



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY  
HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS  
3000 MARINE CORPS PENTAGON  
WASHINGTON, DC 20350-3000

IN REPLY REFER TO:

CMC

23 Mar 12

WHITE LETTER NO. 1-12

From: Commandant of the Marine Corps  
To: All General Officers  
All Commanding Officers  
All Officers in Charge  
All Sergeants Major

Subj: LEADERSHIP AND CONDUCT

1. From the earliest days of our history, Marines have always distinguished themselves by disciplined adherence to orders. This has been especially true in austere and challenging expeditionary combat environments. This discipline is at the heart of our ethos, it sets us apart from other fighting forces, and it has made our reputation.

2. Overall, our efforts in Afghanistan have been fought and conducted in accordance with our own high standards and traditions - in a way that meets the high, almost lofty expectations of the American people. By unHINGING and beating back a determined enemy, Marines and their partners have forced a fundamental change of conditions and brought us to the point of success in Helmand Province. The cost in blood and treasure has been high.

3. Yet, despite this extraordinary effort, a number of recent, widely-publicized incidents have brought discredit on the Marine Corps and reverberated at the strategic level. The undisciplined conduct represented in these incidents threatens to overshadow all our good work and sacrifice.

4. Aside from the undisciplined and embarrassing conduct, I am particularly concerned with the blatant disregard for the unambiguous direction contained within United States Central Command General Order 1B (USCENTCOM GO 1B). This conduct is particularly troubling in that it portends a lack of discipline and accountability by Marines and leadership; we are allowing our standards to erode.

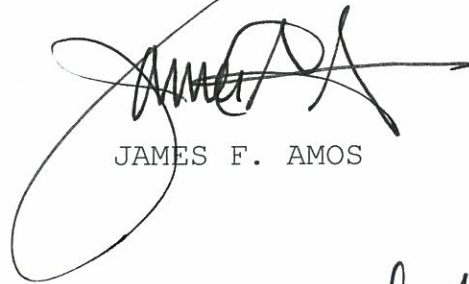
5. I direct each of you to maintain utmost familiarity with the details and spirit of all applicable orders and directives that govern our conduct in specific geographic areas and combat

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zones. In particular, I draw your attention to USCENTCOM GO 1B, and the requirement that Commanders and Officers-in-Charge ensure that all of their personnel are thoroughly briefed on the prohibitions and requirements of the general order.

6. The indispensable condition of Marine Corps leadership is action and attitude, not words. We lead by example, and provide continual and close supervision to those we have the privilege to lead. I expect each of you to hold yourselves and your Marines to the highest standards..nothing else is acceptable.

7. During ten years of war, many hundreds of thousands of Marines have gone back and forth to combat in Iraq and Afghanistan, all while conducting themselves credibly and keeping their honor clean. **That is what we do - that is who we are.** The recent missteps indicate that there is complacency by some in the enforcement of our own high standards. This requires your full and immediate attention. The high regard of our fellow citizens and our own self-image are at stake. Get after it!



JAMES F. AMOS

*Marines... I need you focused  
attentive and your personal  
fingerprints on this matter now!*