Neither the lame duck Baldwin, who soon retired, nor his replacement ever contacted me concerning that topic.

Correspondence from me to General Wayne Downing in August 1993 related:

A picture on the wall of my office shows David standing over Goliath. The caption reads, "Who Thinks Wins." U.S. Special Operations Command [USSOCOM] *needs all the help it can get to thrive during these trying times. We discussed the establishment of a clearinghouse for new ideas when you were a brand new brigadier general. Now that you are* [commander of USSOCOM]*, I offer to show your staff how to put concepts into practice. You have a lot to gain and nothing to lose.*

General Downing agreed, but his clearinghouse never amounted to much, mainly because the absence of a global communication (email) network severely restricted outreach. The entire project dropped dead the day he retired.

autocratic restrictions, built-in biases, compartmentalization, enforced compromise, and security classifications aggravate routine reliance on resident thinkers and selected think tanks

I finally hit the jackpot shortly after September 11, 2001, when I conceived, recruited, and began to steer the Warlord Loop, a national security "debating society." That real-time email forum taps the broadest possible spectrum of opinion. The resultant intellectual clearinghouse features freewheeling exchanges that ventilate crucial issues from every quadrant of the compass 7 days a week. The roster currently counts about 450 national security specialists who include potentates and senior staff officers in the Defense Department, State Department, Senate and House Armed Services Committees, other civilians, and Active as well as retired Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard representatives who range in rank from sergeants to four stars. Males, females, liberals, conservatives, Republicans, Democrats, and nonpartisans touch every point on the public opinion spectrum from far left to far right. One backchannel message not long ago likened benefits to a graduate education in national security at no cost except time expended.

Career-shaping Advice for Aspiring Strategists

I advise *JFQ* readers to differentiate between strategic specialists and generalists, and then decide which camp you want to occupy. Most strategists today are specialists, who figuratively dig professional post holes. Generalists are a mile wide and a quarter-inch deep, but possess abilities to point all specialists in the same direction at the same time through quality synthesis. That's the small, select group I decided to join. A CRS colleague once asked with regard to my U.S.-Soviet military balance reports, "Don't you get bored out of your gourd writing about the same subject all the time?" My answer was, "No, because the scope is stupendous." Many skilled specialists addressed various aspects in much greater detail, but nobody else produced unclassified assessments that put all relevant topics into a composite package covering comparative security interests, objectives, strategies, and tactics; military roles, functions, and missions; organizational structures from top to bottom; budgets, manpower, technologies, and industries; alliance systems; nuclear, biological, chemical, unorthodox, and traditional force capabilities on land, at sea, in the air, and in space; logistical pluses and minuses; regional deployments; related issues, options, limitations, and apparent trends. What's my bottom line? Be a strategic generalist if you want to be uniquely useful.

End of sermon. I hope that all of your strategic accidents turn out as well as mine did, or better. No walk of life can be more rewarding intellectually than that of a strategist, whether you plan for it or not. **JFQ**

NOTES

[1] "Strategic and Tactical Paper Pushing," *Army* (February 2009), 46–49, describes intelligence, contingency planning, and operational planning experiences that prepared me to make that switch.

[2] John M. Collins, *Military Strategy: Principles, Practices, and Historical Perspectives* (Dulles, VA: Brassey's, 2001).

[3] John M. Collins, "How Military Strategists Should Study History," *Military Review* 63, no. 8 (August 1983), 31–44.

[4] John M. Collins, "Deja Vu All Over Again?" U.S. Naval Institute *Proceedings* (July 2005).

LETTERS

To the Editor—Admiral Mike Mullen hits the nail on the head with his recent article on strategic communication (*JFQ* 55, 4th Quarter 2009): actions *do* speak much louder than words. No amount of good news stories can outweigh the billions of dollars we spend to support governments that are corrupt in the eyes of their people and do not share our own ideals.

It would be better to amplify the horrendous actions of our enemies against the people they claim to support. The Anbar Awakening is a perfect example of this at the operational level. A second critical vulnerability of our enemies is their own ideals—we must expose them as flawed both directly and indirectly. Mao Tse-tung was the master of this and did so effectively during the Chinese Revolution. Do not attack the individual—attack the idea and expose its flaws.

I disagree with the thought that we cannot launch ideas downrange like a rocket. Just look at the news: our enemies do so very effectively. We have been ineffective because we launch the wrong messages. We should launch attacks against our enemies' ideas, not sell our own. The goal is to make people hate our enemies more than they dislike us. Furthermore, we should worry less about reassuring our everlasting support; it will create dependency. Unfortunately, despite our best intentions, our history shows a poor record of living up to our promises and lofty ideals.

—Colonel Michael Brassaw, USMC

To the Editor—As author of the Navy's first doctrinal publication on religious ministry (Naval Warfare Publication 1–05, *Religious Ministry in the U.S. Navy*), I read with interest John W. Brinsfield and Eric Wester's article, "Ethical Challenges for Commands and Their Chaplains" (*JFQ* 54, 3d Quarter 2009). Seven years ago, the late naval chaplain, Captain Bradford E. Ableson, argued that joint doctrine needed to include professional training requirements so that chaplains

could effectively engage religious-diplomatic functions ("A Time for Conversion: Chaplains and Unified Commanders," *JFQ* 32, Autumn 2002). Unfortunately, the current article demonstrates a lack of progress in the training of chaplains to serve beyond the traditional role of providing religious ministry.

Historically, the religious-diplomatic function for the chaplain emerged, in part, due to Douglas Johnston's *Religion, The Missing Dimension of Statecraft* (Oxford University Press, 1995). The result was that in the early 2000s, the emerging debate in the Navy, Marine Corps, Army, and joint doctrine was that chaplains were not only providers and facilitators of religious ministry but also a vital component to operational success when engaged in liaison work with indigenous religious groups and their leaders. Those of us embroiled in this emerging issue tackled a number of accompanying moral issues—as well as dilemmas—without much resolution. Throughout the debate, I acknowledged the significance of religion within geopolitics, but I was uncomfortable with the movement away from the primary role of a chaplain as directed by the denomination and Department of Defense policy. This, however, did not exclude an international humanitarian function, which included working with indigenous religious leaders.

Nevertheless, then and now, institutional acceptance of the religious-diplomatic function is ad hoc at best due to the absence of a selection process and academic program to train a cadre of chaplains with the ability to operate in all unified commands. The ethical challenge begins with the institution itself. It must cease the ad hoc process of training and equipping chaplains for such a duty and responsibility. To depend on a chaplain's experience alone is a recipe for disaster. Chaplains going into such a role must possess a high level of cultural competency and understanding of the specific geopolitical issues in a given region. Without this, it is on the job learning, which often leads to unintentional blunders. Furthermore, the institution must change its career development mindset and retain a specialized group of chaplains within unified commands to address indigenous religious issues. This specialized group, beginning at the O–4 level, would be immersed in postgraduate studies that focus on humanitarian issues by using religion as a building block and not a source of divisiveness. With such expertise—a merging of academics and experience—these chaplains would be invaluable to commanders and other deploying chaplains.

Overall, the current systemic approach is haphazard and fails to retain the knowledge and experience vital for a commander's use. Notwithstanding the lack of institutional commitment, I am confident that chaplains will continue to find a way to reach out and make a deplorable situation better—not just for their own but for others as well.

—Commander Steven L. Smith, USN (Ret.)
Wayland Baptist University, Tucson–Sierra Vista

To the Editor—Dr. Smith [above] is "spot on" with his critique, background information, and challenges to the military chaplaincies regarding religious-diplomatic functions. He cites three critical gaps which are ever-so-gradually being addressed.

The first gap he spotlights is the lack of military doctrine for religious-diplomatic functions. In an update of the Joint Publication (JP) 1–05, *Religious Affairs in Joint Operations* (signed November 13, 2009), new and specific guidance addresses both the primary role of chaplains providing direct religious support as well as Religious Support Teams (RSTs) participating in engagement in the area of operation. Now, official military doctrine formally specifies the religious-diplomatic function for chaplains and their assistants (JP 1–05, p. III–1).

The second gap is training, education, and development for the religious-diplomatic function. Tactical and operational commanders expect chaplains to provide insight, advice, and, with command direction, take action in religious leader liaison in their area of operations. This field-driven need at the operational level is now supported with formal doctrinal guidance. To succeed, RSTs must deepen their knowledge. Two Army-driven initiatives are the U.S. Army Human Terrain System, which deploys teams for operational support, and the U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Culture Center, located at the U.S. Army Intelligence Center, Fort Huachuca, Arizona, for training support. But from my perspective, these initiatives appear to address "culture" and subsume "religion." Perhaps these Army-wide initiatives could build crucial synergy by linking with an effort launched by the Army chaplaincy—a new World Religions Center at the U.S. Army Chaplain Center and School, Fort Jackson, South Carolina. Shared effort could provide both the crucial structures and content for training, education, and development.

The third gap highlighted by Dr. Smith is building and sustaining chaplaincy expertise required to engage in religious-diplomatic efforts. At National Defense University, I teach an elective course on Religion and Security that includes newly assigned fellows from the Army War College studying at George Mason University. One of the 2009 graduates is a chaplain who went on to III Corps at Fort Hood and is preparing to deploy. He prepares a weekly Religious Impact Analysis in support of Provincial Reconstruction Teams. His expertise, and the expertise of others with advanced education in world religions, will need to be developed and deepened to make the most of the stake in training and education already invested.

Chaplains are in a position to provide religious-diplomatic advice. The key question is whether we will develop the expertise and depth of understanding to contribute to analysis and actions that enable religion to aid in conflict prevention and conflict resolution.

—Chaplain (Colonel) F. Eric Wester, USA
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