WAR WITH IRAQ:
Right or Wrong

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A couple of weeks ago the news reported that 1000 Soldiers had been injured or killed in the War with Iraq and that the United States was losing the war, rather than winning. The news also stated that there had been more civilian casualties due to the fighting in and around populated areas. During the news report, the question was asked if the War with Iraq was just or not. Once again, President Bush's decision to go to war with Iraq had been questioned because of the number of American and civilian causalities that has occurred since the start of the war. As the news report ended I sat back in my chair and ask myself that question about the war. It only took me about 5 seconds to answer the question and that, yes, the War with Iraq was justified and had to be fought.

I sat there thinking about my answer to the question and wondered if I was being prejudice about the War with Iraq because of what happened on 11 September 2001. Could it have been because of the way Saddam Hussein had treated his people and his defiance of the world after Desert Shield/Storm? Maybe I felt this way because, as senior noncommissioned officer I've dedicated most of my life to upholding the ideals of democracy, perhaps, I was overly patriotic. Or maybe my infantry upbringing had shaped my views. No matter what the reason is, I know that America is doing the right thing, but sometimes it makes me wonder if we are doing the ethical thing.

Before we talk about ethics we must first understand the meaning of the ethics and what we believe in. To do this, we must look it up in the dictionary even though we all ready know the meaning of the word ethics. Webster dictionary states, "Ethics is the system or code of morals of a particular person, religion, group, or profession." Everyone has their own set of ethics that has shaped their lives and the way they do things. We must always ask ourselves, are we doing the

right thing for the right reasons? The question of ethics is gray a lot of the times, which is hard to understand and isn't all black and white like we want it to be.

Before waging war, there are a number of important questions that we must ask ourselves according to the just-war tradition, which has been strongly influenced by Christian ethicists. Some people might even say that we have been at war with Iraq since the invasion of Kuwait even though our troops were pulled out after Desert Shield/Storm.

A just war can only be waged as a last resort. A lot of Americans believed that we entered this war to quickly and without a plan. I think that the United States showed great patience and restraint. We gave Saddam every chance to abide by the key elements set by the UN in 1991. Saddam's defiance of the resolution was a major reason for going to war.

The President must have legitimate authority to go to war. The President is the commander-in-chief of the Armed Forces, but Congress has the sole authority to declare war. However, after 9-11 Congress gave the President the authority to punish the terrorist sponsors and prevent further attacks and I believe that enough evidence was found to show that Iraq sponsored terrorism. This coupled with the defiance of the UN Resolution by Saddam, which gave us the legitimate authority to go to war.

Is there a sufficiently moral reason to invade? There were two main reasons why we invaded Iraq. The primary reason; Iraq had weapons of mass destruction and Saddam would use them against anyone, even his own people. He also possessed biological weapons and was actively seeking to develop nuclear weapons. Saddam had done this in the past just to prove a point. The secondary reason; Iraq's sponsorship and training of terrorists was a big concern due to the fact that Saddam could supply the terrorist with weapons of mass destruction to be used against the United States. I believe that these moral reasons were sufficient enough to invade Iraq.

A just war can only be fought to set right a wrong suffered. I don't think anyone could argue the events that happened on 9-11. Also, I would hate to imagine what would happen if Saddam had used weapons of mass destruction against the United States. Our intentions were to right that wrong.

A war can only be just if it's fought with a reasonable chance of success. America's resolve is to win, nothing less. Our military undoubtedly has the best weapons and equipment in the world today. But by far America's greatest resource is the Soldiers and the willingness in them to do what ever it takes to win.

The violence used in war must be proportional to the injury suffered. America believes that civilians are not valid targets. Also, our rules of engagement state that every effort must be made to avoid killing civilians but, as in all wars, civilians and non-combatants will die. The war with Iraq will be violent but we can justify that violence.

The allied support for this war is not the same as it was for Desert Shield/Storm and some people are second-guessing our intentions. I would say to them that the ultimate goal of a Just War is to establish peace and America's war with Iraq is ethically sound, therefore, a Just War. I would also ask them if they would rather live in fear by not defending our country or go to war and have peace when we win the war. I definitely think they would choose peace.