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Case study: Collateral damage mapping

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Case (for presentation to students)

A GISP working for a national security agency is tasked to create an analysis that delineates expected civilian casualties associated with a missile attack on the suspected urban headquarters of an alleged insurgent leader in a foreign country. Some of this research involves use of data from a variety of sources including analysis of the country's medical capacities.

References

Print

Smith, N. (1992). History and philosophy of geography: real wars, theory wars. *Progress in Human Geography, 16*(2), 257-271.

Clark, M. J. (1998). GIS--democracy or delusion? *Environment and Planning A, 30*(2), 303-316.

Web

American Anthropological Association Code of Ethics
http://www.aaanet.org/committees/ethics/ethcode.htm

Association of American Geographers Statement on Professional Ethics
http://www.aag.org/Publications/Other%20Pubs/Statement%20on%20Professional%20Ethics.pdf

Resources for teachers

Suggested discussion points

1. How should the GISP present any personal or agency moral concerns? Who should they be presented to?

2. Does preparation of the analysis mean the GISP can separate her personal moral concerns?

3. How should scientific organization guidance on work for national defense be used to inform a moral decision, even if it is against agency policy?

4. Can the breaking down of the task into independent components (compartmentalization) be sufficient to address personal moral concerns of involved staff?

Relevant GISCI Rule of Conduct

Section I, Number 1 "GIS products and services should benefit society, and enhance the well-being of individuals and groups, within the constraints of existing law. Some applications of GIS products and services may harm individuals (directly or indirectly) while advancing government policies that some citizens regard as morally questionable. GIS professionals' (GISP) participation in such applications is a matter of individual conscience."

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