

## Religious Diplomacy: Exporting Military Chaplain Professionalism

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### Abstract

Religious and cultural factors have been routinely ignored in the development and execution of United States foreign policy, creating diplomats, politicians, and military leaders who are uncomfortable with engaging in religious dialog or with religious leaders. Joint doctrine now reflects the expectation for military chaplains to perform Religious Leader Engagement, external Religious Advisement, and expanded strategic Religious Support to geographic combatant commands. The demand for religious engagement around the world continues to grow, driven by globalization and the communications revolution connecting people instantaneously and transnationally. Without a deliberate effort to engage United States military chaplains in Religious Leader Engagement and Religious Advising at the strategic level, future combatant commanders will be fighting through all phases of operations at a disadvantage. An immediate positive impact can be made by leveraging existing National Guard capacity, to effectively export military chaplain professionalism to allies and partners globally through the State Partnership Program.

## **Religious Diplomacy: Exporting Military Chaplain Professionalism**

An operational commander who is ignorant of or discounts the importance of religious belief can strengthen his enemy, offend his allies, alienate his own forces, and antagonize public opinion.

—Paul R. Wrigley<sup>1</sup>

To fully leverage the strategic reach and diplomatic capability of the National Guard (NG) State Partnership Program (SPP), the National Guard Bureau (NGB) must encourage and resource every state and territory to use military chaplains in engagements with United States (U.S.) allies and partners around the world. Chaplains are well-suited to this task, and exporting the professionalism of the American military chaplaincy furthers the goals of building partner capacity and religious diplomacy. Better coordination between Department of State (DOS) requirements, geographic combatant command (GCC) planning, and NGB resources will enable NG chaplains to further U.S. policy interests through their direct participation in the SPP. While some may argue that chaplains and religious diplomacy are not critical to military operations and are therefore unnecessary capabilities to develop, recent research indicates that the United States has ignored the role of religion in statecraft, mostly to its own detriment and at great risk to U.S. forces and interests around the world. Rather than being a topic too sensitive to address with other nation's military forces, religion, religious support, and a professional chaplaincy are all critical elements in cross-cultural and multinational engagements.

### **Religious Diplomacy and the Chaplain's Mission**

Religious diplomacy is the development of attitudes and practices that allow for the respectful engagement of religious and ideological differences, without denigrating or doubting the intentions of critics and rivals alike.<sup>2</sup> Douglas Johnston in *Religion, The Missing Dimension of Statecraft* finds that religious and cultural factors have been, and

continue to be, routinely ignored in the development and execution of U.S. foreign policy.<sup>3</sup> He argues that neither diplomats nor politicians are comfortable with engaging in religious dialogue or with religious leaders because, “the rigorous separation of church and state in the United States has desensitized many citizens to the fact that much of the rest of the world does not operate on a similar basis.”<sup>4</sup> This is true not only of U.S. diplomats and politicians, but also of U.S. strategic military leaders.

He therefore recommends that military chaplains should enter into the international diplomatic stage in order to further “peace and understanding” among people and nations.<sup>5</sup> The U.S. military has also adopted this perspective and made a formal change to doctrine in 2009 by updating Joint Publication 1-05, Religious Affairs in Joint Operations. The updates now reflect the duties of a military chaplain to include Religious Leader Engagement (RLE), Religious Advisement (RA), and expanded support to GCC in such matters.<sup>6</sup> Additional resources that can help define these ideas in more detail include Religious Support (FM 1-05, Oct 2012), Religious Support and the Operations Process (ATP 1-05.01, May 2014), Religious Support and External Advisement (ATP 1-05.03, May 2013), and Religious Support and Internal Advisement (ATP 1-05.04, May 2017).

Eric Patterson, a fellow at Georgetown University’s Berkley Center for Religion, Peace, and World Affairs, makes an even more pointed critique. He claims, “U.S. foreign policy is blind to religious factors in international affairs.”<sup>7</sup> In the recent past, the United States was unprepared to believe that events of international importance could be motivated by religious ideas and leaders. Patterson point to the difficulty for American policy makers in coming to terms with the religious mobilization of Iran by the

Ayatollah Khomeini, left-leaning religious support for pro-democratic movements in Latin America, the fracturing of military forces in Lebanon along religious lines, and the rise of Al-Qaeda leading to the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on the United States.<sup>8</sup> Yet, religious leaders and ideas can also lead to more positive developments. For example, former Soviet Premier Mikhail Gorbachev identified that Roman Catholic Pope John Paul II's visit to communist ruled Poland started a chain of events that eventually led to the fall of communism across all of Eastern Europe.<sup>9</sup>

Thomas Matyok, a scholar of religion, peace and conflict studies, sounds a warning bell about religious illiteracy among U.S. Government actors at the strategic level—that is, senior and strategic leaders, often well-schooled in diplomatic and military theories, lack basic knowledge about the world's religions, religious practices and customs, and the role of religion in other cultures. In order to counter this phenomenon, religion should become an essential element that is always included in the planning and implementation of peacebuilding and stability operations.<sup>10</sup> The lack of religious awareness incorporated into national security and diplomacy has placed the nation's military forces directly into dangerous situations. Many of these problems could have been avoided if the topic of religion had been addressed in the planning phase. During the Spanish American War, U.S. military chaplains engaged both Catholic clergy and Muslim leaders on behalf of the U.S. Commander General "Black Jack" Pershing to avoid increased conflict and to help end hostilities in the Philippines.<sup>11</sup>

As a nation, the United States encourages religious freedom and the ability to worship as one sees fit. In the book *Rethinking Religion and World Affairs*, the authors argue that the concept of religious freedom as a basic human right took hold with the

Peace of Westphalia in 1648, and the idea that religion should be a private reality and not a public influence on society has been reinforced in western thinking.<sup>12</sup> If religious faith is a private, personal matter, it follows that discussion of religious ideas and practices are essentially off-limits in professional and official environments. Former career U.S. diplomats have pointed out that there is serious doubt among some that religion is even relevant to their duties, and they further suggest that even if it were assumed to be relevant, there could be high costs for engaging in such talk, as it might invite controversy.<sup>13</sup> This error seems to be one continually perpetuated by U.S. policy makers who have foolishly divested themselves from meaningful talks that include religion.<sup>14</sup> The fountain of hubris has been flowing non-stop for so long in this area, that to consider anything less than the Western idea of a secularized government seems not only impossible, but the only right and proper way to operate and function.<sup>15</sup>

Yet religion is a critical part of the environment, and secular governments do interact frequently with religious people, institutions, and ideas. Former Chief of Staff for the U.S. Army, General Ray Odierno, acknowledged this truth in 2014, stating “military officers need to understand the religious environments within which they will operate, because conflicts possess a religious dimension.”<sup>16</sup> Odierno realized what many scholars have been trying to get strategic leaders within the U.S. government to realize over the past several decades: not everyone separates religion from public life.<sup>17</sup> Globally, Matyok observes that “the West makes up less than one-sixth of the world population” and that it is arrogant “for Western actors to presume that religion is marginal to people’s lives, or that western leaders know what is best for the other five-sixths of the populace.”<sup>18</sup> Religious traditions and practices, especially as they relate to

government policy, must be addressed alongside diplomatic, information, military, and economic considerations.

A multidisciplinary effort must be taken in response to conflict, as a way to truly understand how to end wars and prevent conflict from occurring in the future.<sup>19</sup> This effort must include a deep and sophisticated understanding of religion. Most people around the globe—including many in the “secular” West—use religious beliefs and practices to frame their lives and provide an informed way to view the world.<sup>20</sup> Further, religion is often a useful way to motivate political action, a point exemplified by Gandhi’s observation that, “anyone who thinks that religion and politics can be kept apart, understands neither religion nor politics.”<sup>21</sup>

How then can someone better understand religion and why it matters? Defining “religion” is, itself, a difficult challenge and the subject of many books and studies. For simplicity, Patterson’s description of religion will be used here and is defined as, “an organized and shared set of beliefs and practices, founded on reverence for a supernatural power(s) or in the teachings of a spiritual leader.”<sup>22</sup> A further premise of this work is that, religion is a primary driver of how a culture makes judgments and transmits beliefs from generation to generation.<sup>23</sup> This means that for strategists, a main issue is how to engage with different cultures and their religion(s) as a matter of military preparedness and understanding. Religion’s influence on culture and politics must be understood in all of its complexity and as having diverse manifestations, it must not be reduced to merely a driver of some violent extremist ideologies.

Rather, the U.S. value of religious freedom should be supported in diplomatic and military operations. The National Security Strategy (NSS) is based upon the view

that peace, security, and prosperity depend on strong, sovereign nations that respect their citizens at home and cooperate to advance peace abroad.<sup>24</sup> This includes the freedom of religion for all people as an inalienable human right. This is really the crux of the ongoing tension within the U.S. Government, where it will work to protect individual religious freedoms, but at the same time fails to fully incorporate religious ideas and elements into planning and policy as a practical matter of diplomacy.

There are five general trends that can be seen globally in regards to religion that provide opportunities to engage military staff and commanders the strategic level.

1. Individual religiosity is rising around the world.
2. Public expressions of religion by individuals and groups worldwide matters more in political discourse.
3. States are no longer the sole legitimate centers of authority and authenticity, nor are they always the most reliable providers of vital services.
4. Religious actors, identities, and ideas, are vigorously transnational.
5. Whether at the individual or collective level, religious impulses can transcend what scholars typically define as “rational” or material interests.<sup>25</sup>

These are all areas where U.S. foreign policy could and should intersect with religious dialogue and religious engagement. Understanding these trends would provide occasions for discussion amongst strategic leaders and policy makers. Once discussing religion become commonplace for national security professionals, military planners and diplomats at the strategic, operational, and tactical levels could begin to include religious considerations in the day to day discharge of their duties.

Diplomatic and military leaders must stop ignoring the role that religion plays concerning international affairs around the world. In addition to the five opportunities for religious engagement at the strategic level, Peterson also notes specific trends about religion that affect the international environment. Surveys indicate the following trends:

1. Over the past 20 years, belief in God increased on every inhabited continent except Western Europe, in Eastern Europe belief in God has risen 10 percent.
2. The proportion of people attached to the world's four biggest religions (Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism) rose from 67 percent in 1990, to 73 percent in 2005, and may reach 80 percent by 2050.
3. Majorities of publics in key regional players, including Indonesia, Pakistan, Nigeria, Egypt, Turkey, South Africa, India, and Brazil, report that religion is "very important to their life."
4. Over 90 percent of the publics in 46 countries surveyed say that religious freedom is important to them.<sup>26</sup>

Every GCC is affected or influenced directly by these trends. Military planners and commanders who ignore them and fail to engage their chaplains in such matters do so at great risk to themselves and those within their areas of operation.

### Building Partner Capacity

The United States now finds itself engaged in one of the most complex security environments ever imagined. More than ever before, the ability of the United States to project military power to protect vital U.S. interests relies on working with allies and partners. Former Secretary of Defense Robert Gates noted that, "the capabilities of U.S. allies and partners may be as important as its own, and building their capacity is arguably as important as, if not more than, the fighting the U.S. does itself."<sup>27</sup> The NG SPP continues to be uniquely poised to provide this capability, in peacetime and during war, in order to support Building Partner Capacity (BPC) around the world in every GCC.

This also then begs the question of whether or not every GCC is truly affected by this religious phenomenon. In his analysis of the world's global cultural differences, Samuel Huntington argues there are nine major world civilizations. He describes these cultural zones as Western Christian, Orthodox, Islamic, Confucian (Sinic), Hindu, Buddhist, Latin American, Japanese, and African worlds.<sup>28</sup> Just a cursory review of

these divisions of culture around the globe highlights the fact that two-thirds of these zones (the first six) are explicitly tied to religious traditions. In addition, the seventh (Latin America) overwhelmingly identifies as a Roman Catholic culture. Japanese culture may also be associated with a specific national religious tradition: Shintoism. Only the “African” world is not explicitly drawn around religious–cultural lines.

The nine civilizations laid out by Huntington were largely shaped by religious traditions that are still relevant today, despite the effects of modernization.<sup>29</sup> The most important strategic implication for US military consideration is that future conflicts may occur between these cultural civilization divides.<sup>30</sup>

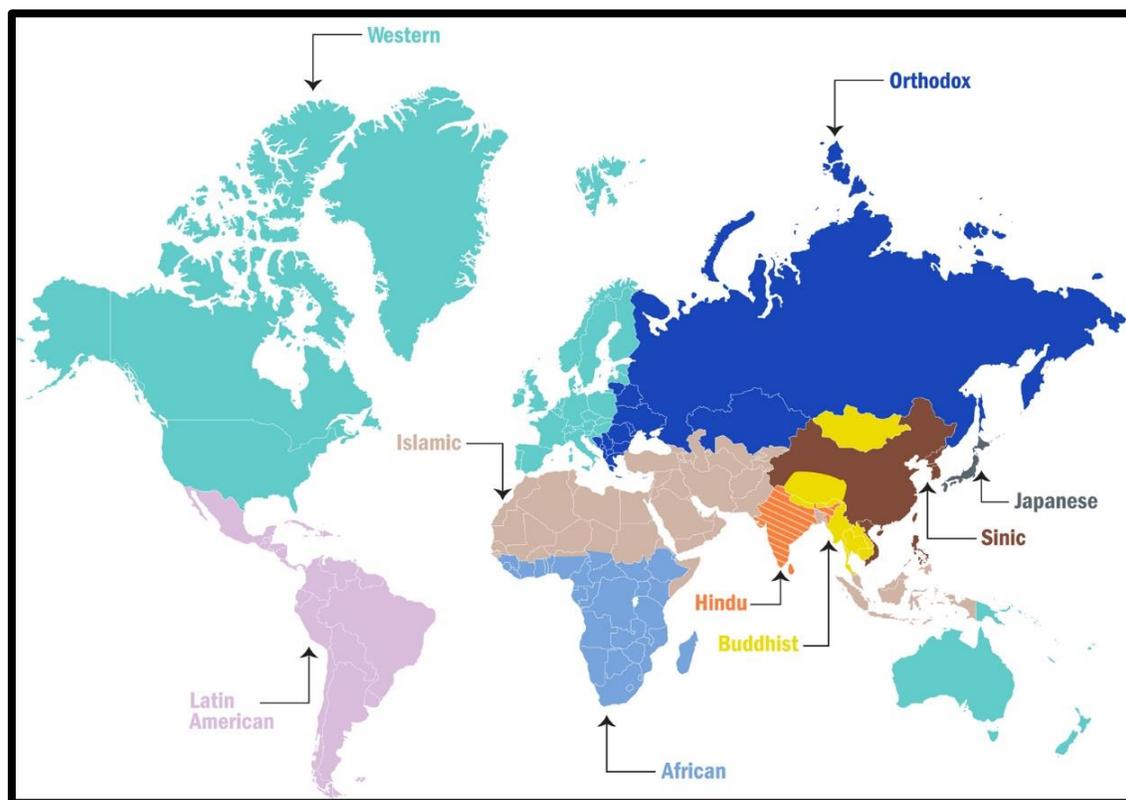


Figure 1. Samuel Huntington's Nine Major World Civilizations<sup>31</sup>

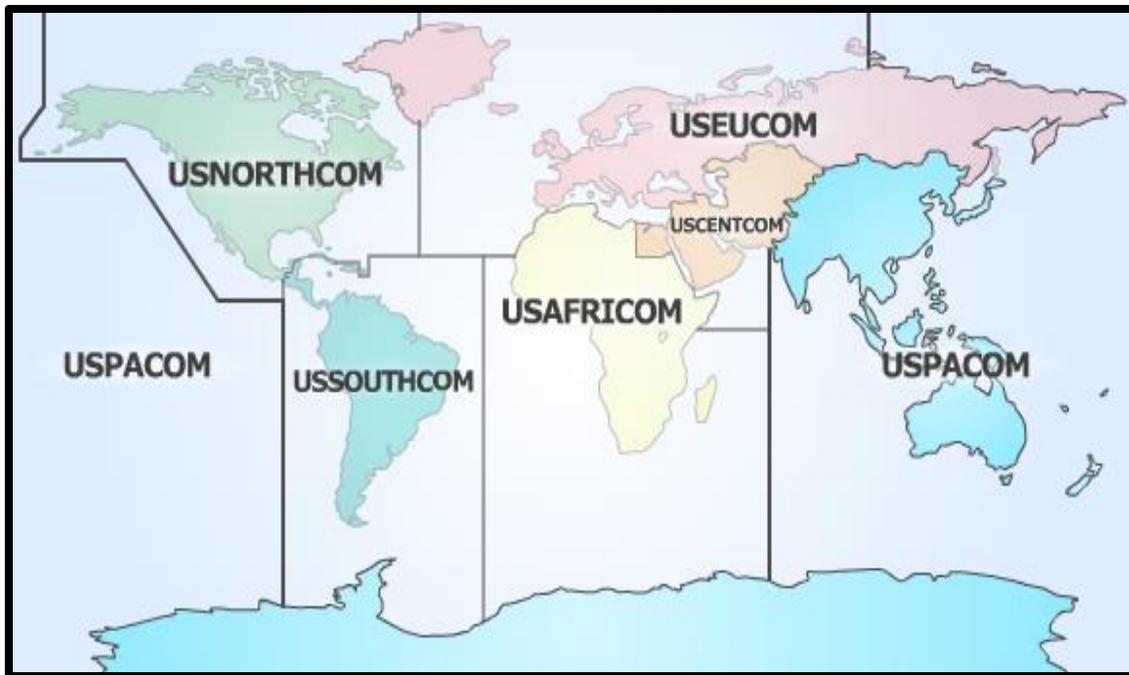


Figure 2. United States Military Geographic Combatant Commands<sup>32</sup>

A quick comparison of the two previous maps shows significant congruence between the US military organization globally, and the religious orientation and geography of world civilization. The U.S. Northern Command and European Command each predominately share Western Christianity and Orthodoxy. The U.S. Southern Command is largely Roman Catholic, with ties to Western Christianity. Across the Atlantic, U.S. Africa Command finds itself a mixture of many religions; however, the predominance of Islam across the north sweeping over into and encompassing U.S. Central Command cannot be ignored. Finally, U.S. Pacific Command finds itself in the unique position of having to address five of the nine major world civilizations previously identified. By addressing the religious underpinnings of each GCC, the commanders can begin to develop better plans and utilization of NG SPP chaplains in their engagements and overall strategy.

The significance to military thinking and diplomacy of religion has not diminished, but has increased over the past two decades as the security environment has become more interconnected and complicated. Because of U.S. security concerns and the need for military coalitions to defend against global threats, the 2017 NSS mentions the phrase “allies and partners” no less than 30 times. Two of the four pillars that constitute “vital” US national interests mention allies and partners. In order for the United States to “preserve peace through strength” in pillar three, the NSS states that allies and partners will “magnify our power.” The fourth pillar in NSS is to “advance American influence” through multinational cooperation.<sup>33</sup> Relying on and developing allied and partner capacity has become a national security interest in and of itself. Military chaplains can directly help link these capabilities to military power.

A brief overview of the ends-ways-means construct in the context of religious diplomacy underscores these connections. The ends are the third and fourth pillars just mentioned. Next, the ways are military chaplaincy RLE and RA through the NG SPP. Finally, the means involve planning, financial, and operational support given by each GCC and synced with DOS. Finally, the risk being faced would be loss of pillars three and/or four contained within the NSS, due to a lack of religious knowledge, engagement, or awareness by the military in the execution of its’ strategy.

The 2018 National Defense Strategy (NDS) developed this concept further and specified how the Department of Defense (DoD) would help BPC.<sup>34</sup> The unclassified summary of the NDS described three lines of effort for the DoD with the second one being, “strengthening alliances as we attract new partners.”<sup>35</sup> The strategy then points out that, “our allies and partners provide complementary capabilities and forces along

with unique perspectives, regional relationships, and information that improve our understanding of the environment and expand our options.”<sup>36</sup> The NDS describes the requirements for achieving a capable network of allies and partners:

1. Uphold a foundation of mutual respect, responsibility, priorities, and accountability.
2. Expand regional consultative mechanisms and collaborative planning.
3. Deepen interoperability.<sup>37</sup>

Understanding the religious environment of U.S. allies and partners is critical to achieving these networks. If the American military chaplaincy, organizationally and doctrinally, is central to religious advising and religious engagement, we must thoroughly consider how chaplains can be used to build partner capacity as directed in the NDS. Not only can a well engaged military chaplaincy help prevent conflict, it can also assist in stability and peacekeeping operations in order to BPC. While DoD and DOS could acknowledge the value of using chaplains to engage allied and partner military forces and civilian populations, U.S. military planners and commanders are often reluctant to use chaplains beyond their more traditional role of ministering to the troops and their families.

#### National Guard Bureau State Partnership Program

National Guard chaplains and the State Partnership Program offer some structural and cultural advantages in solving the challenge presented above. The three ongoing missions of the National Guard are to fight America’s wars, secure the homeland, and build enduring partnerships. These missions have been restated over the past two decades and have become the de-facto expectation for NG service to the joint force. Because of this development and the continued demand for SPP activities by every GCC, a logical step in the process would be to provide a standard framework

and expectation for chaplaincy engagement that supports the larger idea of religious diplomacy that is needed around the world from the U.S. government.

How can the SPP more effectively implement religious diplomacy in support of the NDS? The SPP is as a joint DoD program, managed and administered by NGB, guided by DOS foreign policy goals and country strategies, through GCC Theater Security Cooperation Program (TSCP) objectives. This is done by matching a state NG with a specific Partner Nation (PN), in order to provide mutually beneficial security relationships with U.S. allies and partners.<sup>38</sup> The execution and coordination with the GCC ensures that the right personnel can be sourced by the NG for the types and purposes of missions the DOS wants DoD to focus on with each PN.<sup>39</sup>

**Mission Triad**  
*What We Do*

**This is our story and we all need to tell it**

This symbol, the Mission Triad, is our brand. We prioritize based on these three missions — fighting America’s wars, securing the homeland and building enduring partnerships.

These missions are intertwined, where the capability built in one strengthens and reinforces the others.

The Minuteman in the middle represents our heritage and connects the earliest Citizen-Soldiers to today’s full spectrum Soldiers and Airmen. It also reflects the foundation upon which the National Guard is built — our Soldiers and Airmen, their families, and their communities with invaluable support from their employers.

**OUR PEOPLE**

Our storied history and future accomplishments are directly attributable to the dedication and skill of our most important weapon system: our people. Nothing happens across the force without the capable, competent and ready Army and Air National Guard warriors and their families and employers who support them. Their spirit of sacrifice and desire to do more makes me proud.

**FIGHT**  
AMERICA’S WARS  
MORE THAN 787,000 MOBILIZATIONS SINCE 9/11

**SECURE**  
THE HOMELAND  
MORE THAN 1.2 MILLION MAN-DAYS IN FY16

**BUILD**  
PARTNERSHIPS  
ENDURING RELATIONSHIPS WITH 79 NATIONS

Figure 3. National Guard Bureau Mission Triad<sup>40</sup>

From a geographic perspective it becomes evident how much of an impact the SPP already has globally, while also taking a view to where potential future partnerships could develop. In terms of the current numbers and effectiveness of the SPP, the NGB currently accounts for the following:

1. 73 Partnerships in force,
2. An average of 2 new partnerships each year,
3. Over 900+ engagements annually,
4. All of the 6 Geographical Combatant Commands involved, and
5. Each of the 54 States & Territories participating.<sup>41</sup>

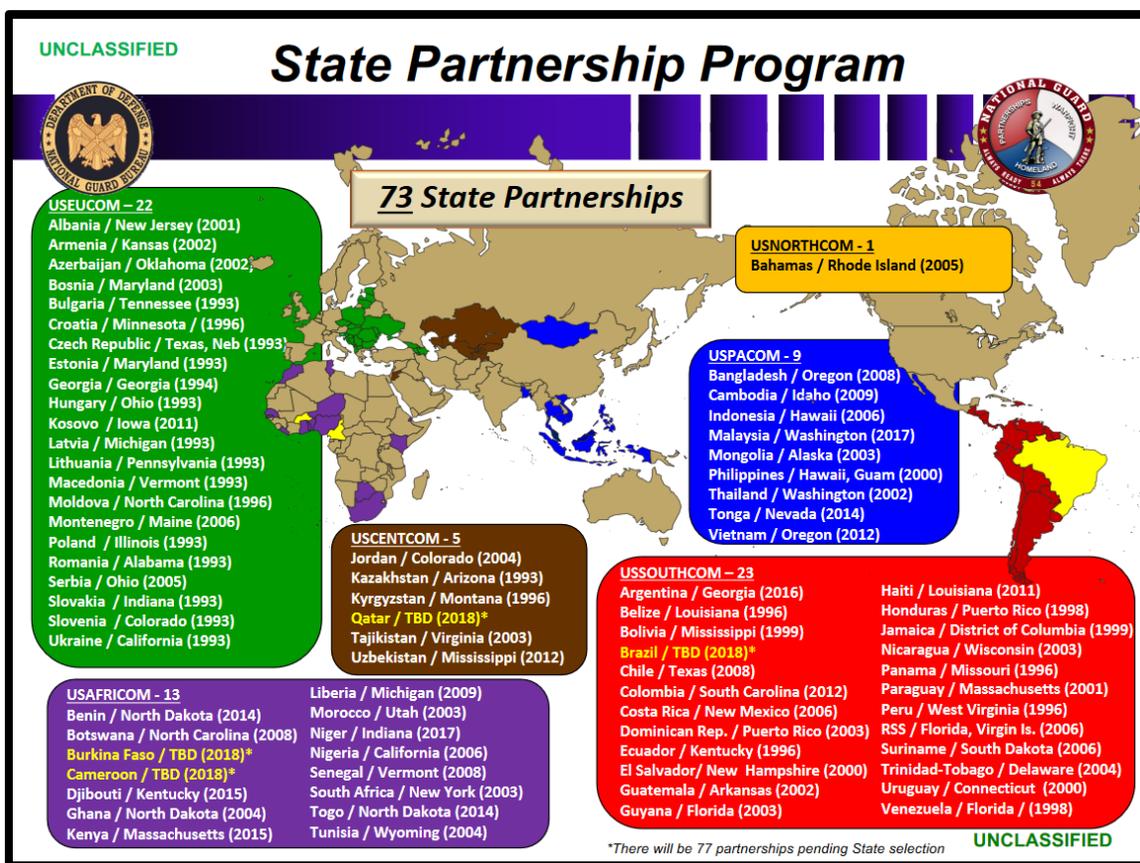


Figure 4. National Guard Bureau State Partnership Program<sup>42</sup>

In fiscal year 2015, the program cost American taxpayers \$13.07 million<sup>43</sup> out of the overall DoD budget of \$560.4 billion for that same year.<sup>44</sup> The SPP is a low cost, high payoff program that is ready for further development in the area of religious

diplomacy. NG military chaplains are already in place and ready to function in this capacity. But how does the process work and where can each state chaplaincy plug into the process to begin and extend the strategic reach of the U.S. government in this underutilized area of influence?

Former Secretary of Defense Ash Carter described the way that the program functioned as of 2015. As he reported to Congress, SPP activities are done in conjunction with DOS strategies and GCC planning. By linking these two agencies together, the NG can narrow down each SPP effort to meet both U.S. and PN objectives. The SPP can conduct not only military to military engagements, but also military to civilian engagements to assist BPC goals. Important steps in planning are to include NG planners in the process with the GCC, so that SPP activities are supporting GCC lines of effort. In addition, the importance of properly projecting those activities through the use of the Global Theater Security Cooperation Management Information System (G-TSCMIS) cannot be understated, as this is the DoD security cooperation database of record.<sup>45</sup>

There are still several glaring deficiencies that currently prevent broader implementation of chaplains as religious diplomats in support of the NDS through RLE and RA. While there have been and will continue to be chaplaincy engagements through NG SPP and Active Component (AC) exercises, there remains a lack of a national level chaplain RLE and RA strategy that is financially resourced and planned for across every GCC in support of the NDS.

The first impediment to success is that the NG SPP lacks a financially resourced strategy for RLE and RA at the national level. While the SPP is funded annually for

many different engagements, there is virtually no budget set aside to implement chaplaincy RLE across every GCC that is synchronized and nested with the NDS. Funding that goes to AC units for exercises and engagements is only able to pay for travel and operational costs. Funds are rarely allocated towards NG pay and allowances. This gap leads to the overutilization of AC and State's Active Guard Reserve (AGR) Soldiers to support TCSP. This results in Soldiers with mismatched skill sets being sent to PN engagements simply because they are available. It also leaves NG personnel, and chaplains in particular, on the sidelines of professional engagements that would benefit from the development personal relationships and continuity.

The second barrier to further NG chaplaincy SPP involvement comes from GCC planners making plans for TSCP events, without appropriate NG participation for those PN engagements. Each year "requirement documents" are laid out for GCC TSCPs that outline the needed personnel, equipment, and financial resources required to support the engagement strategy being pursued. Chaplains are routinely not identified on these documents. This results in "no requirement" for a chaplain to go on any engagements whatsoever. In some instances chaplains have been fortunate enough to make inroads with their PN, by taking the initiative to fill a valid manning document requirement in another occupational specialty. The cycle of "no chaplain requirement" then continues unabated year after year, and is left to the whims of every new planner and/or chaplain that comes into the SPP process.

The third barrier to making a strategically viable chaplaincy engagement strategy a reality is the fact that discussion of religion is usually left out of GCC planning sessions, and there is no global integration by NGB or the Joint Chiefs of Staff to make

religious engagements a priority across the force with DOS involvement. Without a unified voice at the national strategic level, there is no overall direction for religious engagement with PN religious leaders and chaplains, and there is little opportunity help develop PN professional chaplaincy for PN military forces lacking that capability.

In order to successfully realize the benefits that can be gained through the proper usage of religious diplomacy by military chaplains, the NGB must take ownership of the process of SPP chaplaincy engagement. This could be done by simply expanding GCC teleconferences beyond chaplain involvement to include those staff directorates that have the planning officers and resource management professionals determining the requirements for all TSCP events. They can then forecast and budget properly for NG chaplains to be involved with each GCC engagement that their state is partnered with each year. The Chief of the NGB can also make RLE a priority requirement that each state must engage with their PN once per training year. This requirement will help provide NG continuity and relationships over time and facilitate BPC in a way that makes each PN more spiritually fit and resilient. Ongoing relationships will also develop diplomatically sensitive senior leaders in each state who take into account the cultural and religious implications of their PN that are routinely overlooked by many different parts of DoD and DOS each year.

#### Leveraging Military Chaplain Professionalism

Military chaplaincy is an underutilized resource that can be leveraged to help reduce conflict and build partner capacity by increasing understanding between governments, militaries, and the populations they serve. Chaplains should be utilized to perform RLE as an element of BPC, while also performing RA for the GCC to enable better planning and understanding at the strategic level. Military chaplains are uniquely

positioned to help advance and influence all elements of national power for the US Government.

This type of chaplain corps utilization will help commanders understand faith and culture in order to put military endeavors in the most appropriate context for the areas of the world they find themselves operating within.<sup>46</sup> Yet implementing such utilization faces several challenges. The first would be internal resistance by chaplains who do not see this as a role they should fulfill. Second, there is limited force structure to support additional chaplain positions at strategic level headquarters. Finally, there is currently a lack of synchronization at the strategic level that puts an overall plan into place across all GCCs.

Even still, this effort is important and in fact, the United States already has significant capacity and infrastructure to support this effort. Namely, the chaplain corps within the NG is uniquely positioned to provide this strategic capability through the SPP. These forces can be specifically leveraged through the SPP, which is already in place, and that is easily aligned with DoD and DOS requirements. Each NG state Joint Force Headquarters, brings together Army Unit Ministry Teams (UMT) and Air Force Religious Support Teams (RST) that can provide full-spectrum advising and training that is the most strategically developed in the world. These professional military capabilities can then be exported directly to U.S. international partners and allies, in order to expand the reach and influence of the U.S. government around the world. JP 1-05 points out how chaplains can focus their efforts at every tactical echelon to support the needs of troops, while also helping to advance the GCC TSCP. The process for connecting how the

chaplaincy can viably support the NDS starts with a better understanding of the NG SPP and how it can be leveraged for religious diplomacy.

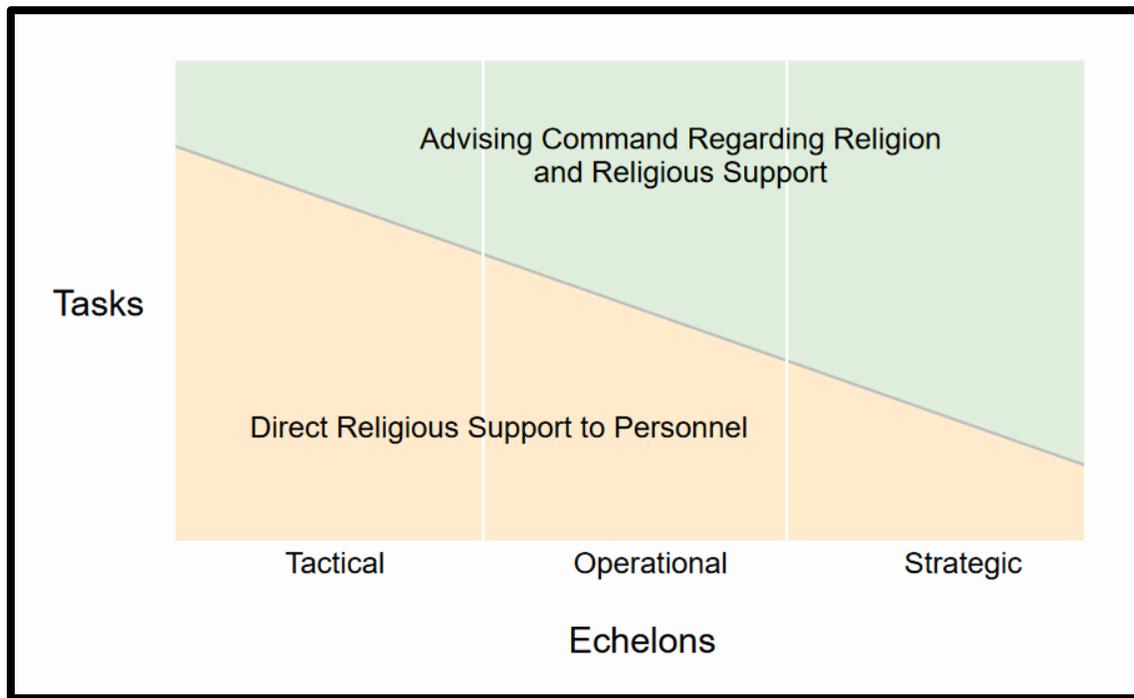


Figure 5. Tasks of Joint Force Chaplains<sup>47</sup>

The greatest benefit that the NG can bring through the SPP is their ability to help build partner capacity with countries that do not have an official military chaplaincy or whose chaplaincy program is not professionalized. As the illustration above points out, chaplains have the ability to provide commanders with RLE and RA at every echelon of force structure. But especially at the strategic level, chaplains are expected to provide the GCC with more time in these two areas. Within the last century, chaplains have shown their ability to do these very things with civilian religious leaders from Europe, Asia, the Middle East, and Latin America, in order to provide assistance to local populations after natural disasters and during post-conflict stabilization.

Another good example of how to address a way for the chaplaincy to view RLE and RA utilization can be found from the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF). Padre S.K. Moore served as a chaplain with the CAF for over 22 years, during which time he completed three deployments to Bosnia, Haiti, and Afghanistan.<sup>48</sup> Upon his retirement from active service, he began teaching in the area of Conflict Studies at Saint Paul University in Ottawa. At the same time, he was asked by the CAF to join the Army Capabilities Development Board to help research RLE and external RA as a viable option for CAF missions. His research led to the development of the operational ministry construct.<sup>49</sup> The model depicts a diversity of ministry that can (and should) be performed by chaplains in global military missions, where they can support their own troops and also perform external mission requirements for commanders as religious diplomats.<sup>50</sup>

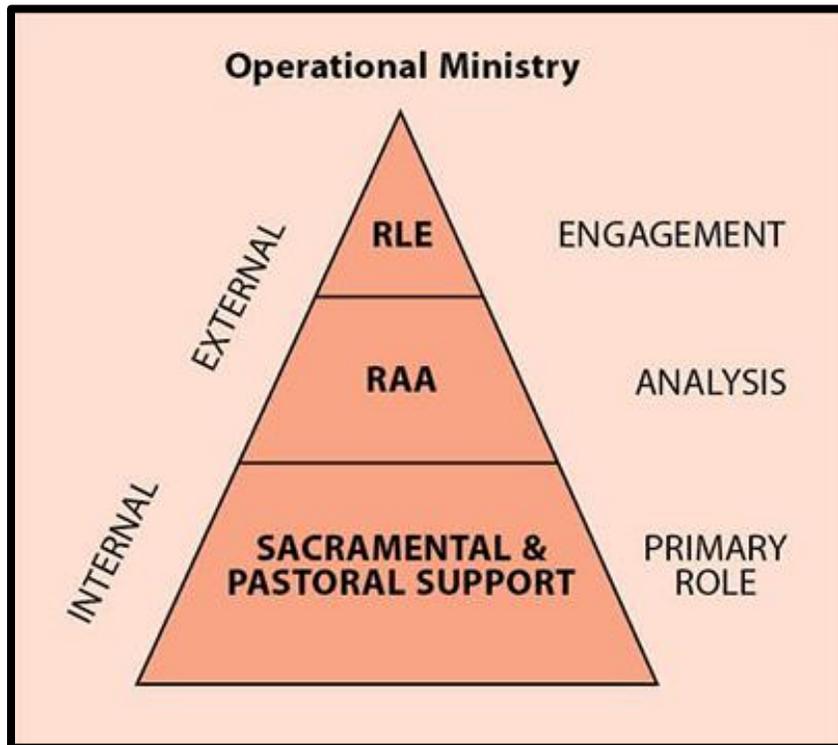


Figure 6. Operational Ministry Construct<sup>51</sup>

Another extension of this strategic objective would be for chaplains to help plan and organize events for allies and partners in order to BPC. First, countries that already have a chaplaincy could be provided with more guidance and information about how to make their chaplains more operationally focused and effective for their own soldiers. General George C. Marshall summed up the very essence of why allies and partners would want to develop or improve their own chaplaincy:

It is in the national interest that personnel serving in the Armed Forces be protected in the realization and development of moral, spiritual, and religious values consistent with the religious beliefs of the individuals concerned. To this end, it is the duty of commanding officers in every echelon to develop to the highest degree the conditions and influences calculated to promote health, morals, and spiritual values of the personnel under their command.<sup>52</sup>

When taken from one of the few people in U.S. history who could speak from the strategic level about both military and diplomatic concerns, it becomes apparent that this is something worth sharing when attempting to BPC with chaplain involvement.

Secondly, countries that do not have a chaplaincy could be offered help with the development of their own chaplain corps for their troops and families. While this may seem far-fetched, there have recently been tangible security gains achieved within the last decade to this very end. Within the U.S. Pacific Command in 2009, Bangladesh requested assistance with the development and organization of a professional chaplaincy within its armed forces.<sup>53</sup> Senior leaders in Bangladesh were concerned with the quality, competence, and security of the volunteer chaplains that had been utilized by their army in the past. In looking at the capabilities and professionalism of U.S. chaplains in current and past operations, the chief of armed forces from Bangladesh asked for U.S. assistance in developing a chaplaincy capability.

Since 2009 the U.S. Army Pacific (USARPAC) chaplain and chaplain assistant team has partnered with Bangladesh to help its army in establishing a professional chaplaincy. First, the Bangladesh Army sent several students each year in 2010-2012 through the US Army Chaplain Center and School (USACHCS) to receive training alongside U.S. and other foreign military students for basic chaplaincy training. Next, the USARPAC UMT traveled to Bangladesh in 2013 to further develop the relationship and to address any concerns or challenges faced by the new chaplaincy there. Later in July of 2014 the Bangladesh Army Chief of Chaplains visited Schofield Barracks in Hawaii, where the USARPAC UMT was able to brief their counterparts from the Bangladesh in doctrine, force design, training, Family Life, and World Religions chaplain functions.<sup>54</sup>



Figure 7. Bangladesh Army Chief of Chaplains, Brigadier General Shah Alam Visiting with USARPAC UMT at Schofield Barracks in Hawaii.<sup>55</sup>

The RLE was well executed by the United States and provided a needed capability to the Bangladesh Army. The USARPAC UMT took the lead in building chaplain capacity with a partner nation, and paved the way for the Oregon NG to provide long term continuity and relationships with Bangladesh, which is their SPP Partner Nation.

## Conclusion

Effective religious diplomacy can show commanders how the chaplain corps capability to conduct RLE and RA activities will positively impact current and future operations. In addition to caring for the spiritual needs of the troops, the authority that chaplains now have from JP 1-05 to conduct RLE and RA will help build allied and partner capabilities, thereby directly improving national security in line with NDS objectives. The NG SPP stands out as a system that is already in place and making a difference within every GCC in the U.S. military. Now is the time to leverage the professional capability of the NG chaplaincy and resource the SPP to provide this capability around the globe.

By utilizing the military chaplaincy as an element of soft power, the United States will be able to further persuade and attract countries into closer partnerships that can advance the export of U.S. values and ideals in support of the 2017 NSS.<sup>56</sup> Even when the benefits for religious diplomacy outweigh the costs, there are a few areas of concern that should be addressed before chaplains get started with RLE and RA. First is the fact that some chaplain endorsers may not support their clergy conducting inter-faith dialogue. Second, outside of the SPP, active duty chaplains spend short amounts of time in their areas of operation making it hard to develop long term relationships. Third, a chaplains' language and cultural skill may be limited or non-existent, which could hinder their effectiveness. Fourth, some chaplains may not be sufficiently mature, knowledgeable, or willing to perform RLE and RA missions.<sup>57</sup> Most of these challenges can be overcome with effective communication between the Armed Forces Chaplaincy Board and denominational endorsers, additional training for chaplains in the areas of RLE and RA and making a determination of how many chaplains could immediately add

the “World Religions” additional skill identifier so they can lead the development and implementation of RLE and RA across the force.

The demand for religious engagement around the world will only continue to grow, driven by both globalization and the ongoing communications revolution that is connecting people at a faster and wider pace than ever known before.<sup>58</sup> The ability for a religious leader to influence military operations around the world can now happen transnationally and almost instantaneously. Without a deliberate effort to engage the U.S. military chaplaincy in RLE and RA at the strategic level, future GCC Commanders will be fighting through all phases of operations at a disadvantage.

#### Endnotes

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