

“Conflict Of Interest During Combat”

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Good job!

ETHICS THOUGHT PAPER

Define The Problem:

During the battle of An Najaf, I was serving as the Command Sergeant Major for Task Force 2-7 Cavalry, 1st Cavalry Division, as part of Operation Iraqi Freedom. Throughout the battle the Muuqtada Militia morale was high and at times fanatical. It increased as the task force progressed toward the Imam Ali Shrine. Supporters of Muqtada Al Sadr continually attempted to reinforce the embattled enemy forces within the Imam Ali Shrine.

On the night of August 26, 2004, reconnaissance assets of the 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU) identified a demonstration of Sadr supporters, some of whom were armed, marching toward the Inmam Ali Shrine. On previous occasions, similar demonstrations had marched into the shrine complex, reinforcing the enemy. At this critical juncture of the battle, the task force commander determined that the demonstration could not be allowed to reinforce the enemy within the shrine complex. The commander ordered me to move to the location with a section of Up-Armored HMMWVs from the task force mortar platoon and block continued movement of the demonstrators. Upon arriving at the site, I coordinated with with a platoon of Iraqi Intervention Forces already establishing a blocking position. Captain Dave; a Special Forces advisor, was in charge of these forces. The presence of armed protestors among the demonstration intimidated Iraqi forces, causing them to begin to withdraw. Captain Dave and I rallied the Iraqi forces, allowing them to maintain their blocking position in the face of over 2,000 agitated demonstrators. After initially rallying the Iraqi forces, I realized a continued threat to this vital position and I ordered a section of M1A2 tanks to reinforce this blocking position. Captain Dave approached me and told me that we had to hold them for couple of hours until a company of Iraqi police showed up. Everybody knew that the police was extremely abusive

against the civilians in this kind of demonstration, their presence would possibly end this demonstration; I wasn't ready to be part of any kind of abuse, because I felt uncomfortable seeing the children and older men in the crowd.

Know the Relevant Rules:

At this point I knew that if I allow the Iraqi police to take over the mission innocent civilians would possibly get hurt; at the same time I was here to accomplish my mission and eventually contributed to the success of the task force mission. I looked at what I had at this point which were; 2 tanks, 4 HMMWVs, 9 soldiers and about 70 Iraqi soldiers against over 2000 demonstrators that were getting more agitated. My biggest worry was the 9 soldiers that I had in the ground, they were there to protect me as my personal security, and I didn't want to put their life in danger; if this demonstration went passed me they would come behind the task force, something that I would definitely not allow to happen.

Develop and Evaluate Courses of Action:

COA Number One

I could go over to the demonstrators, find the leaders and try to convince them to go back home for their own safety.

COA Number Two

I could also let the police go ahead and terminate the entire demonstration for the safety of my troops and the sure accomplishment of the mission.

COA Number Three

I could have waited to see if the demonstrators decided to withdraw on their own.

Choose the COA that best represents the Army Values

At this time the crowd starting pushing closer to us and the Iraqi soldiers started to retreat; whatever I needed to do I had to do fast. I chose COA number two.

The army values that were represented in this mission were my duty and my loyalty to my men, my unit, and the army. The safety of my soldiers and the accomplishment of the mission was the most important thing at this point. I felt I did everything possible to try to find a peaceful solution to this crisis. I ordered my men to withdraw back and to let the Iraqi police take over. On our way back to our vehicles the Iraqi police open fire ^d into the crowd; I look back and there were bodies falling everywhere. The news reported the next date 12 dead and 76 wounded including children.

That night we surrounded the rebels around the shrine and eventually they surrendered to the Iraqis forces two days later. I asked myself what would happen if those demonstrators pass ^{ed} forward. I didn't know, but that night I felt that I made the right decision; others probably think that I didn't.

I received an award for my actions that night that read as follows; the aggressiveness and firm resolved displayed by me directly contributed to the success of the task force during the Battle of An Najaf. My actions are in keeping with the highest traditions of military service and reflect great credit upon him, his unit, and the United States Army; and I really believe that.