessity of integrating religious leaders into stability operations, it must address any roadblocks to adjusting current doctrine that tasks this requirement to military chaplains.

There are six potential objections to this expanded role for military chaplains as a religious liaison. Though other arguments may exist, these six were most often noted and raised the most significant concerns. Table 3 summarizes these objections with corresponding responses.

**Table 3. Objections and responses to chaplains as religious liaisons**

| Objections | Responses |
|---|---|
| • Will distract from primary role of chaplain | • Expands current role of advising commanders<br>• Formalizes traditional unofficial role |
| • Risk of incident too great | • Can train to standard within acceptable margin of error |
| • Chaplains should not be involved in combat operations | • Current doctrine directs chaplain presence in all phases of military operations |
| • Chaplains are an unprotected security risk | • Chaplain's assistant protects the chaplain<br>• Increased security is an available option |
| • Violates chaplain professional and religious ethics | • Individual decision by each chaplain<br>• Chaplains customarily make ethical decisions successfully |
| • Violates parameters of denominational endorsement | • Liaison role acceptable to most religious endorsing bodies<br>• Chaplains cannot be compelled to violate their own beliefs |

The first objection is that this expanded role will take chaplains away from their primary focus of ministry to military members. Historically chaplains have often assumed the role of religious liaison unofficially. While often quite effective, they have done so with considerable risk due to a lack of both doctrinal mandate and standard training. Further, while spiritual and religious support of military members is important, it is only half of the primary role for the chaplain.

Chaplains are also doctrinally tasked with advising commanders in matters pertaining to religion, morals, and morale. Chaplain (Maj) Pete Sniffin of the US Army Chaplain Center and School advocates that an expanded role for chaplains as religious area liaisons is justified by the current doctrinal requirement to advise commanders. It is recommended that this role be expanded only until transition to the follow-on civil affairs units and not long term. The short-term nature of the expanded role depends on civil affairs units having a chaplain assigned and trained or the appropriateness of a transition to an NGO or RNGO.

A second argument against an expanded role for chaplains as religious area liaisons is that there is too great a risk of creating an incident due to the differing capabilities of individual chaplains. In response, core competencies would be identified and trained to a standard that ensures the best chance of success in interactions with indigenous religious groups and religious leaders. Individual competence and ongoing training and development are the norm for all military specialties. Chaplains can be trained to function successfully in this role with standards that denote and guarantee strict tolerances with acceptable margins of error. The impact of local religions on mission success cannot be ignored, and chaplains are by far the best possible choice to embrace these religious groups and religious leaders during stability operations.

A third argument against chaplain involvement in stability operations is that chaplains cannot engage in combat operations, and Phase IV stability operations is a part of combat operations. According to the Geneva convention and US military doctrine, chaplains are considered noncombatants and forbidden to bear arms. However, US military doctrine also prescribes for chaplains to be present to support the spiritual needs and free exercise of religious rights of military members throughout *all* phases of combat operations.[2] Doctrine directs chaplains, though noncombatants, to be active and present in support of US service members through all phases of combat, including Phase IV stability operations. In this regard, there is no difference between chaplains as noncombatants ministering to troops

on the D-day beaches in World War II and their ministering to troops in twenty-first-century stability operations.

A fourth argument against expanding the chaplain mission in stability operations is that chaplains would be an unprotected security risk. Again, this argument is answered by current doctrine that directs chaplains to always function as part of a Unit Ministry Team (UMT). The UMT includes a chaplain's assistant, who bears arms and is tasked with protecting the chaplain at all times.[3] Additional protection may be required in more complicated situations, but this would be true for any military personnel.

A fifth objection is the ethical concern that information gathered from religious leaders might be used in mission planning resulting in the loss of life. Limiting use of chaplains as religious area liaisons to Phase IV stability operations when major combat operations are over addresses this concern. Chaplains must consider additional ethical questions individually. Potential obstacles can be overcome with clarity of purpose, delineated standards of conduct, and clear rules of engagement.

A final objection is that having chaplains serve as religious area liaisons violates the parameters of ministry defined by the religious denomination that endorses and allows their service in the military. Those few cases where it is a limiting factor would be identified early in a chaplain's career in initial military schooling using the recommended core competency training already described. Also, military doctrine allows chaplains to decline to do anything that is in violation of their personal religious convictions. Chaplains could not refuse to function as a religious liaison simply because they view the role as less intrinsically rewarding than ministry with soldiers and families.

## Future Research

Research in this area should focus on identifying and clarifying chaplain core competencies and training necessary to achieve individual proficiency. This requires detailed curriculum that can be integrated into chaplains' core competencies. Training should incorporate how to transition from military civil affairs units to the Department of State for long-term stability operations. Additional officer training at all levels is necessary to

understand the role of indigenous religions and how to embrace them through the unit chaplain's role as religious liaison.

Another area for future research is to address why and how indigenous religious groups would embrace chaplains. Such a study could address the motivations and methods that would encourage these groups to interface with chaplains of a military toward which they may harbor ill will. As noted earlier, cooperation by indigenous religious leaders with any officers of the US military may be readily perceived as collaboration with the occupiers.

Inclusion of religion and religious leaders as potential resources for stability operations should be one part of a seamless plan of US foreign policy and military doctrine that should be applied to State Department interventions and DOD operations. These interventions and operations should be in conjunction with support of US Agency for International Development, US Institute of Peace, and other agencies that aim toward building peaceful, stable, and representative governments throughout the global community of nations.

This research paper has illustrated the necessity of establishing military doctrine for chaplains to serve as religious liaisons to embrace indigenous religions in stability operations. There is much work to be addressed in this area to fully understand the power of religion in diplomacy. However, following this path to its conclusion will help to mitigate the possibility that the initial scenario presented in this paper ever reaches its climax.

## Notes

1. David Little, professor, Harvard Divinity School, interviewed by author, 2 March 2004.
2. US Department of Defense, *Religious Support in Joint Operations*, Joint Publication (JP) 1-05, 1996; and US Department of the Army, Field Manual 1-05, *Religious Support*, 2003.
3. US Department of Defense, JP 1-05.

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