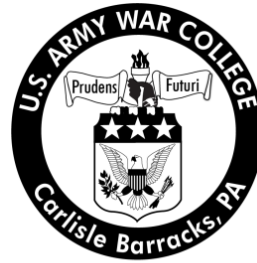# The U.S. Army Religious Support Environment of 2020

by

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United States Army

United States Army War College
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ABSTRACT

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THE U.S. ARMY RELIGIOUS SUPPORT ENVIRONMENT OF 2020

The world is changing in ways that have the potential to impact virtually every person on the planet. Global economies are in a state of flux. Once prosperous nations are deep in debt and many regional economies teeter on the brink of collapse. The U.S. military concluded its mission in Iraq and the drawdown in Afghanistan has begun. However, tensions in places such as Iran, Pakistan, Syria, Egypt, the Horn of Africa, and elsewhere threaten to pull the United States back into the world arena of persistent conflict.

The world is more interconnected now than at any other time in history. Since 1995, internet users have increased from less than one percent of global population, to nearly a third of global population.[1] This new interconnectedness has given rise to forms of powerful social media that have influenced the thoughts and actions of large population groups. The world is evolving into a multi-nodal world where a growing number of state and non-state actors form interest driven coalitions based more on diplomatic, military, and economic power than on rigid security.[2] The various global organizations, (United Nations, North Atlantic Treaty Organization, International Monetary Fund, European Union), are Cold War legacies from a world model that no longer exits.[3]

According to the 2011 National Military Strategy, this creates a strategic inflection point that will have transformational impact on the military in both the short and longer terms.[4] This inflection point reflects an increasingly complex strategic environment. As a result of changes in the U.S. military establishment, the U.S. Army religious support environment will change in ways that will challenge both current and future chaplain

strategic leaders. The U.S. Army and the Army Chaplain Corps will experience

transformational change between the years 2012 and 2020. The ability for chaplain

strategic leaders to lead transformational change will depend on the ability to identify

the significant trends, understand their potential impact, and develop strategies for

managing future challenges and maximizing future opportunities. This paper will

accomplish two goals; First, it will identify current trends with the potential to impact the

Army Chaplaincy during the next eight years. Second, it will demonstrate the use of

forecasting techniques to discover and analyze the trends to develop a range of

scenarios that can inform the dialogue between strategic decision makers within the

Army Chaplain Corps.

No one can predict the future. Military leaders openly acknowledge that the

future security environment will never turn out exactly as envisioned.[5] Given the

unsuccessful track record for predicting the future, why try to peer into the future at all?

General J.N. Mattis, U.S. Marine Corps, provided helpful insight when he said, "We will

likely not call the future exactly right, but we must think through the nature of continuity

and change in strategic trends to discern their military implications to avoid being

completely wrong."[6]

The greatest challenge for the leaders in the Army Chaplain Corps will be how

well they are able to lead change as the Army and Chaplain Corps transform.[7]

Undoubtedly, the Chaplain Corps will not get it all right, but we are reminded that, "we

cannot afford to be completely wrong either."[8] The forecast presented in this paper is

not the focus. The true usefulness of the forecast is in the process of discovery itself,

and how the scenarios produced in this paper can inform the ongoing dialogue between senior chaplain decision makers.

The first rule of forecasting is, "forecasters do not make predictions."[9] Forecasters look at trends and hidden currents in the present that signal changes in future directions.[10] The goal of good forecasting is to identify a range of possibilities that help strategic planners read the signposts of the times in order to become catalysts for change.[11]

Environmental Scanning

The first step to producing useful scenarios involves environmental scanning. Environmental scanning is a "methodology that stands at the juncture of foresight and strategy."[12] The use of environmental scanning involves searching through a broad variety of information sources to identify trends and emerging developments, followed by analysis of the data in order to inform a strategy formulation process.[13]

Environmental scanning for this paper began with a broad, general search, followed by a narrow, more focused look at emerging trends. Initial scanning cast a wide informational net to determine trends shaping the religious landscape in both the Army and civilian worlds. The broad initial scan involved multiple professional and informal sources, internet articles, blogs, professional discussion groups, and formal research data.

The environmental scan revealed three distinct trend layers. The first layer included the most clearly defined, recognizably significant trends that will most certainly shape the future religious support environment in some manner. If one understands the first trend layer as a cause, the second layer is clearly the effect. The second trend layer represented a critical line of thought expressed by many strategic leaders as they

began to grapple with the challenges unfolding from the first trend layer. The third trend layer represented a series of undercurrents, subtle indicators that could be early indicators of significant emerging trends.[14]

First Trend Layer. The first trend layer related directly to the strategic inflection point discussed earlier in the paper.[15] A decade of U.S. military involvement in large-scale persistent conflict will end in 2014 when the United States withdraws from Afghanistan. In addition, the U.S. military will undergo a minimum of $487 billion in cuts over the next decade. These trends exist in a continuing global security environment that presents an increasingly complex set of challenges and opportunities.[16] The first trend layer is a powerful trend driver that generates the context within which other trends appear and function. In a sense, the first trend layer has sufficient mass to create its own gravity, defining the orbits of other trends. In short, the Department of Defense (DoD) will transform in ways that will impact every branch of the U.S. military.

Second Trend Layer. The second trend layer was the effect caused by the first trend layer. Multiple discussions and publications filled this layer and reflected the thoughts of strategic leaders as they attempted to answer the strategic questions implicit in the trends of the first layer. Two examples clearly represented the line of strategic thought in this area.

The JOE 2010: Joint Forces Operating Environment*,* provided the first example. This document asked three questions:

- What future trends and disruptions are likely to affect the joint force over the next quarter century?

- How are these trends and disruptions likely to define the future contexts for joint operations?

- What are the implications of these trends and contexts for the joint force? [17]

These questions were emblematic of the discussions among strategic leaders as they worked to determine strategic directions that will shape the future of the U.S. military.

The second set of examples came from an informal email discussion that unfolded between senior Army chaplains early in 2012. The focus of the discussion centered on the strategic leader, strategic thinking, and strategic adviser roles of senior U.S Army Chaplains. In discussing the future strategic direction of the Chaplain Corps, one senior chaplain asked, "What will our Chaplain Corps need to look like?"[18] Another senior chaplain wrote, "Right now, the resourcing crisis that besets the Army and our chaplaincy threatens the development of strategic leaders."[19] Another senior chaplain responded, "If we are to meet the needs of the future, the status quo in assignments, recruitment, schooling, and identifying quality young chaplains needs to be reevaluated."[20]

These examples from the joint forces document and the chaplain email discussion represented a line of thought that has the potential to shape strategic decisions that will influence the Army religious support environment of the future.

Third Trend Layer. The third trend layer was more subtle. The trends at this level represented hidden undercurrents that were difficult to discern and understand. Observations from a wide variety of sources revealed information that did not initially appear helpful in the forecasting research. However, after sifting through a stack of military, cultural, and religious information, a small handful of weak interconnected data emerged.[21] The small handful of interconnected information resulted in a data set

containing two distinct trends that had the potential to shape the future of the Army religious support environment.

The first data set reflected a gradual shift in the traditional denominational demographics within the Chaplain Corps. Since the 1990's, there has been a gradual increase in non-denominational chaplains endorsed by non-denominational (umbrella) endorsing bodies.[22] This paralleled trends in the civilian religious world where there was a corresponding rise in the number of non-denominational Churches throughout the United States.

This trend line continued to develop when in 2010 the Army accessioned the first active duty Buddhist Chaplain, CH (CPT) Somya Malasri.[23] The trend line would unfold again when the Army accessioned its first active duty Hindu Chaplain in 2011, CH (CPT) Pratima Dharm.[24] As of the writing of this paper, The Sacred Well, a Wiccan organization, is actively seeking approval by the Armed Forces Chaplains Board, (AFCB), to become an officially recognized Ecclesiastical Endorsing Agency (EEA).[25]

In 2012, the trend continued to unfold. On at least one Army installation, Humanists submitted documentation in accordance with *AR 165-1, Chaplain Activities in the U.S. Army*, requesting approval for a Distinctive Faith Group Leader, (DFGL), to accommodate the religious needs of Soldiers practicing Humanism as a belief system.[26]

The second data trend indicated a growing tension between secular culture and traditional religious belief and practice. Many contemporary events reflect this tension. One primary example of this tension was a series of events that unfolded at Fort Bragg, NC during the 2010 – 2012 timeframe.

In September 2010 the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association helped organize a Christian concert called "Rock the Fort" on Fort Bragg, NC.[27] Following the event, a group representing Atheist Soldiers demanded equal time for an Atheist – themed event called "Rock Beyond Belief."[28] Following threats of legal action by the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), Americans United for the Separation of Church and State and other groups, Fort Bragg agreed to provide $50,000 to support Rock Beyond Belief, planned for March 2012.[29]

Examples from the civilian world followed a similar pattern. An internet news item in January 2012 noted that, "Christian student organizations at Vanderbilt University may be forced to go underground or meet in secret after university officials doubled down on a policy that bans student religious groups from requiring their leaders to hold specific beliefs."[30] Essentially, the policy could prevent leaders of registered student Christian groups from leading Bible studies or worship.[31]

An analysis of the tension between secular culture and traditional religion revealed a trend toward an evolving religious landscape with a wider acceptance of non-traditional religious expression on one hand, coupled with a narrowing tolerance of traditional religious expression on the other. This tension has an impact on the Army religious support environment of 2012, and may have a greater impact in the future.

Trend Layer Summary. A one-sentence summary of the three preceding trend layers articulates the analysis of each:

- First trend layer: The U.S. military is in a state of transition that includes a shift in strategy, fiscal restraints, and force restructuring.

- Second trend layer: Strategic leaders across the U.S. military are involved in an intense examination of current strategies in order to determine strategic directions for the future.

- Third trend layer: There exists an undercurrent of movement away from traditional American cultural perceptions of spirituality, religion, and religious expression.

Corroborating and Refining the Environmental Scanning

Interviews conducted in January 2012 with a representative sample of six senior Army Chaplains would corroborate, or contradict, the environmental scan. The sample consisted of chaplains in the grade of 05 – 07, and included the Deputy Chief of Chaplains, Training and Doctrine Command Chaplain, Medical Command Chaplain, III Corps Chaplain, 101st Division Chaplain, and the Fort Bragg Garrison Chaplain. The four interview questions for the chaplains closely mirrored the questions General J.N. Mattis asked in the 2010 Joint Operating Environment document quoted earlier in the paper.[32] The senior chaplain interview questions were:

- What current trends or factors within the U.S. military have the potential to shape the U.S. Army religious support environment between now and 2020?

- What current trends or factors within religion have the potential to shape the U.S. Army religious support environment between now and 2020?

- Which trends or factors are most important, and why?

- Of the trends or factors you have identified, which one(s) represent the most critical uncertainties for strategic religious leaders in the Army?

The answers to the first three questions reflected a clear agreement among the six chaplains. The interview process corroborated the three trend layers identified earlier in the environmental scanning process in that the interview responses fell clearly within the overall boundaries of the three layers.

Eight Key Trends

The interview process helped refine and expand the three trend layers into eight trends. The following summary of the interview responses reflected five distinct trends within the Army, and three distinct trends within religion at large.

Trend 1: (Army) Non-traditional Expressions of Worship and Spirituality. The Army religious support environment reflects a movement away from traditional expressions of spirituality and worship. Attendance at most traditional and liturgical worship services on Army installations is shrinking. Retirees, older service members and their families are the primary attendees at traditional chapel worship services. The Army also reflects the non-denominational culture shift within the civilian world as the Chaplain Corps accessions more non-denominational chaplains. Young Soldiers are much more open to non-traditional broad expressions of spirituality. Wiccan/Pagan worship expression is now common as a part of the Commanders Religious Program on most Army installations. Requests for accommodation of Humanist/Atheist forms of belief expression have already begun to surface. Buddhist and Hindu Chaplains currently serve in the Army, while Pagan endorsing bodies actively seek a qualified individual to put forward for accessioning as a military chaplain.

Trend 2: (Army) Transformation of the U.S. Military. The Army will re-tool and re-structure in response to National Strategic Guidance. The military of the future will be a Joint force that is smaller, leaner, agile, flexible, ready and technologically advanced.[33]

This transformation will result in reduced force structure across the Army. The U.S. Army in the Pacific will build up, while U.S. Army in Europe draws down. Traditional Army force structure will shrink, while Special Operations force structure may grow. The transformation will result in a joint force that reflects the true interdependence experienced in current and recent conflicts.[34]

Trend 3: (Army) Fiscal Restraints. The U.S. military will experience a minimum of $487 billion in budget cuts during the next decade. Supplemental contingency funds will disappear as current operations cease. Fiscal restraints may have an impact on nearly every aspect of the religious support environment of 2020. This trend may impact funding for established religious education programs as well as popular events such as Strong Bonds retreats.[35] Fiscal restraints may affect training resources and force the continued maturation of distance learning as it replaces more traditional and costly resident-classroom training events. Much of the projected budget cuts will be realized through the elimination of 100,000 ground troops, (80,000 from the Army), which will result in the loss of an unknown number of chaplain and chaplain assistant slots. Fiscal restraints will undoubtedly have an impact on religious facility construction and renovation. Budget cuts may create resourcing challenges as leaders seek to maintain basic levels of Title 10 Religious Support.

Trend 4: (Army) Garrison Focus. The U.S. military has withdrawn from Iraq as of December 2010, and will be completely withdrawn from Afghanistan sometime in 2014. The transition from major overseas combat deployments will return the Army to a garrison focus unseen for nearly a decade. Soldiers returning to a garrison environment may bring considerable physical, mental, and spiritual baggage with them as they

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continue to struggle with issues related to multiple combat deployments. Post Traumatic Stress (PTS) and Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) issues will affect the Army for many years to come. Brigade Chaplains note the continuing rise of the geographical bachelor phenomenon as families frustrated with multiple deployments choose to live apart in broken, or long distance relationships. High divorce rates among Soldier Families may persist as problems related to deployment continue to surface long after Soldiers have returned home.

Trend 5: (Army) Evolving Contemporary Worship. Roman Catholic, Gospel, and contemporary worship services in the Army remain healthy. Contemporary worship continues to evolve as Army demographics reflect the changing expressions of worship and spirituality within society. What the Chaplain Corps considered as contemporary Protestant Chapel worship in the mid 1990's is slowly becoming the new "traditional" worship experience for Generation X families and individuals thirty-plus years of age. Senior Garrison Chaplains report that the current trend for contemporary worship is more toward visual worship experiences where leaders leverage technology through an exceedingly wide array of web based images and resources. The chaplains driving the current trends in contemporary worship are primarily from Generation X. These chaplains have worked to improve the current contemporary worship model, but because of increased deployments, there has been little time or energy to focus on the worship needs of a new generation of Soldiers. Senior chaplain leaders suggest that the Chaplain Corps does not consistently offer what Soldiers and Families seek, reflected in the opinion that many current programs aim at only one – two percent of the

Army population. As Millennial Generation clergy come of age and enter the Army

Chaplaincy, they will begin to shape contemporary worship and religious programs.

   Trend 6: (Civilian) Digital/Technology Explosion. The digital explosion has the

potential to change the world as much as the invention of the printing press. Civilian

clergy have access to an unimaginable array of web-based ministry applications and

resources, which have begun to reshape their approach to ministry and worship

throughout a wide range of religious faith and practice. Web-based educational

programs become a popular alternative to classroom education as more and more

people go to school on line. Online Master of Divinity degrees designed to prepare

individuals for military chaplaincy are now available. Individuals who earned these

degrees online currently serve as active, guard, and reserve chaplains.

   Trend 7: (Civilian) Culture Shift. Current trends indicate a dramatic culture shift

in American society. In the current pluralistic society, religious expression is less

definable. Mainline denominations appear to be in decline while non-traditional faith

groups are on the rise. As mainline denominations shrink, non-denominational faith

groups become organized and establish endorsing bodies. Current culture tests

traditional value systems and shapes new values. Culture is increasingly secular in

nature and current culture takes little for granted. Many Americans are comfortable with

the idea that one religious path is just as valid as any other path. Traditional religious,

moral, and ethical lines are now blurred.

   Trend 8: (Civilian) Rise of the Millennial Generation. As a new generation

reaches maturity, Millennials step into the shoes of older Gen-Xers who are now in their

thirties. Millennials typically do not join a church or claim affiliation to any one religious

denomination. They accept a broad range of religious expression; while twenty-five

percent of people aged eighteen to twenty-nine describe their religion as "none". Less

than half say that religion is very important in their lives.[36] Millennials search for

meaning, not structure. Religious leaders who observe Millennials describe them as

having a spiritual search, but loose spiritual identity. Millennials worship in a media rich

environment focused more on the images they see rather than the words they hear,

they ask; "why?" not "what?"

Five Key Uncertainties

      During the interview process, each interviewee responded with questions they

believed the Chaplain Corps would need to answer in order to prepare for the

challenges of the future. An analysis of these responses yielded five distinct questions

that summarize the critical uncertainties articulated during those interviews:

1. How will the Chaplain Corps address the expanding understanding and
   practice of religious expression within the framework of Constitutional Free
   Exercise of Religion and the professional boundaries of the Chaplain Corps?

2. How will the Chaplain Corps understand and/or define religion and spirituality
   within the context of expanding forms of religious expression?

3. How will the Chaplain Corps unite operational and garrison religious support
   entities to function in community in order to deal with problems that will
   surface in a garrison based Army?

4. Will the Chaplain Corps adjust religious support force structure, transforming
   in sync with Army wide force restructuring?

5. How can the Chaplain Corps use a context of sacred values to anchor and provide structure and stability in an Army undergoing an unprecedented transformation?

Plotting the scenario matrix uses a deductive approach to select two of the five key uncertainties. The answers to the two questions must be both highly unpredictable, and highly relevant to the religious support environment of 2020.[37] These two questions, when expressed in a linear fashion, become the X and Y axis for the scenario development matrix.[38] For example, if an uncertainty is expressed by the question, "How will I get to work tomorrow?" The possible answers could be; "by walking" on one end of the spectrum, or "by riding in a car" at the other end of the spectrum.
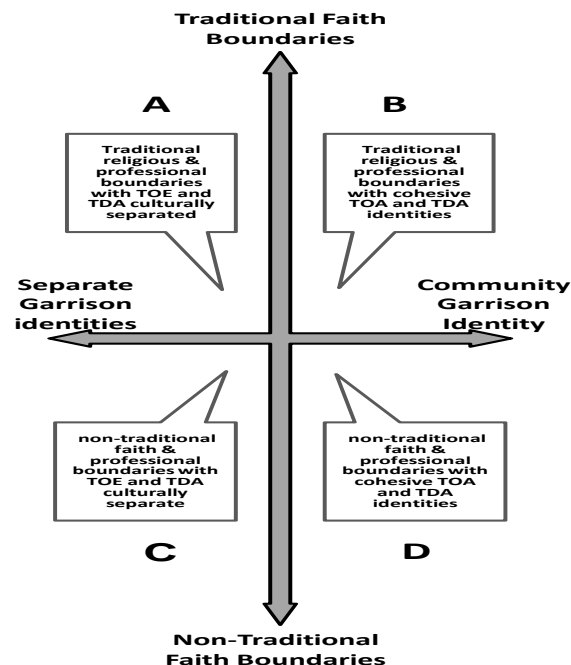

Figure 1. Scenario Matrix.

Figure 1 illustrates the matrix and the four possible background settings that frame each scenario. All five of the questions represent critical uncertainties for the 2020 religious support environment; however, only questions 1 and 3 produce scenarios that are qualitatively different in a logical, deductive, non-random way.[39] According to the chaplains interviewed, question 1 represented the greatest uncertainty facing the Chaplain Corps in the future. Question 3 represents the garrison environment where the Chaplain Corp's responses to question 1 will ultimately play out.

Scenarios

The five questions, including the two used in the matrix, are all strategic in nature; however, this paper presents the scenarios in narrative form using stories and news articles to describe events and situations from the tactical arena. This is intentional. The strategic decisions that shape the future religious support environment will have their greatest impact on chaplains and chaplain assistants who minister at tactical and garrison levels. The implications following each scenario focus appropriately back upon the strategic realm.

Scenario A: The Status Quo. CH (MAJ) Smith leads the most active and effective Brigade Unit Ministry Team (UMT) in the Division. His UMT has two non-denominational Evangelical Chaplains, a Roman Catholic Priest, a Pentecostal Gospel Chaplain, and a Baptist Chaplain. An outstanding set of chaplain assistants rounds out the team. The team can do it all, rarely going outside their Brigade for denominational support.

However, CH Smith does not get along with the Garrison Chaplain and there is a rift between the Brigade UMT and Garrison UMT. The younger chaplains do not think the Garrison UMTs do anything but sit at their desks and drink coffee. According to the

young chaplains, the only real ministry takes place at the unit level. CH Smith

understands the supporting role of Garrison UMTs, and has a general idea of the

strategic role of senior chaplains above corps level, but he is ineffective in

communicating this to his subordinate UMT. Privately, CH Smith considers a return to

civilian ministry rather than accept a promotion to Lieutenant Colonel and the follow on

assignment he believes would move him away from Soldier ministry.

The Garrison Chaplain is frustrated with the overall situation. Unit chaplains

resist supporting anything other than traditional religious expression as complaints from

Atheists, Humanists, and Pagan groups continue to rise. Recently, he discovered that

these groups were meeting off-post to work with a civilian organization that is helping

them pursue legal action against the Army.

Under fiscal restraints, the Garrison Chaplain struggles to resource basic

religious programs. Chaplains often use their own money to purchase new technology

for use in some worship services, while other services still use old hymnals and ancient

pianos. Some UMTs rely heavily on donations from outside organizations to provide

program materials. With the drawdown in manpower, Installation Management

Command (IMCOM) staff must double up on workload, and religious support is a lower

priority. There is a great need for religious support to Soldiers and Families suffering

from the long-term effects of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars, but the Garrison Chaplain

has few resources to devote to their needs. Army Community Services, Mental Health,

and local churches often step in to pick up the slack. Ultimately, the Garrison Chaplain

feels unprepared to face the complex challenges of 2020.

Implications for Scenario A: The Status Quo. This scenario implies that the

Chaplain Corps will not fundamentally change between 2012 and 2020. What are the

strategic risks for maintaining the status quo? This is an unlikely scenario, but it implies

a number of strategic questions: How will the Chaplain Corps meet expanding ministry

needs with shrinking resources? What are the Constitutional implications for resisting

accommodation requests from non-traditional faith groups? How do senior chaplains

shape the Chaplain Corps culture to break down barriers to ministry as the Army returns

to a garrison environment?

The Garrison Chaplain and the Brigade Chaplain in the scenario were not

prepared for the challenges they faced. Are they emblematic of an Army Chaplain

Corps that might attempt to maintain the status quo as the Army transforms?

Scenario B: Good News – Bad News. Army Times headlines 5 March 2019:

IMCOM is Out! In a hastily called press conference on Tuesday, the Army Chief of Staff

(CSA) announced that IMCOM would go away at the end of the fiscal year. The change

is a result of the ongoing budget crisis that continues to force cuts in the U.S. military

establishment. The latest round of cuts in military force structure and equipment will

save an estimated $5 billion per year. Current Mission Support Elements (MSE) will

restructure and pick up many of the responsibilities IMCOM currently holds. In addition,

Army units now wearing the IMCOM patch will re-flag on 1 October as Base Support

Units subordinate to the Senior Mission Commander. The new Base Support Units will

be twenty percent smaller than when they were under IMCOM. The CSA said the

difficult decision to cut IMCOM would eliminate redundancies and improve Army

efficiency.

CNN News Headline 5 March 2019: DOMA is Safe! Congress upholds traditional values as the U.S. House and Senate overwhelmingly vote down a bill that would have struck down the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA). Conservative Congressional leaders are quick to point out that this move signals a return to more traditional American values, while liberal Congressional leaders vow to continue the fight for the rights of same sex couples. CNN military correspondents report that the Department of Defense immediately dropped plans that would have given same sex marriages the same regulatory status as traditional marriages.

Implications for Scenario B: Good News – Bad News. There are implications in scenario B for accessioning policies in a reduced force structure environment. There are force structure implications and questions as well. If the DoD imposes mandatory force restructuring, how can the Chaplain Corps capitalize on those requirements to improve the way it does business? The continuing potential for fiscal restraints also has implications for training methods and policies. The potential for longer-term issues resulting from a decade of war have further implications if UMTs must provide religious support in an environment beset with both fiscal and manpower constraints. How does the Chaplain Corps posture for future decisions regarding DOMA? The longer-term legal status of DOMA is an unknown, and the Chaplain Corps can ill afford to adopt a wait and see attitude with respect to a future legal decision. The scenario suggests that the Chaplain Corps may need to develop a range of appropriate policy options allowing flexibility of response to various legal outcomes.

Scenario C: Fault Lines. CH (CPT) Joe Beaufort is the Army's first Humanist Chaplain. He was initially assigned to an Infantry Battalion at a large Army Installation,

but his commander refused to accept a Humanist Chaplain. At first, CH Beaufort was angry when the commander did not want him, but he quickly settled in to an alternate position in the garrison. He quickly discovered that his motto of "living on the creative edge of our culture" enabled him to connect with many Soldiers from the Millennial Generation.[40] As a former civilian psychologist, he also found a niche counseling same sex couples. Because of the 2017 repeal of the Defense of Marriage Act, and the follow-on changes in Army regulations, he became a popular Strong Bonds retreat leader for same sex marriage couples and other free thinkers.

CH Beaufort quickly recognized the gap between Table of Organization and Equipment (TOE) UMTs and Garrison UMTs.[41] However, as a critical thinker he found ways to work around the gap. Exploiting the growing gap between traditional chaplains and Soldiers, he was able to discover needs others missed.

Within two years, CH Beaufort had built a strong reputation for taking care of Soldiers and Families with non-traditional belief system needs. CH Beaufort's expertise in ethics made him a valuable asset to those who sought non-judgmental values based counsel. The Garrison Commander, an agnostic, told the Garrison Chaplain, "All chaplains should be like CH Beaufort; with CH Beaufort you get all the results and none of the controversy!"

Implications for Scenario C: Fault Lines. The profound strategic question posed by Scenario C is "What makes the chaplaincy unique?" In the scenario, CH Beaufort may have done well at "providing" many things, but did he "perform" anything distinctly and uniquely spiritual or religious? What are the assignment policy implications for assigning and utilizing chaplains from faith groups that have non-traditional expressions

of spirituality? There are also implications for the Chaplain Corps' "Provide or Perform" policy. Are there limits to provide or perform? The scenario also implies questions about traditional definitions of religion and spirituality. Do broad definitions of religion and spirituality threaten to create a fault line within the Chaplain Corps when a non-faith chaplain can "provide" religious services for everyone, but cannot "perform" religious services for anyone? What is it that makes a chaplain unique?

   Scenario D, Tectonic Change. CH (MAJ) Mike Miller is a senior Major assigned as the Deputy Division Chaplain at Joint Base Lucky Maple. He cannot believe the changes that have occurred in the Army during the past five years. To him, it has been nothing short of a tectonic shift.

 IMCOM went away first; some chaplain and chaplain assistant positions moved over to supplement the remaining forty-five BCTs and some positions were simply lost. CH Miller is thankful the Chaplain Corps was able to retain the Division Family Life Chaplain, but discouraged that the Garrison Family Life Chaplain went away.[42] He had hoped to become a World Religions Chaplain at some point, but those changed back to Deputy Corps Chaplain positions when Divisions again became subordinate within the Army Corps structure.[43]

 For CH Miller, force restructuring was a small change compared to the change in the Army religious landscape. Because of court rulings, every expression of faith was now worthy of accommodation. A new era of openness in the Army required chaplains to provide for a wide variety of non-traditional faith expression. As a traditional Southern Baptist Chaplain, CH Miller struggled every day attempting to accommodate same sex couples, Pagans, Humanists, Atheists, and others.

CH Miller's mentor, CH (COL) Chuck Morris, always talked about an environment where things were volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous (VUCA). During a mentoring session, CH Miller confessed his discomfort at ministering in the Army VUCA setting. CH Morris responded; "We need to talk." After a few minutes of silence, CH Morris begins: "There are some skills you must learn if you are to survive in the Army Chaplaincy of today." He continues, "Normally you would learn these skills later in your career, but times have changed and you must learn them now." Over the next year, CH Morris mentored CH Miller, teaching him a skill set that would gradually make him into a strategic thinker. CH Miller gradually became comfortable working through complex problems and situations. By the time he was promoted, he was well on the path to becoming a strategic senior leader in an extremely challenging environment.

Implications for Scenario D: Tectonic Change. Scenario D duplicates implications from other scenarios. However, this scenario contains important implications about how chaplains develop into strategic leaders and strategic thinkers. Within scenario D, there are policy implications for how, when, and where the Chaplain Corps trains and develops chaplains throughout a career. What policy changes need to occur in order to develop strategic thinking skill sets as a chaplain rises through the ranks? Currently, only a select few chaplains attend Senior Service College to receive formal education as critical thinkers. Trends indicate that complexities and ambiguities will increase in the future; therefore, are there alternate ways the Chaplain Corps can address the need to develop critical thinkers? These implications speak to both the professional and developmental processes that result in critical thinking and strategic skill sets. Great mentoring may help a fortunate few; Senior Service College will help

others, but what about the rest? Is there a need for a continuing education requirement

at the Lieutenant Colonel level that provides an opportunity for chaplains to pursue

additional studies emphasizing strategic development? Will a tectonic shift in the

religious support environment require a corresponding shift in policies that shape

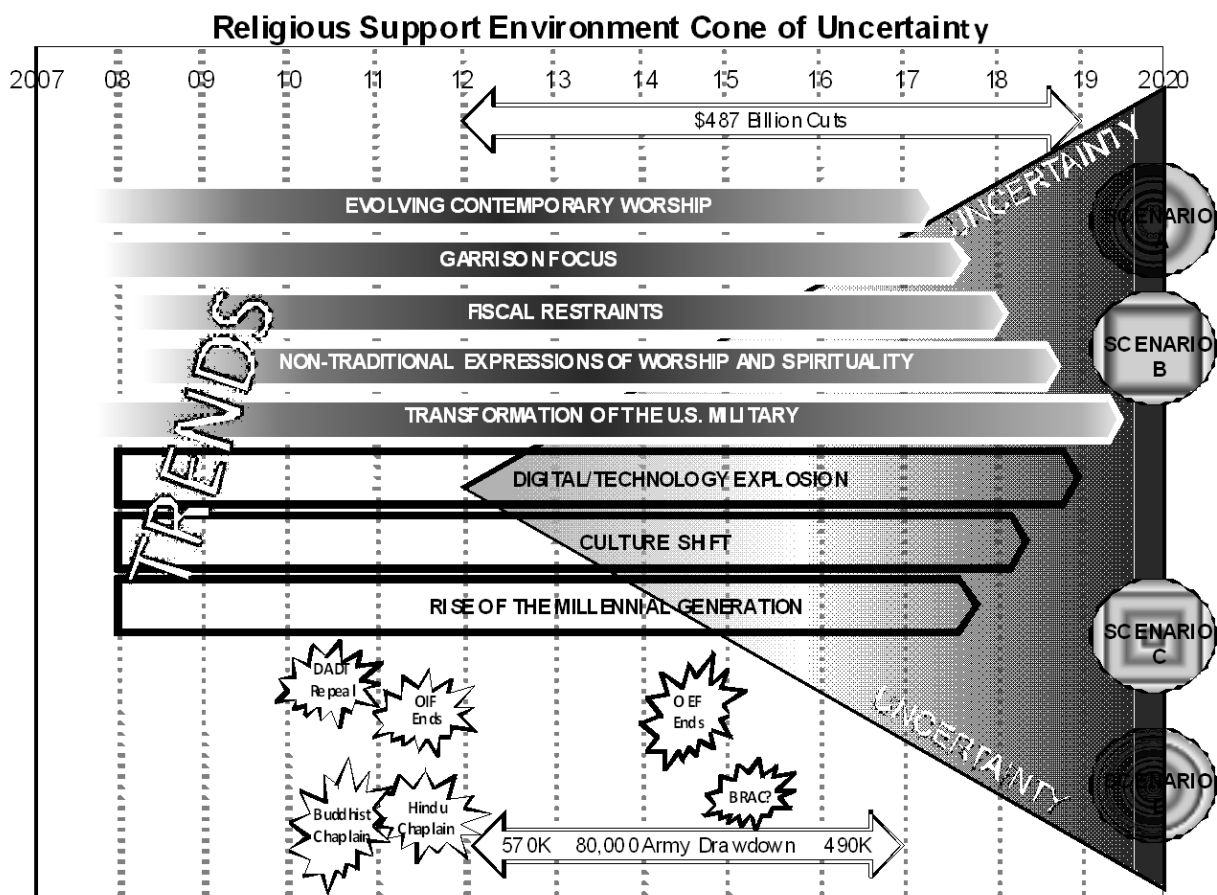Chaplain Corps training and professional development?

Figure 2. Religious Support Environment Cone of Uncertainty.

Conclusion

The Religious Support Environment Cone of Uncertainty in Figure 2 provides a

graphic summary of the trends, forces, factors, and scenarios forming the basis of this

paper. It provides a visual guide for the dialogue between senior chaplains that has

already begun. As the graphic suggests, uncertainty and unpredictability increase as forecasters project trends further into the future. [44] The four scenarios are useful only as tools to generate discussion; they do not provide any answers, but they may be useful in helping leaders ask the right questions.

The Army Chaplain Corps cannot afford to stand by and let the future unfold in random fashion. As strategic leaders, senior chaplains have the opportunity to dialogue about trends and use the on-going conversation to shape the decisions that will function as the catalysts for the future. There will be many challenges in the religious support environment of 2020 that no one can anticipate. However, the strategic inflection point of the present provides senior chaplain leaders an opportunity to guide transformational change in a positive direction.

The armchair quarterback is right one hundred percent of the time simply because he has the advantage of hindsight. However, the armchair quarterback is a spectator who never plays the game. The real hero is the one on the field, the one who makes the decisions that win or lose the game. The thoughts, factors, trends, and scenarios presented in this paper serve one purpose, and that is to encourage all senior chaplain leadership onto the playing field. Strategic chaplain leaders cannot afford to be spectators.

Endnotes

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