Ethical Dilemma Paper

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Counterterrorism operations by intelligence agencies frequently involve resolving ethical dilemmas that require trade-offs between liberty, integrity, privacy, moral values, and human rights considerations over security and threat aversion. However, ethics remain integral to military, homeland security, and intelligence operations, and therefore, it is critical for counter-terrorism officials to be able to evaluate between various ethical and national security considerations when making decisions. In this case, a CIA contractor TZTYPHOON is providing reliable and critical information to avert ISIS threats in Europe. However, the operative makes ethically questionable requests to his CIA handlers. A refusal by the CIA to provide him with prostitutes in return for his information may adversely impact current counter-terrorism operations.

In general, every employee of U.S. federal agencies is provided with clear Standards of Conduct at the time of induction. Any activities involving sex trafficking, prostitution, or similar activities that bring dishonor to the agency, are forbidden in the code. These also include engaging in promiscuous sexual relations, soliciting or frequenting prostitutes, or being engaged in notoriously disgraceful conduct. Furthermore, engaging in sex acts that could potentially lead to a federal employee to coercion, blackmail, or improper influence are clearly prohibited, regardless of whether these acts are legal in host countries[[1]](#footnote-1). Moreover, employees of Intelligence agencies, as well as their contractors, are obligated to comply with the same standards which apply to the executive branch.

However, a number of factors have to be considered whilst adhering to ethical guidelines. The counter-terror operations being conducted by the CIA, with the aid of TZTYPHOON, involve a high degree of secrecy. The sensitive nature of information involved requires to be constrained among a few individuals who have to decide between jeopardizing operations and upholding general ethical guidelines. Furthermore, the information relates to high-impact, low-frequency terrorist attacks that require undertaking measures to eliminate risks and sometimes override civil liberties for security purposes. The time-sensitivity of TZTYPHOON’s information and the critical nature of this collaboration also means that only a few CIA operatives will have to make decisions independently, quickly, and based on a single source of information[[2]](#footnote-2). In this case, even if a clear violation of ethical guidelines and professional integrity is occurring, these factors may justify overriding them, alongside other core civil liberties, to protect the collective interests of the U.S. and the host countries’ security.

Integrity-related problems may occur within any institution, especially when one colleague sees another violating statutory guidance or the code of ethics. However, at times, some professionals, especially international collaborators and contractors, operate under different ethical standards. Thus, certain ethical guidelines that are mandatory to be followed in social work, for instance, may not apply to the security sector, despite the violation being a universally unacceptable practice. Under such collaborations, critical information obtained through deceitful measures that are known to be useful may override general ethical guidelines. Moreover, it is also not possible to subject these decisions to an ethical committee given the secrecy and time-sensitivity of the information involved.

The decision whether to hire prostitutes for TZTYPHOON will require the CIA to strike the right balance between professional integrity, the critical and underground nature of the information available, and its utility[[3]](#footnote-3). Although, a strictly utilitarian model of ethical decision-making may not be suitable for every case; however, the sensitive nature of the information involved require the CIA officials to consider the context and utility of the operations. Once the secrecy or sensitivity of the information. the circumstances under which it is obtained, and the critical nature of its outcomes is ascertained, the CIA can justify temporarily violating certain ethical guidelines[[4]](#footnote-4).

In conclusion, the secretive nature of the operations, the extensive collaboration involved, the need to eliminate risks, the time-sensitivity of the operations, and the potential loss of innocent lives in case of an intelligence failure are all grounds to justify allowing a contractor to violate certain ethical guidelines. This comes in addition to protecting U.S. national interests that sanction such operations in the first place. Nevertheless, intelligence officials must still not accustom themselves to believing that ethical norms are an obstacle to counter-terror operations; a temporary allowance does not justify a routine violation.

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