

The ethical values that caused me to not abide by the military officer's request are inspired by Star Trek's famed term, the prime directive.

*"Born of Star Trek creator Gene Roddenberry's distaste for the Vietnam War, this science fiction rule that technologically advanced humans ought not meddle in the affairs of alien cultures has lent credence to noninterventionist principles in terrestrial affairs, from anthropology to international politics. And those principles have merit, intended as they are to prevent the peculiarly devastating cultural havoc that can result when two worlds meet in unmitigated collision."* (Peltz 635)

Just because the more humane approach is to spare two lives for the price of one does not indicate this is the best and only option. *"Thus, what is of supreme importance in war is to attack an enemy's strategy"*. (Cimbala 361) Following Sun Tzu's war philosophies, sometimes the only way to face your foe is to attack their strategy and strengths. Whether you intervene or not, your actions will not spark hope or prompt a resolution for this nation's civil war.

The ramifications and repercussions for interfering can impact more innocent bystanders from the surrounding villages being placed with harsher restraints and restrictions to the possibility of steering my home country into a developing country's civil war. *"If war became necessary, it should be conducted in a way that minimized loss of life and social destruction."* (Cimbala 361) Intrusion may also be construed as selfish with a false pretense that my involvement will lead to the betterment of the world but ultimately it is yet another tale of satisfying one's ego. *"What is man? He's just a collection of chemicals with delusions of grandeur."* (Rand) An individual who places their self in this situation or follows through with the

officer's request would believe themselves as a "God," whereas their assumptions or choices are deemed rightful, just, and absolute.

*"Therein lies the modern interpretation of the Prime Directive. This "Archer Doctrine"--one must not "play God"--is, like the Prime Directive, expressed in the language of moral absolutism, in which right and wrong, as clear alternatives, preexist any dilemma." (Peltz 652).*

However, this is the exact reason why so many countries and organizations share spite and hate toward the United States.

As Americans, we believe it is right or just to press our own beliefs and policies upon a culture or society rather than allowing others to work independently. *"Nothing contained in the present charter shall authorize the United Nations to intervene in matters which are essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of any state."* (United Nations 3) Rather than involving ourselves with conflict outside of our borders, we can be proactive inside our inner cities and revitalize departments such as our education system. Similar scenarios only accelerate this regression for the United States. Granted, there is always a possibility to make up for lost time and opportunity plus justify that the act of war is necessary. *"When you surround an army, leave an outlet free. Give the enemy a way out." This stems from Sun Tzu's leitmotiv to only fight when it is really necessary.*" (Pars 333)

The feelings of guilt and innocence will be bestowed upon you regardless of your choice from following through with the officer's request to the failure to act. This is all a matter of human nature and the repercussions we face no matter our choice. *"If one's actions are honest,*

*one does not need the predated confidence of others.”* (Rand 146) Prior to action, you must analyze the situation by asking yourself a few questions. What is the upbringing of the military officer? How did he become in a position of power? Do you believe he is in sole command or has been delivered instructions by a commanding officer? Etc. The circumstance for the military officer can range far and wide:

- a child seized from their family and placed into a training camp to fight a war against an enemy they do not truly know or understand
- a citizen inside a dictatorial or totalistic regime
- recruitment through false propaganda and information possibly transmitted from out of state via communication technologies
- fooled into believing the leader he fights for is a (false) prophet

All these questions would need to be answered and not assumed or speculated in a short period of time. Therefore, the reality of the situation is that in this scenario you are not given the appropriate time and resources, or possess the ability and expertise to fully weigh your options. To properly weigh your options, you would have to place this scenario in another perspective. For the sake of satisfying the requirement, I would seek the following:

- Current and Previous Regional Treaties
- Local to National Government Policies
- Controlling and Rebellious forces stage of societal development
- Controlling and Rebellious forces objectives and message

- Controlling and Rebelling forces allies and enemies
- Home countries relationship with the controlling and rebelling forces
- Home countries relationship with controlling and rebelling forces enemies and allies
- Home country past or present involvement in the region
  - Diplomatic and/or Military Involvement?
    - If yes, how long have we been occupying the region and for what reasons?
      - When discovering the reasons, do the rebels have any right to have acted the way they have demonstrated?
        - Do you have the right to intervene?
      - When discovering the reasons, do the existing government entities have the right to stay in power?
        - Do you have the authority to make such a decision?

No matter the choice you will never satisfy all parties or standards whether they are personal or an attempt to respect another culture. These are the moments where great leaders and decision makers are born or shunned. There is only so much information and reconnaissance work you can conduct. Given the situation, all you really can do is go with your intuition and be mindful of George Washington's Farewell Address,

*"The great rule of conduct for us, in regard to foreign nations, is, in extending our commercial relations, to have with them as little political connection as possible. So far as we have already formed engagements, let them be fulfilled with perfect good faith. Here let us stop... Hence, therefore, it must be unwise in us to implicate*

*ourselves, by artificial ties, in the ordinary vicissitudes of her politics, or the ordinary combinations and collisions of her friendships or enmities.” (Washington)*

Throughout history we have continuously disregarded one of our most prominent founding father’s words including his thoughts on government parties and the factions they prompt.

*“It serves always to distract the Public Councils, and enfeeble the Public Administration. It agitates the Community with ill-founded jealousies and false alarms; kindles the animosity of one part against another, foment occasionally riot and insurrection. It opens the door to foreign influence and corruption, which find a facilitated access to the government itself through the channels of party passions. Thus, the policy and the will of one country are subjected to the policy and will of another.” (Washington).*

There is no suitable choice or course of action that would resolve the situation other than to tolerate the developing countries civil war and let it evolve with limited to no third-party involvement. Action should only be considered, if it is possible to stop a death or violence that does not alter the course of a culture’s development from a moralistic standpoint. Subsequently, the only equitable play you have is to follow Star Trek’s prime directive which is to not influence the development of a culture through exposure to advanced technology or alter their cultures evolutionary development. By declining the military officer’s order, the justification is supported by the prime directive. This leaves you with virtually two options; walk away by never placing yourself in this situation or face being shot for defying the military officer’s request.

## Works Cited

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