Notes on the Just War Theory: Whose Justice, Which Wars?

Robert J. Myers

It is generally accepted that the revival of American interest in the traditional concept of the "just war" began sometime during the undeclared war in Vietnam. Some might mark it with the publication of Michael Walzer's *Just and Unjust Wars* in 1977.

Walzer's motivation is spelled out in part in his introduction to the original edition of his book. He first depreciates the international law fraternity and its emphasis on "positive law" for an international community that does not exist. Then he explains his own purpose:

I want to recapture the just war for political and moral theory. My own work, then, looks back to that religious tradition within which Western politics and morality were first given shape, to the books of virtues like Maimonides, Aquinas, Vitoria, and Suarez—and then to the books written by Hugo Grotius, who took over the tradition and began to work it into secular form. But I have not attempted a history of just war theory, and I quote the classical texts only occasionally, for the sake of some particularly illuminating or forceful argument. I refer more often to contemporary philosophers and theologians (and soldiers and statesmen), for my main concern is not with the making of the moral world but with its present character.¹

Later in his career, Walzer seized the opportunity created by the Persian Gulf War in 1991 to write a new preface and issue the second edition in 1992. Now he is perhaps more skeptical of the whole enterprise:

This is a dangerous moment for any theory, though it is also, obviously, a moment to which theorists look forward. Think of the perverse if exhilarating effects upon religion whenever the language of holiness is taken over by politicians. Of course, politics and war are never holy—not, at least, as I understand holiness—while they are sometimes, or to some degree, just. But only sometimes and to some degree, and when more blanket justifications are claimed, the theory is rendered suspect. If it can be used to defend injustice, should it be used at all?2

This paper will reflect on whether or not the good that the “just war” intends actually outweighs the evil that a doctrine so available to self-interested interpretation allows. Hans J. Morgenthau poses this problem for nation-states in the following way: “There is a world of difference between the belief that all nations stand under the judgment of God, inscrutable to the human mind, and the blasphemous conviction that God is always on one’s side and that what one wills oneself cannot fail to be willed by God also.”3 Whose justice are we talking about? Is there an evident “universal justice,” from God or natural law, that we can rely on to validate justice in war? Can wars be considered in terms of justice, or are such analyses simply self-serving? My reflections are limited to wars America has been involved in during the twentieth century.

For me, as for Walzer, it was the Vietnam War that challenged the just war theory—not the utility of the theory but its legitimacy, which is another question altogether. States need to promote war to their citizens as just or right, to assure participation and public support, but this may have little to do with justice, assuming an objective standard of justice is available. Contemporary just warriors often simply note the criteria (which will be listed shortly) and assume that their own country passes the test. The built-in relativity is ignored. Universal justice requires something more: it can reside in the perfection of a particular religion or a Kantian imperative, so that there is no blinking at the right or wrong of a matter. Yet even for religion the tests are severe, as was brought home in the American Civil War. To many, the question of which side God was on was entirely legitimate, although offers made by earnest religious leaders to

intercede with Him on President Lincoln's behalf were gently turned down. If God wished to advise Lincoln, there was nothing standing in His way.

The operational justice of everyday life, however, when it comes to matters of war and peace, is apt to be both chauvinistic and nationalistic, thereby in the case of America leading to moralistic approaches to those matters. Certainly from the perspective of most Americans, the U.S. entry into World Wars I and II, the Korean “police action” under UN auspices, and the Gulf War in 1991 placed justice on the side of America and its allies. For some, Vietnam was an anomaly, although claims about justice are still debated. As a degree of relativism is necessary in considering the justice of war, it is not surprising that this justice remains a matter of both heated and learned controversy.

Some associate the beginning of the just war tradition with Augustine, although he was no enthusiast; even the “just war,” he said, is a “cruel necessity,” and even if the aggressor meets his due, “[war] is a trouble and misfortune.” Later, Catholic canonists and a rich collection of jurists such as Hugo Grotius, Jean Bodin, Alberto Gentile, and others in the sixteenth century codified the rules of the “just war.” The international lawyers, however, were less concerned with justice (even though just war language entered into international law) than with the intricacies of international law, which gave each sovereign state an “equal right” to go to war. This shift in concern brought about the temporary eclipse of the “just war,” and the concept was revived only after World War II, a war which needed, in the eyes of most of humankind, no justification beyond good triumphant over evil. (One leaves aside here important means arguments over firebombings and the atomic bombings of Japan.)

Robert Tucker has expressed concern about nuclear deterrence and the temptation for one side or the other to break it under the guise of a “defensive” first strike. Here he was skeptical about moralism and the possibility for an aggressor (even an American!) to launch such a war. It may be, Tucker writes, “that what men conceive to be their interests and, consequently, the actions they take, will eventually be influenced by claims whose roots are found in [the] need for self-justification.” Paul Ramsey addressed the nuclear question as a Christian theologian, trying to justify a “limited nuclear” war, but in the end his treatment brought no greater moral weight to bear on the nuclear dilemma than did the more recent labors of the Catholic bishops, with their agonized conclusion

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that nuclear weapons and threats were immoral, but what was a poor bishop to do? It was the growing moral issue of Vietnam and the uneasiness of the American conscience that prepared the groundwork for Walzer's book.

The Just War in Historical Perspective

What are some of the specifics of a just war scenario now that the broad brush strokes are behind us? There is little argument about the criteria, which are expressed in the following, taken from Robert Phillips. There are two principal categories in the just war tradition: *jus ad bellum* (steps leading up to war) and *jus in bello* (the rules of engagement, so to speak). In *jus ad bellum*, the traditional steps are three: (1) last resort; (2) declared by legitimate authority; (3) morally justifiable. The latter includes (a) self-defense against aggression; (b) correction of an injustice that has gone uncorrected by legitimate authority 'in another place'; (c) reestablishment of a social order that will distribute justice; (d) undertaken with the intention of bringing about peace. (It is worth noting that all of these ideas apply equally to the concept of "intervention," which is nowadays a much more frequent occurrence than declared war.) Then, if the issue is not yet settled, we move into *jus in bello*. Here we have two principles: "(1) proportionality. The quantity of force employed or threatened must always be morally proportionate to the end being sought in war, and (2) discrimination. Force must never be applied in such a way as to make noncombatants and innocent persons the intentional objects of attack. The only appropriate targets in war are combatants." Under these circumstances, one must call upon the principle of double-effect:

In a situation where the use of force can be foreseen to have actual or probable multiple effects, some of which are evil, culpability does not attach to the agent if the following conditions are met: (a) the action must carry the intention to produce morally good consequences; (b) the evil effects are not *intended* as ends in themselves or as means to other ends, good or evil; (c) the permis-

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sion of collateral evil must be justified by considerations of proportionate moral weight.⁸

If this has the lugubrious sound of medieval scholasticism, then we are on track to understanding where this collection of rules of war originated: in the monasteries of the Roman Catholic Church as it tried to restore civic and social order to the collapsing Roman empire. Order was more important than justice in those parlous times. But justice is surely not the principal motivator of war (correcting an injustice is one of the minor rights of the “just war” but potentially very troublesome). Donald Kagan, in his book, *On the Origins of War*, quotes with approval Thucydides, who found that people go to war out of “honor, fear, and interest.” If these are the three causes, how, then, do we get into the idea of justice in war? We want to know that “right” is on our side, yet I will argue later that right is obviously not the same as justice. Tucker in his critical study of just war theory says that “historically, states interpreted the principles of justice in war in such an elastic way that they have caused them to seem compatible with any act of war.” That kind of observation is the source of my uneasiness in reading about “just war” in such standard texts as Walzer and James Turner Johnson’s *Can Modern War Be Just?* and *Just War Tradition and the Restraint of War* and in seeing the daily bloody display reported in the media.

Note that there is no expectation in just war theory of removing war altogether from international society. For realists, that at least is a positive factor. Kagan has no such expectation either; he quotes Heraclitus, who says, “War is the father of all things.” The goal of just war theory then is to limit the frequency of war and to burden conduct with moral opprobrium when just war rules are not followed. But why would anyone want to follow rules that interfere with victory and retribution, which often figure in the way enemies, old and new, pursue their aims once they have crossed the dangerous Rubicon of war? Can we—should we—judge the justice of wars on the basis of an unsound, perhaps immoral theory?

The Catholic Church’s involvement with the “just war” doctrine in the fifth century is explained by Phillips in *War and Justice*. Phillips discusses the Church’s role in avoiding the proliferation of armed conflict:

The first line of response is theological. *Bellum Justum* in its traditional form is one important aspect of medieval political theory which receives its clearest expression in the Augustinian contrast between the City of God and the City of Man. In that context statecraft will always be seen as an essentially imperfect means for the distribution of justice. The state will have its necessities, but they will be subordinate to a higher law.

This point, of course, was essential to the Church, if in addition to participating in the councils of kings and princes, it was going to maintain its claim to access to Divine judgment.

It also meant, as Phillips interestingly explains, that the Church in this instance turned its back on Christ and the New Testament, and thus on Christianity. The New Testament was pacifist—in it we have the turning of the other cheek and love, not war—and pacifism put the Christians in opposition to the state. Phillips cites cases, including the tragedy of a Roman youth, Maximilian, who said, “I cannot enlist [in the Roman army] for I am a Christian.” This assertion cost him his head.

Phillips also recounts the early Christians’ belief in the imminent return of Christ (a belief that any fair reading of the New Testament would substantiate). Thus, according to Phillips, “the moral admonitions against violence expressed by Jesus are inextricably mixed with passivity—a serene waiting in faith for the end of the world.” Importantly, this waiting-for-the-world-to-end attitude had some unintended consequences: it was a downer for all future-oriented economic activity. Everything was predictably worse—the golden age, the silver age, the bronze age. Life operated in cycles, the past always superior to the present and the future inferior to what now existed. Elaine Pagels in *The Origin of the Devil* reports on wrongs not righted in the early Christian community because of the belief in the imminent end of the world. Finally, someone looked around and saw there were many new and good inventions and much knowledge that had accumulated since Christ’s time and the predictions of the end of the world, and suddenly, in a historical sense, came the Enlightenment.

In the meantime, in the real world of the fifth century, Augustine was faced with the challenge of defending Christianity against its pagan attackers. The pagans claimed that it was because of Christianity that Rome turned its back on

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9 Ibid., 4–6.
its reliable pantheon of gods and goddesses and that this was responsible for the sack of Rome in 410 A.D. To this challenge, Augustine responded with the *City of God*. He also strengthened his ties with the Roman powers that were. In brief, says Phillips, Augustine was willing to jettison, or at least minimize, Christ’s teachings, which promoted pacifism, in favor of the “glory tales” of the Old Testament, God as the Lord of Battle. For Augustine, Christ’s teachings became optional counsels of perfection or evangelical counsels. The Church would prefer to speak to the temporal power, and, with skill, prevail over it. All this reveals the ubiquitous nature of the struggle for power. Augustine, educated as a Roman, had an inclusive attitude and used what he could of Greek, Roman, and Jewish wisdom.

In Sabine’s *A History of Political Thought*, there is an outline of this struggle for power between church and state: The Church’s idea was to cut off and claim the spiritual sphere and leave temporal matters to the civil authorities while maintaining ultimate approval over their decisions. The doctrine of “two swords” was enunciated by Pope Gelasius I at the end of the fifth century. To oil over differences that were (and still are) inherent in such a division and to ease the daily friction, a doctrine of “mutual helpfulness” was also promulgated. There was no doubt which side was superior. As Pope Gelasius I said, “Christian emperors need bishops for the sake of eternal life, and bishops make use of imperial regulations to order the course of temporal affairs.” One of the things the bishops “ordered” was the circumstances of the wars that plagued the Middle Ages. As Phillips writes, “Once the hurdle of pacifism had been surmounted, *bellum justum* developed almost naturally within the framework of medieval political philosophy.”

Prudence and morality were united in codes devised to protect the ruling elites and the status quo.

By following this condensed history we can readily see why we have the term “just war” and why it often appears with quotation marks. Tucker’s statement, that any war was justified under such an elastic code, cannot be the complete and final answer if we are genuinely seeking constraints on war-making and war-fighting—or peacekeeping and peacemaking, to use the current Orwellian terms. The religious attachment to the question of war, an attachment that surely stems from conflicts of temporal interest, no matter how disguised, still persists. In fact, temporal authorities certain of ecclesiastical support welcome the seal of approval—as in Operation Just Cause in Panama in 1990. There almost always

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10 Ibid., 9.
seems to be a perfect fit between church and state, as Walzer’s earlier statement indicates.

The ongoing intensity of the struggle between church and state and its abiding importance in Europe over the past three hundred years is outlined in Pierre Manent’s *An Intellectual History of Liberalism.*\(^{11}\) From Manent’s perspective, the church-state question has been and remains the dominant issue facing European politics. The “just war” is one area in which mutual benefits to the church and state have produced an unshakable alliance of interest. A state could declare war under any circumstances as a Machiavellian “necessity” and leave the matter there. In practice, however, as a way of assuring domestic support and at least a minimum of international understanding and acquiescence, the state preferred to coopt the moral authority of the Church. The Church, in turn, to keep its sword sharp, bustled in with piety and moral approval.

This argument demonstrates that the Church, in its ecclesiastic authority, had ruled that temporal matters were subject to its judgment. The state accepted that for its own reasons, but at a cost to its power vis-à-vis the Church. For disinterested observers, in order to consider where to first aim our criticisms of the just war theory, it is important to understand that it is in fact the Church and not the state that sanctions war. The broader implications of this particular struggle for power are what makes Manent’s conclusions so striking.

Modern man, democratic man, says Manent, wants to free himself, recreate himself, but is caught in a seemingly irreducible dilemma:

> In order to escape decisively from the power of the singular religious institution of the Church, one had to renounce thinking about human life in terms of its good or end, which would always be vulnerable to the Church’s “trump.” Since, therefore, power in the body politic can no longer be considered the power of the good that orders what it gives (the Augustinian definition of grace), man can understand himself only by creating himself.\(^{12}\)

Nowhere can man as he now is or man’s society and state escape the Church’s judgment. Man establishes himself in nature and in the law (each of which is in conflict with the other). Man then tries to construct a body politic that transcends this separation. But this polity is still faced by its old adversary. Manent writes:


\(^{12}\) Ibid., 117.
The Christian religion from which [the artisans of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries] tried to protect the polity is just as weak today as civil society and the state. But even in its present weakness, that religion still leads us to seek a separation of nature and law that it once forced us to desire. *Vis a tergo* that pushed the nations of the West toward a society without religion, it still remains sovereign in its apparent exhaustion, as if, in three centuries of “accelerating” history, nothing had happened.\(^\text{13}\)

I have followed this church-state path only to demonstrate the perduring strength of moral and ethical input not from the sovereign state, but rather from its acquiescence to the ecclesiastical powers. This is the strength of the Church’s critique, “speaking truth to power.” And yet, in another aside, this judgmental stance is no longer sufficient for the Christian right in America, for example. It now wishes to compete for power with the civil authority, rather than simply to stand in judgment.

**Whose Justice? Which Wars?**

For the moment, then, it is sufficient to emphasize that the moral approval of war (and its first cousin intervention) is highly valued by the state and gives the solemn-faced clerics and their Pentagon acolytes their substantial influence over the rectitude of matters of war and peace. The Gulf War received little support in the United States as long as Secretary of State James Baker promoted it in terms of oil and jobs. Only in 1991 when President George Bush began using phrases like “moral and just” did the public respond, the United Nations coalesce, and Congress vote to support the war. At least one Pentagon official assured us that God was on our side. The Gulf War was a comparatively easy case, performed at a slow and measured rate, with clear stages, from Operation Desert Shield to Operation Desert Storm, and with time to pay attention to the rules of the game.

But what about the more difficult cases, such as Vietnam? There was a certain seamless quality about the defeat of the French at Dien Bien Phu in 1954 and the arrival of American advisers to replace them. That the French could not defeat the nationalist forces of Ho Chi-minh was a lesson lost. We can today turn to Robert S. McNamara’s exceptional *In Retrospect: The Tragedy and the Lessons of Vietnam* for singular insight into the most fateful and intense period of the game.

\(^\text{13}\) Ibid.
the war. My original expectation of McNamara's book was that it would simply be self-serving, a product of the "we were terribly wrong" syndrome. But this memoir contains insights into the idea of war as just. This is important because Americans historically have expressed their preference for a "just war"—in fact, to participate in an "unjust war" was unthinkable. In 1961 a wider war seemed to be on the horizon as the entire Indochina region (the former French colonies of Laos, Cambodia, and Vietnam) seemed to crumble and Eisenhower passed the baton to Kennedy. The argument over U.S. intervention in Vietnam, however, was not posed in just war terms but rather in terms of international law: The United States had answered the call of a legitimate government to turn back invaders from the rival state of North Vietnam.

Against this narrow legalistic argument there were few popular protests or warning statements from religious establishments. As McNamara points out repeatedly, this was the Cold War era. Three strands of conventional wisdom were woven together to create an impenetrable blindfold for American leaders: (1) the domino theory, that the fall of Vietnam would inexorably lead to the collapse of the whole of Indochina and Southeast Asia, and the United States might be forced to make a stand at the Thai border; (2) the Sino-Soviet alliance was about to conquer the Third World through "wars of national liberation"; (3) and a display of any weakness in Vietnam would undermine U.S. credibility with our NATO allies. With those three pillars of wisdom in place, self-imposed U.S. constraints severely limited both options and common sense; furthermore LBJ ascended to power, and his policy was one word: win. (The theory that JFK would have pulled out before the escalations of 1964 and 1965 is part of the legend of Camelot.) There were other McNamara complaints, including the lack of State Department expertise comparable to advice on Europe and the Soviet Union, a legacy of the McCarthy era, and insufficient coordination between military and diplomatic policies.

The key to understanding the Vietnam tragedy for McNamara and the United States, however, is recorded in a single paragraph. In August 1967 there were congressional hearings on Vietnam yet again. The Pentagon's joint chiefs were ever "can do," believing they needed just a few hundred thousand more troops (five hundred thousand were there already). And McNamara would once again try to make his case for a limited war, which would gradually carry the day. Here is the critical information:
The day before [the hearings] began, the president warned me about the heat I would face. "I am not worried about the heat, as long as I know what we are doing is right," I told him. He looked at me without saying another word. Not surprisingly, the president's political antennae were more sensitive than mine.14

"As long as I know what we are doing is right." This is a statement right out of Kant, appropriate enough for a philosopher, I suggest, but not for a secretary of defense. Not only was Johnson's political sense keener than McNamara's, but his own sense of morality was more acute. So we have a situation where the reasons for the intervention were faulty and the secretary of defense was fighting a crusade. The criterion was not strategy and success but "right." McNamara's statement accepts the validity of two dubious principles of Kantian philosophy: (1) that reason is superior to experience and (2) that principle is superior to consequences. One can elaborate at length on the dimensions of this folly. It required Nixon and Kissinger, after a decent interval, to look the facts of power in the eye and get out. In my view, the Vietnam war on balance failed the test of the just war criteria, but not the Machiavellian test of necessity, given the circumstances of the day.

I will now list some of my objections to the facile use and abuse of the term "just war" and the uncontested acceptance of its validity as our international and national moral standard: (a) As the phrase now stands, we are corrupting the word "justice," one of the four Great Virtues; in effect, "just war" is an ideological band-aid to cover the wounds on the body of Justice; (b) we are confusing "right" with "just," as we have seen McNamara do. "Right" can mean what is good for you and for your interest. It can be identical to might, and indeed "might is right" is a common identification. "Just," on the other hand, means philosophically guaranteeing that all of the involved parties in a certain action get their due. For me, "right" is an aggressive word, ego-oriented and self-serving, as shown in the McNamara example and in the word's frequent use in daily life. "Just" puts itself in the spotlight of general approval and even universal acclaim.

In the end the availability of this set of historical principles allows for an ease of manipulation that makes all wars just in the eyes of each set of participants.

These principles, then, actually have no meaning, and there are no boundaries to the ways in which they can be manipulated.

This leads to my penultimate observation. Would the world in general and the United States in particular be better off without the just war doctrine and tradition? The practitioners (and benefactors) of this sophistry seem troubled by a theory that sets out to militate against the evil of war. That it can be used to enhance the imperial ambitions of specific states is something—to paraphrase Stanley Hoffmann—that is smuggled in. Seeing no flaws in the present system, James Turner Johnson would build on it without checking on how the foundation is holding:

The real challenge held out by the contemporary rediscovery of just war thought as a source of moral wisdom is to develop much more discriminating, more proportional means of warfare. In the present contest this implies more reliance upon conventional forces (even with the moral difficulties posed by some conventional arms), upon civil defense, and upon physical separation of military from centers of civilian population. All these are politically (in the ideological sense of that word) unpopular. The challenge thus becomes one of how to make the morally preferable also politically possible.15

Walzer, to be sure, is perfectly aware of this problem:

Just wars are limited wars; there are moral reasons for the statesman and soldiers who fight them to be prudent and realistic. Overreaching is common in war, however, and has many causes; I do not want to deny that a certain characteristic distortion of the argument for justice is one among them.16

Finally in this critique of “just war,” one needs to abandon the just war framework altogether. So far, I have stayed within all the parameters and made objections to the “just war” on its own terms. The real dissatisfaction, however, is with the idea itself in the modern age. No nation nowadays will enter a war

16 Walzer, Just and Unjust Wars, 2nd ed., 122.
simply because it is “just.” Here is where the realist position comes to the rescue. “Just war” may be a necessary cry to mobilize American public opinion, but it is not alone sufficient to cause a wise leader to plunge the nation into bloody conflict. The realist tripod—clear national interest, augmentation of power, and a moral choice after analyzing the issue—will be a surer guide to justifying a decision to go to war today. “Just war” is now simply a symbol used by both sides of any war, even the 1991 Gulf War. Since Napoleon, wars have been waged on a national scale—every citizen is a cog in the gross national war effort. World War II was perhaps the ultimate expression of that fact. If everyone’s war is just, then those who believe they must go to war, out of necessity, fear, or honor, should turn to realism for policy and “just war” for propaganda and self-service.

An even more basic criticism of the concentration on the “just war” itself as a way to improve international morality comes from Professor Luigi Bonanate of Italy in his book Ethics and International Politics. He picks up on Clausewitz’s dictum that war is a continuation of politics by other means and the need, or at least the opportunity, to judge the right or wrong of war at an earlier stage. Clausewitz wrote: “War never breaks out wholly unexpectedly, nor can it spread instantaneously. Each side can therefore gauge the other to a large extent by what he is and does, instead of judging him by what he, strictly speaking, ought to be or do.” Bonanate then asks, “If war is not an isolated, self-contained act, but the continuation of policy by other means, shouldn’t we apply our criteria to politics and not to war? Only if it is intertwined with politics can war be explained.”

Having located “just war” in religion (or spirituality) in the first instance, I find it appropriate to turn to that quarter. What should we ask religion to do? Should we urge an ecumenical conference to ensure that some new body guarantees the implementation of each step of jus ad bellum so that jus in bello is rarely needed? Or should we propose that religious and secular forces together, brandishing twin swords, carve up new territory but use extant organizations at regional and international levels to head off war altogether or, at a minimum, to certify the justice of every conflict? Or do we worry with Reinhold Niebuhr that the quality of morality worsens as we progress from the individual to each higher level of collective vision?

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17 Luigi Bonanate, Ethics and International Politics (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1995).
Pope John Paul II is of some help here, although not on the issue of new collective restraints: “Man is always the same. The systems he creates are always imperfect, and the more imperfect they are, the more he is sure of himself.”

In thinking about “just war,” La Belle Epoque, a phrase of a hundred years ago, is haunting. Progress was the new religion and war was impossible. There were three reasons for this claim: economic ties, the solidarity of the working class, and the technology of modern war. Andrew Carnegie, the steel magnate and philanthropist, hoped to add a fourth restraint, the Christian religion common to the Teutonic Powers—Germany, Great Britain, and the United States. Nonetheless, this brief epoch was followed by World War I, World War II, and about fifty years of the Cold War. The question yet to be answered is, are we leaving the Cold War for peace or for another round of war? “Just war” has no predictive powers, and justice is always in short supply and often an easy victim. Nuclear weapons still abound, and a major “just war” could jeopardize all the apparent gains of the end of the Cold War.

Another quarrel with “just war” is that it moralizes great human tragedy, turning every war into somebody’s crusade. For Woodrow Wilson, World War I was a crusade to end war and to make the world safe for democracy; FDR’s rhetoric in World War II was no less moralistic (he believed, for example, that the war would “cleanse the world of ancient evils, ancient ills”); and, as we have seen in more detail, even Vietnam, an essentially unheroic battle with a Third World country, assumed the cast of moral necessity. There may well be situations in which a crusading spirit is necessary, but the just war idea makes it all too easy to legitimize excess and to blur the vision of the leaders who are entrusted with the question of war and peace. Morgenthau established the first of his four fundamental principles of diplomacy, that it “must be divested of the Crusading Spirit,” so that the conduct of war, when necessary, concentrates on purpose, interest, and strategy.

It may be worth pondering a fuller statement on war and “just war” by Augustine, who brings a quiet skepticism to the subject:

If I were to try to describe, with an eloquence worthy of the subject, the many and multifarious distresses, the dour and dire necessities, I could not possibly be adequate to the theme, and there would be no end to this protracted discussion. But the wise

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man, they say, will wage just wars. Surely, if he remembers that he is a human being, he will rather lament the fact that he is faced with the necessity of wars, for if they were not just, he would not have to engage in them, and consequently there would be no wars for a wise man. For it is the injustice of the opposing side that lays on the wise man the duty of waging wars; and this injustice is assuredly to be deplored by a human being, since it is the injustice of human beings, even though no necessity for war should arise from it. And so everyone who reflects with sorrow on such grievous ills, in all their horror and cruelty, must acknowledge the misery of them. And yet a man who experiences such evils, or even thinks about them, without heartfelt grief, is assuredly in a far more pitiable condition, if he thinks himself happy simply because he has lost all human feeling.\textsuperscript{19}

**Conclusion**

On balance, how should one judge the moral weight of the just war criteria in moderating conflict, say in the next century? In reviewing the ideal conditions and interpretations of the just war doctrine, it is difficult to quarrel with the intention. That the formula is misused does not necessarily invalidate the doctrine. Yet in a world of sovereign states, a formula whose righteousness is in the eye of the beholder is surely fatally flawed. "Just war" provides the opportunity and pseudo-justification for the evil Augustine describes so eloquently. The unctuousness and hypocrisy associated with the soldier-priests and politicians cast a dark shadow over the integrity of language and morality. Adding new words to the old formula will not do. We simply have to face the inevitability of war and the fact that war is hostile to measured conceptions of justice. We have a choice between the Weberian ethics of conviction (the crusade) and consequences, a utilitarian measure whose morality stops at half-plus-one. The just war criteria may or may not contribute to that final decision.

To recall the James Johnson system, the logic of war would ideally return to a single champion representing each warring party. But these David and Goliath determinations have little to do with justice, if the idea of war is all about somehow seeing that a universal justice is served. Constraints on war through the cultivation of Virtue—wisdom, justice, courage, and moderation—may someday

lead to statecraft that weighs the options and explains every peaceful alternative (McNamara regrets that he did not) so that the "last resort" occurs with less frequency. But the end of war as a human enterprise exceeds the mortal grasp. One could perhaps imagine a peaceful society of which an absolute, self-endorsed code for handling war was an integral part, so that the conditions of society as a whole set the standards for its performance in peace and war. Is such a self-regulating society possible? For the time being, perhaps all we can do is to remember to place quotation marks around "just war." As Erasmus put it: "The good Christian Prince should hold under suspicion every war, no matter how just."