

Running Head: ETHICAL WARFRONT AND TERRORISM: FIGHTING TERRORISM AND ETHICS ON THE SAME BATTLEFIELD

Ethical Warfront and Terrorism: Fighting Terrorism and Ethics on the Same Battlefield

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Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to explore the ethical dilemmas facing today's soldier in the Global War on Terrorism. Soldiers at all levels must make decisions on the battlefield that may not be morally or ethically sound in many person's mind outside the context of war. It first discusses the changing face of the battlefield and the shaded areas of clear-cut guidance. I will discuss the training presented to Soldiers to support an ethical decision on the battlefield, and how this decision may contradict with the human instinct of survival. Then I will discuss how terrorist will use ethical dilemmas against the U. S. Soldiers to support their own goals. Finally, I will discuss the importance of a strong ethical background and sound training to help overcome the difficulties associated with ethical dilemmas on the battlefield today. After reading this paper, you should have a better understanding of one of the most important issues facing Soldiers today in the fight against terrorism.

The United States is involved in just about every country on the planet. Whether it is providing economic aid, intelligence, technology, or military assistance it is ethically spreading the ideals of democracy and capitalism around the world in the hopes of securing a peace for all nations to enjoy a healthy, prosperous future. After the U.S. was attacked on September 11, 2001, a new breed of warfare emerged and an offensive was launched around the world. This offensive was designed to combat terrorism and aggression against the free nations by a force often unseen, idealistic, and religious in nature. There are no rules to the fighting, no clear combatants, only success through fear, oppression, and terror to achieve the goals of the enemy. Terrorism is not new to the U.S. or any other nation for that matter, it just never happened on such a large scale on our homeland by a foreign entity.

Answering the Call

The U.S. answered the call of many nations tormented by terrorism and led the war against the world's terrorists using the enormous power and might of the strongest nation on the planet. This could have been done in a barbaric manner destroying everything in its path, but this nation is built upon principles that all men and women are not evil, only a small few, and should be spared in the onslaught of war. Ethically speaking, precision munitions, small-scale attacks targeting specific structures or individuals, diplomacy, and monetary might are used to ensure the only ones punished are the individuals responsible for the terror. Tactical patience is often used in conjunction with diplomacy to give restraint a chance to prove successful. The United States will use time on its side to defeat nation states that support terrorism with sanctions causing a stranglehold on the government forcing internal discontent to achieve our goals.

This war will not end swiftly, or possibly, in this generation's lifetime, however, it will end someday with a victor on the hilltop. The U.S. will fight this war with every means at its

disposal and at the same time will stand on the hilltop in the end and be able to say it fought with honor, with ethically sound principles at the foundation for future generations to be proud of.

Changes

Today's battlefield is very much different from the battlefields of WWI, WWII, Korea, Vietnam, or even earlier. The days of force on force in linear fashion fighting a war on a symmetrical battlefield ended with the battles of Iwo Jima, Battle of the Bulge or other wars around the world through time. Fighting terrorism forces one to fight on an asymmetrical battlefield in which you must take into account the populace, infrastructure, and effects of the fight in specific areas, regions, countries, or cities. Combatants are not easily recognized by a particular uniform, carrying weapons, driving tanks or armored personnel carriers, carrying flags or colors, or even stationing themselves in a forward distinguishable line of troops. Instead, terrorists will not wear uniforms, will carry any number of different weapon systems, drive their own vehicles, and remain amongst the populace without any discernable difference between the two. Their objective often entails inflicting as many casualties as possible with the least amount of resources expended. They will use suicide bombings as a tactic to inflict casualties and create fear among the populace.

The history of the suicide bomber dates back to October 680 A.D. when the third Imam of the Muslim faith, Husayn, took his small group of fighters and left Mecca knowing he would not make it to Kufa. Instead, he was killed and his body, minus his head, which is in Damascus, was entombed in Karbala and remains one of the most sacred Shiite locations.

The U.S. used battlefield victories as stories of success in the past. These small victories showed the American public the military was doing its job in securing objectives, opening lines of communication, or destroying enemy positions in pursuit of overall victory. A large enemy

death toll and small U.S. death toll demonstrated our superiority over the enemy and capability for an overall victory. When U.S. soldiers die in combat it is often looked at by the public as a failure in our capability to fight and win. U.S. losses are not tolerated by the people of this nation, and often force our government, of the people, by the people, to change its current posture or policy regarding a particular conflict. What the American public fails to understand is that nearly every armed conflict the U.S. engages in constitutes another possible dead soldier no matter how effective, trained, and lethal our forces have become. The very nature of combat brings the risk of a lost life in the pursuit of freedom and justice. The policy makers, President, and Joint Chiefs of Staff weigh the risks involved in any conflict and decide to accept risk based on the benefits of a successful outcome.

“Train me sergeant, so I may fight and win”. These words echo through the halls of nearly every command. Whether it is a spoken word, furtive glance at the range, or a soldier going the extra mile to ensure he masters the technique being taught, soldiers want to learn the techniques necessary to win in battle. They thirst for the opportunity to fight for their country’s ideals and free the oppressed. The NCO can teach the proper method of executing a parachute landing fall, how to obtain a good sight picture, or the principles behind using points of domination in room clearing. The NCO cannot teach a man or woman how to feel after a bloody engagement with the enemy or how to suppress the feelings of rage and vengeance when a brother in arms is killed in combat.

Department of Defense regulations, Title 18 of the United States Code, and Executive Orders by the President of the United States lay out specific rules and/or guidance on ethical conduct. The majority pertains to monetary gain, conflicts of interests, activities with non-federal entities, and standards of ethical conduct. All of this guidance is important for the soldier in their

day-to-day activities in garrison. However, ethics take on a completely different persona on the battlefield. Soldiers are ordered to comply with the aforementioned guidance in a tactical sense as well. Policies on ethics are designed to establish a standard of conduct for each member employed by the U.S. government. This prevents actions taken by someone that may bring discredit upon our nation for their own personal gain or safety. In laymen's terms, ethics may be the difference between stealing a sandwich and merely asking someone for work to earn a sandwich.

In August 2006 Michael H. Thompson of Humansystems© Incorporated, Guelph, Ontario, Canada did a study on training that should be required for their soldiers in regards to ethical decision making on the battlefield. The results of this study were interesting in several ways. First, they found the ethos instilled in Canadian Forces (CF) were paramount to successful ethical decision-making. This can be related to our own Army Values. Without a basic guideline for soldiers to follow in regards to ethical decision-making and purpose, ill thought out decisions that can have global impact would surely follow on the battlefield.

Second, they recognized the need for a more direct approach to training their soldiers in ethical decision-making for use in an operational environment. They felt the current training was not adequate to support the needs of the troops deployed around the world. In addition, personnel chosen to train soldiers in ethical decision-making needed to have operational experience in order to be better equipped. The need for psychological professionals increased with the ongoing war on terrorism. Soldiers are becoming affected more than expected by their experiences on the battlefield and decisions they make. The military and civilian sector is not equipped to handle the flood and there is no relief in sight.

U.S. Army ethical decision-making training did not mature until recently. The leaders of today's military saw a need in the late eighties to provide a set of guidelines for soldiers of all lifestyles to follow. These guidelines would provide a tool for a seamless transition from citizen to soldier in regards to ethics and behavior. Army Values training began as an initiative to transform the force in size, structure, and image. Cards were printed, dog tag size medallions were produced, and classes were taught introducing these guidelines as the new Army Values. Each soldier was told to memorize, teach, and live by these values. The War on Terrorism catapulted the mental health services of all uniformed services of this nation into high gear overnight. Army Values give a soldier a foundation of values to live by, no matter what background they may come from. These values provide a backstop in the decision-making process in regards to ethics.

On the battlefield of today, soldiers are expected to engage combatants and not civilians. With an enemy that is not willing to make himself known on the battlefield and intentionally disguises his appearance in order to gain the advantage, many ethical decisions arise. When the enemy is willing to arm a child and sacrifice this child to kill U.S. soldiers, soldiers are put into a scenario that is the toughest ethical dilemma they will ever face. Do you engage a child carrying a doll? Do you engage an elderly man with thick glasses behind the wheel of a car driving in your direction? Should you search women of a culture in which touching females is not accepted because you are not Muslim? These are all ethical situations our soldiers are placed in every day on the battlefield. Soldiers are instructed to comply with policies, regulations, and directives pertaining to their mission. Do you put your ethical upbringing on hold long enough to shoot the child holding a grenade, shoot the elderly man in the bomb laden vehicle, or physically search the female hiding the loaded .45 cal pistol under her clothing? Nobody wants to be the next

headline story with pictures of a dead child, the remains of an old blind man that was handcuffed to the steering wheel, or end up in a body bag because the woman shot the soldier conducting a raid on her house looking for an insurgent. These are the realities in today's fight. Soldiers are ordered to protect themselves, government property, or innocent persons using deadly force if necessary. They may not be able to shoot the child sent there to kill them because of an ethical upbringing that taught them to protect children, the innocence of humankind. These issues confront soldiers daily in Iraq and Afghanistan. Strong ethical training and a solid ethical upbringing will help soldiers deal with situations of this type. More importantly, it will help them deal with the aftermath of these decisions as well.

The insurgents on today's battlefield have utilized the mass media, internet, and print media to exploit military blunders, their successes, and sway the populace to their cause. We as a nation have not done a very good job of influencing media outlets to print stories of our successes. Instead, they choose to broadcast the village or neighborhood torn up after a raid in which a firefight ensued due to insurgents using it as a stronghold. They will show the images of the dead women and children, blown up buildings, and utter chaos that remains after heavy fighting. The soldiers on the ground may have needed to call in an airstrike on a particular building that was being used as protection for insurgents fighting U.S. soldiers. Turns out, this building was a mosque. Terrorists will use children to deliver their bombs to ensure maximum emotion and attention is brought to the event.

There are countless stories that can be told about soldiers that made split second decisions in order to protect themselves or their post at a roadside checkpoint. Numerous reports surfaced regarding vehicles being fired upon for failing to stop at a checkpoint, only to find out the occupants were two women, Special Forces soldiers in traditional wear, or elderly people that

could not understand what was happening at the time. Ethics plays a vital role in the split second decisions made by soldiers every day. With a strong ethical background, they are better equipped to make the right decision and ensure stability in their own lives after such a decision is made.

Ethical training can only provide a set of guidelines for one to follow. The actual learning portion of ethics is taught throughout life, especially, in the younger, formative years of one's life. These are the lessons taught by your parents on how to behave in a society. What is acceptable behavior, and what is not, is passed down from generation to generation. Aristotle went so far to say there is no way to teach it as a set of rules, or a method. This ethical training is usually the result of a society's laws created over time as acceptable for the civilian populace to live in harmony. Laws such as do not kill, steal, or commit adultery are the foundation of ethical reasoning. They are religiously based that have transformed into criminal law. Ethical reasoning is basically doing what is right no matter what the consequence. In addition, it is putting others before yourself and doing what is morally right. There may not be a law that specifically forbids an action, but to do it would still not be right in the eyes of the public.

Conclusion

This nation will continue to combat terrorism in the many forms in which it manifests itself. Without an ethically sound, trained military, our nation will lose face on the world stage. A strong ethical baseline provides a huge dividend in a morally, ethically sound military able to project its power into any nation in the world. Ethics ensure the actions taken by our soldiers are acceptable to the majority populace and are done with what is right in mind. Without an ethical measuring stick this nation and other industrialized nations would fall victim to human rights abuses, decimation of the family unit, and a failure of the citizen to support his/her government's ideals in the world stage.

