



ICJE, P.O. Box 293, Montgomery, AL 36101 * 334-280-0020

Ethics, Public Safety

and

The Modern American

by

**Assistant Professor Stan Tippins Sr., (2014). Criminal Justice Department/Legal
Studies Department Faulkner University**

Introduction:

I took the time to research the origin of the Greek word (*Ethos*), which is the prefix of the word ethics. In my search for answers, I identified several compelling words. 1. Trustworthiness 2. Logic 3. Pathos, which means emotion, and the phrase, “logos or logic in conveying tone and style of the argument.” These words and various parts of that phrase are conveyed before or during any holy war, national or international conflict. Considering that those involved in the argument truly believe *they are right!*

One would not disagree with the notion that trust, logic, emotion, communication and principle beliefs are intertwined when examining public safety, wars, and ethics. In order to better know and understand what something is, it might be easier to define or describe what that thing is not. Before we examine the core principles that govern the *Modern American* we should describe a *Modern American*.

Lets begin- *Modern Americans* are not encouraged to pray in school. Islam teaches to pray several times every day wherever they are. Muslims love their homeland and take great offense when it is invaded. *Modern Americans* do not protect the borders of America. *Modern Americans* do not believe that America is at war. A growing number of Muslims are fully engaged in a holy war. One should consider the real possibility that the fundamental character, culture, and beliefs of Modern Americans are vanishing and perhaps nonexistent in some sectors. Did I get your attention?

The Ethics behind “the ends justify the means” with Terrorists

It has been said that all is fair in love and war. I will not examine the aforementioned statement as it relates to love; however, this investigation will delve into “*the ends justify the means*” ideology relative to war. Consider this acronym for W.A.R- “we are right” and one begins to realize that during the fight, both sides of the conflict employ similar tactics. Undoubtedly, there is an all or nothing approach that can be linked to the “*end justifies the means.*”

According to Fawaz A. Gerges, Osama Bin Laden carefully cultivated his image. As a result he has convinced some 1.3 billion Muslims that he has empathy and deep concern for their faith (Gerges, 2006). He encourages hatred towards America and American interest. Some Muslims are convinced that heaven awaits those who sacrifice

their lives in their so-called holy war. Furthermore, men are told that 70 virgins will be theirs if they commit suicide during the W.A.R. Reasonable thinking people would ask, “What is the heavenly benefit for young virgin Muslim women, and the innocent people who die during this war?” Now, to tackle this thinking comprehensively one must consider how warriors on both sides treat young women and the innocent before the conflict begins.

Like most religions, there are varying degrees of zeal and Islam is not different in this respect. In fact, history has revealed that atrocities can equally be attributed to every religion including Christianity. Furthermore, there are squabbles within the faith’s and among all religions. According to Gerger (2006), al Qaeda has the ultra-militant wing and the nonviolent majority. Pseudo leaders like bin Laden will come and go as time passes. Leaders will undoubtedly reflect on failures and successes as the jihad continues.

Ross D. Gartenstein & Kyle Dabruzzi (2008) learned that senior leaders with al-Qaeda have a safe harbor in Pakistan where support is growing. Also, their unified message is resonating among followers who combine skill sets, financing, and operational objectives. Al-Qaeda has transformed terrorists groups and operations into a cohesive threat for Western nations (Gartenstein & Dabruzzi, 20089). Al Qaeda operatives have little or no problem using deception, lies, the young, and the old in their efforts to continue jihad and thus have adopted the “ends justify the means” concept.

The Ethics behind “the ends justify the means” with Counterterrorism

In response to jihad, American forces have used a *no holds barred* approach in the W.A. R. to counter al Qaeda and terrorists’ efforts. In order to gin up public support President Bush made several speeches designed to foster patriotism. Chernus (2004) said

that President Bush frequently used the phrase compassionate conservative and connected it with the war. As a result, many Americans associate patriotic efforts with nobility and national pride as Americans battle the forces of terror. According to Jeffery Record, the Bush Doctrine connects radicalism, technology and has placed it in direct conflict with American ideology (Record, 2003). Furthermore, this *no-holds-barred* approach transcended to military efforts to combat terror.

For example, water boarding is said to be a horrible tactic employed to extract information from terror suspects. According to Terrance Jeffery, "Its most effective use, say current and former CIA officials, was in breaking Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, known as KSM, who subsequently confessed to a number of ongoing plots against the United States." (Jeffery, 2007) Jeffery thinks that water boarding should be honestly debated within proper context because America and its interests should be protected by any means necessary; in other words, "*the end justifies the means.*" The objective comprehensive approach that must be examined is (how young women are treated, and how captured warriors are treated). The results of this comprehensive examination greatly depends on which side of the ocean one lives because "W.A.R." That is an observation of "*the end justifies the means*" on a macro-level.

Legally Lying within a Public Safety Context

Lets look at the "*end justifies the means*" on a micro-level. Consider that police investigators are allowed to lie to suspects in order to find or uncover evidence. According to Ruben G. Апресян, this is situational ethics. For example, for most people facts are imperative; nevertheless, one should consider some ethical standard for obtaining necessary facts. Unfortunately, those charged with gathering necessary fact

have treated others as an end in itself. Apressyan thinks “the requirement of the unconditional impermissibility of lying leads to a concealed justification of treachery, which should be considered another type of lying.” (Apressyan, p. 9, 2010) The police call these reverse-sting operations. Such operations involve sophisticated lying totally rooted in the primary objective, which is to get the bad guy. One should not assume that “*the end justify the means*” ideology is excluded during such covert operations. Have you heard of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), National Security Agency (NSA), the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), and Special Ops?

Conclusion

I leave you with questions: Is it important to teach American patriotism? Should God be involved in the *war* (W. A. R.)? Where is the ethical line drawn? And, who has the authority to draw that line? With counterterrorism efforts and police investigations one must decide if national pride and honesty is more important than public safety? What is a *Modern American*? To be completely honest-one would have to look left, look right, scratch his or her head and the say: “Could you repeat the questions?” This would give you more time to properly describe or define your ethos/ethics on the questions. One could argue that if we give up thinking about these important questions, we would be *Modern Americans*?

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