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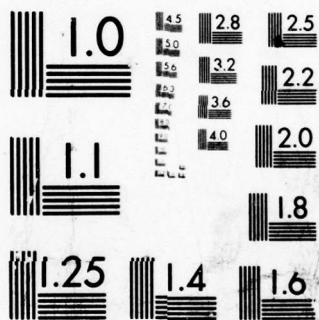
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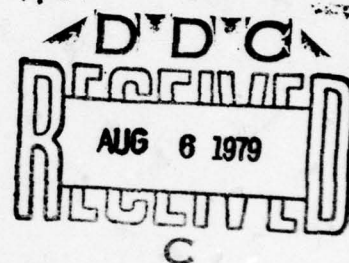
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# NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL

Monterey, California



## THESIS

THE PHILOSOPHY OF FORCE IN FOREIGN POLICY:  
A THEORY OF THE JUST WAR

by

Robert Bennett Needham

March 1979

Thesis Advisor:

Stephen Jurika

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The Philosophy of Force in Foreign Policy:  
A Theory of the Just War

by

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MASTER OF ARTS IN NATIONAL SECURITY AFFAIRS

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## ABSTRACT

✓ The historical background of United States foreign policy highlights its erosion from a confident proponent of the American national interest to one of uncertainty and indecision. This has paralleled a similar decay in other public institutions, including the educational, the military, the economic, the ecclesiastical and the political.

The fundamental cause of these tragic symptoms has two facets; the rejection of a Biblical-theological foundation for the public philosophy, and its replacement with secular humanism.

Our growing difficulties with strategic nuclear deterrence and an increasingly aggressive Russian adventurism, and the loss of our leadership momentum in the international system will not be solved by new technology, weapons or new sociological methodologies. Only a return to a responsible metaphysics, to those truths which provided the basis for America's rise to greatness, will work.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

The occasion for this thesis deserves brief mention. Several years ago Captain Carl A. Auel of the United States Navy Chaplain Corps embarked on a study to assess systematically Chaplain Corps-sponsored postgraduate training for active duty chaplains. Several significant discoveries were made. The graduate courses taken by many chaplains had little direct professional value to the Corps as a whole; there was little responsible accountability by the Corps to the Navy in the systematic monitoring and utilization of that government funded education; and the Corps had not exercised its legitimate prerogative of filling its potential graduate billets or in choosing the areas of study.

The first tangible result of this genuine upgrading of professional accountability for the Corps was the selection of ten chaplains in 1977 for five Corps-selected areas of study, four of these being ethnic studies and the fifth a study of the ethical/moral issues involved in nuclear weapons and nuclear weapons policy. Nine of the ten chaplains were assigned to the ethnic studies, and the author of this thesis was selected for the fifth (nuclear weapons) category. The justification for choosing this subject area was to provide the Chief of Chaplains with



an advisory resource on spiritual and other problems related to the deployment of nuclear weapons, and ways for improving ministry to men assigned to nuclear weapons commands.

The Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey appeared to be the preferred choice of institution for this subject from several perspectives and, with the gracious and enthusiastic support of their Department of National Security Affairs, a strategic planning curriculum was established with some special modifications to permit the inclusion of coursework in ethics and the policy sciences.

While exploring the extensive subject matter of strategic weapons, strategic weapons policy, and a number of related foreign policy subjects, cannot be described as a pleasant experience, in the sense that a detailed study of the present United States strategic position vis-a-vis the Soviet Union is scarcely an exercise designed to produce optimism or facilitate sleeping soundly, it has been a distinct and treasured privilege to be a student in the National Security Affairs Department. The faculty have been exceptionally gracious and forbearing with my theological orientation (line officers are their usual student fare), and they will be sorely missed. I am especially indebted to Professor Stephen Jurika, not only for his stimulating and challenging pedagogy, but his patience in overseeing the writing of this thesis. My sincere thanks to Professor William Reese as well (a fellow undergraduate

alumnus of the Reed College science program) for his investment of time as the second reader of the thesis.

In the chapter on the American doctrine of the just war I am particularly indebted to Professor Robert W. Tucker's book on the Just War for providing an analytical framework from which to critique the philosophical problems in that doctrine as it is held in America. Of several books on this subject, his was the best in this respect.

Whatever faults in substance or style this thesis exhibits are mine alone, and whatever merits it may possess are first and foremost due to the Sovereign Grace of Almighty God, and secondarily, to the instrumentality of the NSA Department faculty, several of whom invested much time and effort in seeking to move my writing style into that of the twentieth century!

Naval Postgraduate School

March 1979

## II. AN OVERVIEW

### A. THE PHILOSOPHICAL BACKGROUND OF U.S. FOREIGN POLICY

In its early years, the United States faced many internal and external threats to its existence that taxed the courage and ingenuity of the founding fathers. These problems (especially in foreign relations) were not all simple ones, or resolved without difficulty, although admittedly not as complex and dangerous as those facing our nation today. Nevertheless, there is abundant evidence that men like Thomas Jefferson, Alexander Hamilton and John Quincy Adams possessed sufficient philosophical understanding to adopt a positive, unapologetic stance on foreign policy which responsibly served the U.S. national interest without, at the same time, hopelessly alienating our allies or pandering to our enemies.

A most instructive case is to be found in Hamilton's defense of President Washington's proclamation of neutrality on 22 April 1793, by which the United States was effectively removed from involvement in the French Revolution. In his cogent argument, Hamilton allowed that there were three moral principles which argued for U.S. support of France, namely, "faithfulness to treaty obligations, gratitude towards a country which had lent its assistance to the colonies in their struggle for independence, and the



affinity of republican institutions...".<sup>1</sup> Yet, against these Hamilton demonstrated that the national interest, fundamentally on the basis of self-preservation - which is the first duty of any nation - could not permit involvement of the infant republic in a European war. He further averred that individual morality is not precisely the same as that which exists between nations; and hence, the application of ethical principles to actual behavior is often different for nations than for individuals. Gratitude is a case in point, and the gratitude which the United States presumably entertained towards France did not justify imperilling the new nation in a cause of questionable virtue and great risk.

The United States was founded by the first generation of statesmen who were able to formulate a concept of the national interest which could effectively distinguish in its foreign policy between moralistic concerns--and even pretensions--and the duty of a nation to survive. That this discernment and competence largely has been lost by the U.S. government and administration policy makers is so obvious as to need little comment. What is of concern here is why that change took place, what are its effects, and what can be done to recover our lost sense of national purpose?

## B. CAUSES OF THE AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY DILEMMA

The intellectual underpinnings of political thought at the time of the Declaration of Independence came primarily from the Reformation and, to a lesser degree, from the Enlightenment. In their own way, both of these great intellectual stirrings had contributed to the formation of political thought in America and, combined with the uniqueness of the American experience, provided a yeasty ferment of contrasting and conflicting ideas, some of which were to have profound consequences for United States foreign policy. The connection between the two goes as far back as the 1700's in the thinking of men like John Locke, Samuel Rutherford, and John Witherspoon, who was the only clergyman to sign the Declaration of Independence. Witherspoon had taken Rutherford's excellent political work entitled Lex Rex: The Law is King, and applied its principles to the writing of the Constitution. His thesis was that there could be freedom without chaos because there was form, based upon a Creator God who Himself cannot change, and whose universe bears endless witness to order, control, and truth. Here was a government of law rather than by the arbitrary decisions of oligarchs or despots. Put it another way, when the Bible (as the Word of God, and hence, the final authority for men in matters of faith, life, and society) is respected by the rulers, the governed are protected from arbitrary decisions of their rulers and governments.

Even though Rutherford's work had a great influence on the content of the United States Constitution, he is largely forgotten by most modern Anglo-Saxons. Perhaps his greatest contribution to political theory and practice was the concept of checks and balances in government. Because Rutherford held to the Biblical principle that man had an inherently sinful nature, he recognized that man, collectively or individually, simply did not possess the ability and will to police his own actions. Both individuals and governments, therefore, need others to oversee and measure their behavior against absolute Biblical standards for personal and civic rectitude.

By the mid 1800's, however, this finely honed theocentric cosmology had been corrupted by the dual effects of humanism and the deism of the Enlightenment. While God was not yet openly rejected, for all practical purposes He had become irrelevant, especially as the epistemological basis for understanding the realms of science and humanity. Hand in hand with the gradual rejection of belief in the inspiration and veracity of Scripture came the gradual rejection of basic biblical truths (such as the sinful nature of man). It is impossible for man to sever himself completely from his past. Societies cannot do that either, and certain Biblical principles and values were "maintained" within our culture (at least to the extent of lip service) even after it no longer believed in the trustworthiness of Scripture as the only rule of faith and practice and the



document of Divine revelation. It was not uncommon to find Americans who claimed sincere commitment to the ten commandments as the basic guide for their life (though most would have been sorely pressed to state them) and yet could argue, strongly, that the Bible was full of error, and subject to all manner of private interpretation.

My belief is that the last generation to hold these contradictory positions--to any significant extent--were the men and women who served, fought, and died in World War II. For them, the combination of victory, patriotism and dribblets of historic Christianity seemed to provide a sufficient life and world view. Their children, the high school and college students of the 1960's, having no better alternatives, and resorting to drugs and other forms of subjective experientialism en masse, could and did see the fundamental hypocrisy of giving lip service to a faith long dead. While this does not imply that the rebellious generation of the 1960's was somehow "better" or "wiser", they were the first to reject the last vestiges of the tremendous momentum which Christianity had given to American culture after the War of Independence, and which had continued, even after the Bible had been set aside as its basis, to exert a major influence on several generations of Americans. Put quite simply, America has entered the post-Christian era and Americans have largely lost the ability to understand or use the great Biblical principles which provided a strong foundation for the political theories and decisions of this nation's founders.

There are several other key "strands" which have contributed to the present philosophical, spiritual and social malaise in America. The most significant of these is the Humanism of the enlightenment.

Before and during the French Revolution humanistic thinkers had an extensive impact upon Western philosophy despite the failure of that revolution to live up to its expectations. And, in America, its effects were seen first among the university educated, the seminaries, and the clergy.

The utopian dream of humanism can be summed up in five words: reason, nature, happiness, progress, and liberty. Man was seen as beginning--absolutely--with himself, and the final divorce of epistemology from the being God took place when Rene Descartes declared his first metaphysical principle to be "cogito ergo sum" (a blasphemous parody of the first and greatest epistemological text in the Bible, "I AM who I AM").<sup>2</sup>

This was the complete antithesis of Reformation thought. It rested upon a different foundation, it stood for absolutely different principles, and it ultimately produced disastrous results for humanism. No longer was man to live and work lovingly and humbly for the glory of God. Now as the perfectible center of his own universe, his only task was to perfect that society with the tools of reason in the realms of science and philosophy. Among the cognoscente, Christianity became indistinguishable



from deism, and regarded as something tolerable for those who, having failed to make the grade intellectually, were still bound by the shackles of religious superstition.

However, it was the humanists who had donned the shackles, not the Biblical theologians. Beginning with man alone, humanists have failed to arrive at universals or absolutes, which alone can give lasting meaning to existence and moral values. Of course, it took several generations of concerted scientific and philosophical effort to discover that this was so, but by the mid-1900's there were no humanistic philosophers left who were optimistic about mankind.<sup>3</sup> The methodology of Western philosophy had degenerated largely into sophisticated argumentation about semantics, and its poverty stricken content into sheer anthropocentrism. Existentialism became philosophy's logical dead-end, and the culture of despair, suicide and self-abuse thus had not only an intellectually respectable basis for its cynicism, but also was reinforced by an institutional church; a structure which had sold its soul for the husks of intellectual food that denied the eternal and invisible for the mundane and palpable. The majority of American Churchmen no longer believe in a supernatural God whose name they still use. The highest and holiest of human institutions (the family and the church) have been degraded and destroyed with their concurrence. The civil government, which should be the servant and protector of the people is becoming their oppressor and robber and

we, as a people, appear to be lacking direction or purpose. Our attempts to legislate righteousness into society, and to solve the social consequences of our sinful nature with makeshift bureaucratic programs have ended in costly failures. There is an ironic twist in all this. Even after the great social welfare programs of the 50's and 60's were recognized as failures, the internal momentum and security of these new and vast bureaucracies had become so great that no government effort has been able to terminate their parasitic existence.

Because we have rejected even the possibility of the existence of absolute standards, we are less able to function effectively in major governmental decision-making than the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. They, at least, hold to an ideology (however corrupt and unworkable in practice), and for that reason have a sense of purpose which has enabled them to move steadily (if not always successfully) toward well-defined domestic and international goals.

Because we have rejected Biblical truths, we have had to fill the void left by their removal with half truths and outright illusions. For example, if man is good, he presumably won't act in an evil way if properly enlightened according to the standards of the public educational system. Since the United States is an enlightened populist democracy, therefore we will not consciously choose to do anything, as a nation, that is "bad." The duty to protect

our national existence, and the right to confront internal and external challenges to that existence, is Biblical through and through; but, rejecting that, we are embarrassed by our power, for liberal humanism has decreed that the use and possession of power is "bad", especially if it is military power.

Reinhold Niebuhr has put the matter clearly:

Modern man's confidence in his power over historical destiny prompted the rejection of every older conception of an overruling providence in history. Modern man's confidence in his virtue caused an equally unequivocal rejection of the Christian idea of the ambiguity of human virtue. In the liberal world the evils in human nature and history were ascribed to social institutions or to ignorance or to some other manageable defect in human nature or environment...

We were not only innocent a half century ago with the innocence of irresponsibility; but we had a religious version of our national destiny which interpreted the meaning of our nationhood as God's effort to make a new beginning in the history of mankind. Now we are immersed in worldwide responsibilities; and our weakness has grown into strength. Our culture knows little of the use and the abuse of power; but we have to use power in global terms. Our idealists are divided between those who would renounce the responsibilities of power for the sake of preserving the purity of our soul and those who are ready to cover every ambiguity of good and evil in our actions by the frantic insistence that any measure taken in a good cause must be unequivocally virtuous. We take, and must continue to take, morally hazardous actions to preserve our civilization. We must exercise our power, but we ought neither to believe that a nation is capable of perfect disinterestedness in its exercise, nor become complacent about particular degrees of interest and passion which corrupt the justice by which the exercise of power is legitimized. Communism is a vivid object lesson in the monstrous consequences of moral complacency about the relation of dubious means to supposedly good ends.



The ironic nature of our conflict with communism sometimes centers in the relation of power to justice and virtue. The communists use power without scruple because they are under the illusions that their conception of an unambiguously ideal end justifies such use. Our own culture is schizophrenic upon the subject of power. Sometimes it pretends that a liberal society is a purely rational harmony of interest. Sometimes it achieves a tolerable form of justice by a careful equilibration of the powers and vitalities of society, though it is without a conscious philosophy to justify these policies of statesmanship. Sometimes it verges on that curious combination of cynicism and idealism which characterizes communism, and is prepared to use any means without scruple to achieve its desired end.<sup>4</sup>

To put it briefly, we are our own worst enemy. Having no means to eliminate the excruciating guilt arising from the inevitable recognition of our national mistakes and personal sins, we find it impossible to face honestly, because we believe we are truly virtuous. As a result we see the often unconscious but growing tendency to make self-destructive decisions; whether at the highest levels of government, individually, or as part of one of the cults whose appeal is primarily to the intellectually and spiritually poverty stricken.

We appear to be searching frantically for a workable national policy, filled with dismay at ineffectual and indecisive national leadership, yet loathing the idea that the only answer is to be found in the person and principles of a righteous and holy Creator.

The dismal contribution of the institutional churches to this tragic process of decay in the national purpose is too great to be only partially mentioned. It consists of

at least two major strands. The first of these - the denial of Biblical absolutes, and hence the God who gave the Scriptures - has already been discussed. But another misuse of their holy calling has been woven just as deeply into the fabric of American political and social tradition.

In the early years, when the colonies were concentrated along the eastern seaboard, the quality of education and training possessed by most of the clergy, Protestant and Roman Catholic alike, was generally high indeed, very high by educational standards of the day. Sermons were substantive and usually Biblical, and the people were generally knowledgeable about Scriptural principles of conduct. Historical evidence indicates a significant degree of responsible balance in the application of Biblical standards to daily life among a sizable portion of the populace.

When the nation began to expand westward with new communities springing up by the hundreds, a critical shortage of ministers rapidly developed.

Once the questions of basic survival no longer occupied all the energies of everyone in a new community, many of the members of those frontier settlements turned to spiritual concerns, and to building places for worship. This desire to listen to the Word of God, and enjoy other pastoral services, generated a growing demand for ministers. Existing seminaries, of which Princeton Theological Seminary was the undisputed leader, simply could not meet

the demand, even when the few graduates were supplemented by experienced ministers from Great Britain and Holland. As the need became greater the demand for quality diminished, especially in frontier towns, where the townfolk tended to be less well educated and less critical of pastoral deficiencies than those in established, eastern cities.

The "solution" eventually came from a quarter other than the seminaries. The Methodist churches, which already had a tradition of ministry among the lower classes in England, undertook to ordain 'lay' preachers who were usually commissioned to serve more than one congregation. Thus the famous "circuit rider" came to America - but with a difference. Men who committed themselves to this arduous service rode horseback often for days at a time, usually lived frugally and dangerously in frontier areas, and established a reputation for pastoral concern that would elicit admiration even today. What is often forgotten is that these men were nearly always minimally educated, and sometimes illiterate. Frequently their sermonic repertoire consisted of from one to six memorized exhortations, with little in the way of substantive theology to back up their preaching. Experience - particularly a dramatic, personal experience - assumed a dominate place in the popular religious thought of the day as the ultimate criterion by which one determined whether or not he entered the celestial kingdom. Objective criteria of genuine conversion and assurance, spelled out in Scripture, ceased to be important, and if



the conversion experience of the 'seeker' included the repudiation of, and turning away from, the evils of drink, blasphemy, etc., no greater joy could befall pastor and congregation.

As a result of this change in emphasis, the circuit-rider ministry became institutionalized and constricted in its sermons and larger pastoral ministry. Hand in hand with a diminishing interest in theology came the increased concentration on simplistic prohibitions within the social sphere.

In the rough and ready anti-intellectualism of a rural frontier community, such a downgrading of the Gospel of redemptive grace into moralistic "do's and don'ts" usually went unrecognized, and often had some social usefulness.

Town and villages in that environment tended to divide into two sub-groups, the church-goers and the saloon-goers. The former generally felt superior to the latter and looked down on them because they themselves didn't drink, swear, carouse, or gamble. The saloon-goers despised the church goers for their sissified self righteousness, and rationalized their own behavior on the basis that at least it wasn't hypocritical.

The 'effectiveness' of social morality with a Christian veneer rested largely in the tremendous community pressure which could be brought to bear upon anyone who deviated from the straight and narrow, in a situation where everybody knew everybody else and everybody else's business.

This identification of social conformity with Biblical redemption thus became a major factor in the establishment of the traditional American notion that Christian morality consists mainly of vague unhappy and sour prohibitions against improper behavior and pleasures. Along with the repudiation by theologians and academicians of the authority and inspiration of Scripture this reinforced the vague assumption that being a good (American) citizen constituted sufficient justification for admission into heaven, or at least into God's graces.

By the early 1900's the great truth of redemption by the grace of God (accomplished in the finished work of Jesus Christ) was rapidly disappearing from the teaching of most churches. The need for divine pardon for indwelling and committed sins, and the assurance of forgiveness, appeared mysterious and archaic when ranged alongside the dominant idea of the innate goodness of mankind, and the overriding importance of social reform.

Although other contributory elements could be identified, these are the preeminent religious sources of the widespread and fuzzy American notion of morality and Christianity, which recently has come to be called (quite perceptively) "civic religion".

One of the more far reaching effects of this kind of traditionalism eventually found its way into the field of U.S. foreign policy. As Christianity became confused with good citizenship in the popular mind (abetted by political



rhetoric at election times), the next logical step was to assume that it was the duty of every patriotic American to spread the gospel of the American dream. Evidence of the proselytizing zeal of those who muddled these separate realms of responsibility can be seen in the activities of some 19th. century U.S. missionaries. It was not uncommon for Protestant missionaries to convert the foreign heathen as much to American Victorian culture as to the Christian gospel. Indeed, as the years passed, the tendency grew to emphasize democratic government, personal hygiene, sanitation, good methods of agriculture, modest dress, and the capitalistic economic system almost exclusively. Pearl Buck, a missionary of the Presbyterian Church in China in the 1930's, was an archetypal example who not only repudiated the unique Biblical message, but transmuted its calling into an effort to uplift the Chinese by exposing them to a distinctly American value system.

Because the United States had not faced the great problems Europe did during and after the Industrial Revolution; because of the remarkable and largely unhindered progress in expanding westward, and building a strong economy involving the middle class; most Americans assumed that God had blessed them because they were "good" - that is, they had not sunk to the political evils of the Europeans.

Thus was laid the foundation for the greatest presumption of all, the American messianic calling, which engendered

all the zeal among its adherents of missionaries converting the heathen in centuries past. Only this time the gospel was the gospel of free enterprise, hard work, individualism - in short, the American way of life - that had to be carried to the far corners of the earth.

Humanism, and a degenerate religion provided the philosophical impetus for the decay of mature statecraft in the United States. Technology and the cosmology of scientism were the tools.

Prior to 1912, Western scientific effort had been spectacularly successful. Diseases centuries old were being conquered, improvements in transportation and communications were breathtaking, and researchers believed they were close to unlocking secrets of the universe that would permit even greater breakthroughs. An intuitively satisfactory hypothesis had been invented which provided an acceptable alternative to the distasteful idea of creation for explaining man's origin, and many churchgoers believed that they had found the explanation for Biblical miracles in scientific phenomenology, thereby removing the embarrassing problem of the supernatural in a world where the natural was supreme.

The optimism was so catching that an entire school of eschatology (postmillennialism) was developed to explain how the promised millenium on earth would be realized through the instrumentality of scientific progress.

The nexus of these ideas and circumstances was nebulous but the net effect was to provide for many sufficient evidence that a new age was dawning. This, combined with the fact that there had been no major European war for nearly a century, led many to sincerely believe that a genuine change had come - that civilization was becoming civilized. Enlightened scientific humanism was fulfilling the promise of a better social order for mankind - one in which war, disease, poverty and ignorance would at last be abolished - something that Christianity had never been able to accomplish.

In 1912, this psychological bubble was punctured when the latest mechanical wonder of the infallible new science, the Titanic, sank; for it had been proclaimed unsinkable. By the end of that terrible experience, the bright optimism of the 19th. century was gone, and western man suspected that the advancements, inventions and discoveries of science could be a two-edged sword.

It took a second World War - even more horrible in its carnage, the rise of totalitarian dictatorships, the extension of the violence of war to noncombatant civilians on an unprecedented scale, and the atomic bomb to complete the disillusionment of the most ideologically optimistic. World War II showed us that we, too, were capable of evil, and it was a shock for many Americans to discover that we were capable of violence and cruelty. It was almost as shocking after the war to discover that not all the countries



which had experienced the presence of U.S. troops were delighted to have had them.

For a people who need the constant reassurance of love and approval from others to convince themselves that their messianic ideology and role is valid, signs of disagreement, disapproval or outright rejection can be unnerving, and result in great uncertainty of purpose. The problem with being a messiah is that messiahs are supposed to be sinless redeemers.<sup>5</sup> Messiahs don't commit evil, and the necessity of doing some things in foreign policy that are obviously not pristine in all respects has served to generate confusion and anxiety in the American breast. We have often acted expediently, sometimes harshly, and sometimes unrighteously in our foreign relations. This strikes at the very heart of the humanistic presumption of the perfectibility of man. It is an unanswerable challenge to the social redemption assumed to be an intrinsic characteristic of the American experience. Having diplomatic relations with national leaders and their governments that do not possess or promote the democratic way of life seems somehow immoral, and wrong unless an ongoing effort is made to change the offending state into our image and likeness.

The exception to this rule is, of course, totalitarian communist states, towards which we manifest a curious silence and an unwillingness to criticize or object to their repressive systems especially if they are superpowers.

Just as the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) is obsessed with demonstrating to the world its total rectitude in all its dealings in every area, we too have shackled ourselves to a hopelessly unobtainable goal - that of achieving corporate righteousness in all our domestic and foreign activities. The standard of righteousness is the old humanistic composite ideal of equal happiness, progress, liberty for all and, since these are basically good, all therefore deserve equal reward.

Our problem is compounded for us in a way that not even the CPSU must face, for we have no hard theoretical basis (false or true is not the issue) for self justification, as do the Marxists. We try to demonstrate consensus of values in many ways but that, too, is an exercise in frustration because it is impossible to attain a solid consensus in a society that glorifies pluralistic and individualistic liberties as necessary expressions of the innate goodness of political man! Consequently we seek majority opinions in areas that may seem related, however fuzzily, to the values of rampant humanism. President Carter's "human rights" idea is a tragic example of a naive and immature notion trying to wear the clothes of a mature ideology, and finding them too big. Given its almost total lack of any philosophical substance it is not terribly surprising that it has virtually disappeared from his political rhetoric in spite of the verbal pyrotechnics which accompanied its 'birth'.

Trying to make mankind into his own god has failed the human philosophy dismally. We are disillusioned, and tempted to hopelessness. Pragmatism, scientism, technological materialism, capitalism, intellectualism, hedonism, political and social activism, mass education, civic religion and patriotism have all failed to fill the void as a workable national ideology. The product of this historic process of degeneration is the loss of a sense of national purpose so great that our foreign and domestic policy decisions are foredoomed to be reactive, since the embarrassed, the guilty, the insecure and the undertain will invariably accomodate the aggressive and purposeful, our dealings with the Russians and Chinese at all levels have been characterized by appeasement, fear of offending, and timid hopefulness that expressions of moral outrage (not based on moral principles, only fuzzy traditional assumptions) will somehow induce our adversaries to moderate their imperialistic behavior!



### FOOTNOTES

1. Hans J. Morgenthau, "The Mainsprings of American Foreign Policy: The National Interest vs. Moral Abstractions". The American Political Science Review, Vol. XLIV, No. 4, Dec. 1950, p. 841.
2. Exodus 3:14.
3. Modern man is a man of dichotomy. By dichotomy we mean a total separation into two reciprocally exclusive orders, with no unity or relationship between them. The dichotomy here is the total separation between the area of meaning and values, and the area of reason. Reason leading to despair must be kept totally separate from the blind optimism of non-reason. This makes a lower and an upper story, with the lower story of reason leading to pessimism and men trying to find optimism in an upper story devoid of reason. At this point the older rationalistic thinkers (with their optimistic hope of maintaining unity between the world of reason and that of meaning and values) were left behind. This is the mark of modern man.

Francis A. Schaeffer, How Should We Then Live?, Fleming H. Revell Company, Old Tappan, New Jersey, 1976.

4. Reinhold Niebuhr, The Irony of American History, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1952, pp. 4-6.
5. The marks of the Messiah found in the Psalms include a ruler "marked by a primary concern for morality." (Psalm 14:4,6,7; 72:2,3,7; 101:1-8). The New Bible Dictionary, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, 1962, p. 814.

### III. ETHICS AND WAR

#### A. THE JUST WAR ISSUE

The basic ethical problem in any study of warfare is the very difficult matter of the "just war." For centuries thoughtful men have wrestled with this question, as the practical implications for a nation are enormous. If a war is considered to be unjust (rightly or wrongly) by a significant segment of the populace, the leaders of that nation may find themselves eventually facing serious, if not fatal, domestic opposition concerning the conduct of the war. While purposely making no statement with respect to the legitimacy of the Vietnam War at this juncture, it is worthwhile in this context to note this recent example of the consequences that can accrue to leaders who lose touch with public opinion about the "just-ness" of a war in which that country's forces were occupied.

It is important for a government to have some grasp of the justness (or lack thereof) of a war before entering upon it in order to arrive at a reasonable projection of citizen support. It is equally important that possible long term consequences for the national interest be carefully considered. If a country collectively perceives itself as unethically, unwisely, or mistakenly entering into a military conflict, that perception can contribute



to the erosion of confidence in government, lead to possible internal conflict or even revolution<sup>6</sup> and, at worst, national collapse.

Because warfare is the in extremis test of national will, unity and strength, it is all the more important that warfare not be undertaken lightly. But, if it is engaged in, then it should be done so only with the utmost care, in order that the core values which hold that nation together are not eroded or destroyed by the involvement.

As soon as the issue of the just war is raised, it generates a definitional problem. What does "just" mean? Presumably, in any context other than that of Orwellian "doublethink" the concept of "just," or justice, must be based upon an underlying set of social values and related to some code of law. If that lawcode permits the development of workable definitions of "lawful" and "unlawful" with respect to the cause and/or conduct of a war, then it can be determined whether the war is just or not, in a legal sense. But it is impossible to arrive at a more systematic definition, and hence concept, of a just (or unjust) war without a societal value system upon which the working lawcode is based.

It is important to remember that the legal sense of a just war, and the moral sense of what is a just war are most likely not identical, and may be significantly different. They should not be confused. Indeed, this distinction is true in the wider sense. What an ethical

system, such as that derived from Biblical theology, may deem good or evil, a law system may view in the opposite way. American law in the 1970's declares that abortion, with certain restrictions, is lawful, based upon an ideological and social assumption of what is good for the mother. In a legal sense, then, it is not bad. If it is not bad, then it is presumably good. Yet Scripture, by good and necessary inference, forces the admission that abortion is evil at any stage of pregnancy, and unless survival of the mother or child is clearly impossible (e.g. tubular pregnancy) its commission constitutes murder.

So in the matter of warfare, legal concepts of justness may fail to agree with ethical definitions of what is just. In World War II Germany took a number of actions in the name of "military necessity" which were viewed by people in other societies as atrocities or war crimes. Within the German system of law they were just. Within the Judeo-Christian ethical system generally accepted in Western Europe at the time, their conduct was regarded as unjust, for the most part. Within the system of international law as it was developed at that time, some of their actions were viewed as just, and some as unjust. And within the lawcodes of the different countries Germany invaded, different perceptions existed about which actions were just or unjust in the legal sense.

Furthermore, certain societies may be more inclined to view the justness of a war from a legal perspective, others

more directly from a perspective of the ethical values held by that society. The United States is one of the most litigious societies in the modern world, and accordingly tends to view the question of the just war more exclusively from a legal standpoint.<sup>7</sup>

If a given society is uncertain about its values, that perceptual fuzziness may be tolerable in times of peace and economic prosperity. But war, unless it is minor and short term, draws heavily on a nation's human, material, intellectual and spiritual resources, and in crisis the absence of a widely accepted value system can be disastrous, because the law code will not govern the conduct of that war. Why do values, and warfare, always get so tangled in the end? Primarily, because war involves not only the use of violence, loss of human lives, and the destruction of valuable property, but also the intense, and life-changing involvement of many individuals in large and complex military organizations. War strikes at the heart of most, if not all, of the values which hold a nation and civilized society together. Even if a soldier is not killed in battle, he can emerge from the experience emotionally and spiritually devastated; and if an entire generation of a nation's youth is so affected the course of that nation's history can be profoundly altered.

Furthermore, war, as no other instrumentality in the human experience, forces large numbers of people to make agonizing moral choices which do not occur in peacetime.



A classic example is the military commander who determines that he must "sacrifice" a certain number of his men in order to gain some overall objective that presumably will benefit all his forces later on.<sup>8</sup>

Consequently, a nation which does not have a widely held understanding of, and agreement about, those values upon which its code of law is based, or an understanding of how to operationalize those values in its system of law, is asking for disaster should it embark upon a major war.

Most individuals function relatively well on a day-to-day basis in a non-crisis environment, even if they are confused about the values that govern their conscious and subconscious choices. But it is the catastrophic nature of war which generates the type of crisis situations in which individuals must make such profound, difficult, and awesomely accountable moral choices. If they have never consciously examined or exercised their "ethical muscles," there is the likelihood that they will find themselves out of their depth in such circumstances, and unable to act wisely. Rather, the tendency would be to react viscerally on the basis of trivial or irrelevant considerations, sometimes ruthlessly or immorally, or to retreat to intellectual and spiritual paralysis, waiting for someone else to do their thinking for them.

For these reasons, the issue of the "just war" is no mere intellectual game for ivory tower intellectuals, but one of the most vital matters that can occupy the attention

of responsible national leaders; one that can be avoided or ignored only at the peril of that society's existence.

There is one apparent exception to this claim, namely, a dictatorship, which can wage war without the same kind of consensus required in a democracy. However, it appears reasonable to argue that the exception is only apparent, for even dictatorships require a degree of consent by the governed, if only by default, or at least enough of the governed who occupy the lower rungs of the dictatorship power structure. Thus, a dictatorial decision to go to war represents the existing operational reality of central control for virtually all life under a dictatorship--where decision is by autocratic determination, not consensus.

Because war always deeply involves the basic values necessary to men's existence, it is not particularly surprising that the justifications for war pertain to those areas in which basic human values most often find expression, particularly the religious, political, or the instinct for self-preservation.

It is very difficult, if not impossible, to find examples where leaders have taken their nations to war without attempting to justify it to their citizens. (Again--an apparent exception is when a nation is the object of a surprise attack by an enemy). This is, of course, reasonable<sup>9</sup> since people in every culture tend to sense the inherent and unknown peril involved in going to war, and

particularly, that a war can destroy everything dear to them, including their own lives. Consequently, when people are asked to face sacrifices of that magnitude, they need (with very few exceptions) a fairly significant degree of motivation to do so.

Of the three categories of justification suggested, that of national (and individual) survival is the easiest to use if the populace clearly sees the external threat to its continued existence. Both religious and political considerations will fall into line behind this banner, for nearly all religions inherently support the right of adherents to continue living, and to defend themselves in some way for that purpose. Politically, any leader who, in the eyes of his people appeared to resist the right of a legitimate state to protect itself from external threat would be regarded as committing the ultimate political sin--namely treason. Political justification, too, would be secondary to that of elementary survival.

Political and/or religious justification will invariably be involved where the threat to national existence, or to individual survival, is not well-defined or obvious. Furthermore, the reasons offered for entering into belligerency prove to be a curious mixture of political and religious justification, and the United States is no exception to this phenomenon.

Having addressed briefly the basic considerations which compel nations to develop some concept of the "just war" it



is appropriate to examine the American doctrine of the just war, and in particular, the problems inherent in its development and structure.

#### B. THE AMERICAN DOCTRINE OF THE JUST WAR: AN ASSESSMENT

Every nation is strongly inclined to view the world through the lens of the particular interpretation it has given to its own domestic history, and America has been no exception to this strikingly constant pattern. The slant of our perceptions of things foreign clearly reflects interpretive insights which we have applied to our beginnings and development as a nation. Robert W. Tucker has noted,

There is an apparent simplicity about the American doctrine of the just war that readily lends it to caricature. Undoubtedly the most striking characteristic of this doctrine is its simplicity. The American doctrine is distinguished by the assumption that the use of force is clearly governed by universally valid moral and legal standards; it is distinguished further by the insistence with which these standards are interpreted as making the justice or injustice of war primarily dependent upon the circumstances immediately attending the initiation of force. In substance, the just war is the war fought either in self-defense or in collective defense against an armed attack. Conversely, the unjust--and, of course, the unlawful--war is the war initiated in circumstances other than those of self or collective defense against armed aggression.

This singular preoccupation with the overt act of resorting to force has its counterpart in the lack of concern shown toward the causes that have led to war; whatever the nature of these causes, they cannot be regarded as providing a justification for the initiation of war.<sup>10</sup>

A second key element in the American doctrine of the just war is that there are no grievances, circumstances, or

necessities in the realm of foreign affairs which can ever justify the expediency of initiating a war, presumably to redress those grievances.

A third concept, deeply interwoven with these two, is that aggressive warfare is always unlawful. When a war is unlawful, it is also unjust in the American philosophy. The elevation of legal rectitude as the ultimate standard of moral conduct became well established in the American tradition concurrently with the rejection of the Bible as the highest and first source of ethics and moral righteousness. Justice and law became synonymous, with legality of behavior often regarded as being the essence of morality.

The chief American prosecutor at the International Military Tribunal at Nuremberg reflected these assumptions in his opening address before that body:

"Our position is that whatever grievances a nation may have, however objectionable it finds that status quo, aggressive warfare is an illegal means for settling those grievances or for altering those conditions."<sup>11</sup>

The fourth concept in the American doctrine of the just war is that force (violence) can never be a legitimate instrument of national policy. John Foster Dulles articulated this idea in his 1956 address to the United Nations Assembly at the time of the Suez Crisis, observing that,

"If we were to agree that the existence of injustice in the world, which this organization so far has been unable to cure, means that the principle of renunciation of force is no longer respected and that there still exists the right wherever a nation feels itself subject to injustice, to resort to force to try to correct that injustice, then. . .

we would have, I fear, torn this Charter into shreds and the world would again be a world of anarchy."<sup>12</sup>

It should be apparent that this doctrine, if pushed to the limits of its application, must necessarily lead to the absolute repudiation and condemnation of preventive war, or any policy espousing it. There is a strong implication that there never can be a situation in which the national interest could be best served by undertaking a "lesser" evil in order to preclude a far greater evil later on.

This view seriously oversimplifies the issue of what constitutes a preventive war, and from what perspectives it is judged. From a strictly military standpoint, a preventive war is aggressive only in the technical sense that the first blow is strictly to initiate hostilities and to gain a crucial tactical or strategic advantage, but may not necessarily be aggressive for much of the remainder of the war. From a political standpoint, a preventive war is initiated to prevent the sacrifice of one or more vital interests of the nation, which could conceivably jeopardize its very existence if actually sacrificed.

The issue of aggression, seen from this perspective, applies only to the choice of the most propitious moment for initiating what is considered to be, politically, a necessary defense of the national interest.

If one concedes any validity at all to these two possible qualifications, then the issue of the immorality



of initiating conflict ceases to be the ethical touchstone for determining the morality of a given war. Rather, the question becomes one of determining if the interests a nation seeks to defend are legitimate; whether the threats to a nation's security are real, and if so, their gravity and scope; and if the wide spectrum of costly consequences which can reasonably be expected to follow from the resort to force have been honestly and carefully considered. The justness of a preventive war must be sought in the causes of the war, the objectives for employing force, and the manner in which force is used.

Given the American social and historical context, there are grave problems associated with even the theoretical consideration of the possibility of employing a preventive war, and the assumed moral problems are among the most serious that would be raised. Even if enemy intent is unambiguous, opponents of preventive war would certainly raise strong moral objections based on the aforementioned doctrinal assumptions.

Yet, apart from a purely pacifist position, preventive war as a possible instrument of policy cannot be excluded on moral grounds alone save by a doctrine which insists upon identifying the justice or injustice of war with the acts immediately attending the initiation of force. For this doctrine preventive war is not only aggressive war in the technical military sense; it is also aggressive war in the moral sense and as such unjust. Because preventive war implies condoning the resort to war by a state in circumstances other than those of self or collective defense against armed aggression, it signifies the acceptance of war as an instrument of national rather than of international policy. Preventive war must therefore be condemned, whatever the circumstances that

are alleged to condition its initiation and however unambiguous these circumstances may appear. Thus President Truman in setting forth the aims of American policy during the Korean conflict declared: "We do not believe in aggressive or preventive war. Such war is the weapon of dictators, not of free democratic countries." The very idea of preventive war, in the words of Dean Acheson, "is a thoroughly wicked thing. . .immoral and wrong from every point of view." Nor is this position shaken by the conviction that the adversary is dedicated to crushing us, and that he will not be inhibited in using every means for bringing about this end. "We shall never choose a war as the instrument of our policy," John Foster Dulles declared repeatedly as Secretary of State, even though "we know that our enemies do not have moral scruples. In fact, they deny that there is such a thing as moral law."

Whatever the logical consistency of this position, the evidence available is impressive in pointing to the significance of moral conviction in rejecting the possibility of preventive war by those who nevertheless remain convinced of the complete moral depravity of the adversary and of his fanatic commitment to a deeply hostile philosophy. To be sure, as a problem for American policy, preventive war cannot be divorced from the actual political and military circumstances in which it has had to be considered. Nevertheless, it is not obvious that these circumstances have been uniformly unfavorable to the successful execution of such a policy.<sup>13</sup>

A fifth pillar in the American just war doctrine is that the idea of preventive war proves the notion of war's inevitability; and because the idea of the inevitability of war is anathema in the American tradition (a sixth element), it becomes impossible logically to concede that there could be a just and legitimate preventive war under any circumstances.

A possible conceptual linkage between the rejection of preventive war as an acceptable foreign policy element

and the breezy American tendency to assume that "time is on our side" is both intuitively pleasing and apparently open to substantiation from the history of U.S. foreign policy behavior. If this untested assumption that time is on our side is accepted as fact, then choosing preventive war would become stupid as well as immoral. In the 1951 Senate hearings on the dismissal of General MacArthur, Secretary of State Dean Acheson made just this point:

"The basic premise of our foreign policy is that time is on our side if we make good use of it."<sup>14</sup>

And six years later John Foster Dulles made a similar assertion without even Acheson's modest qualification!

"The working hypothesis on which we conduct our foreign policy is that free governments in the long run are going to prevail and despotic governments in the long run are going to go under."<sup>15</sup>

In Dulles's statement can be seen evidence of a seventh concept peculiar (if not unique) to the American doctrine of war and statecraft. It is that dictatorial regimes like the U.S.S.R. are guaranteed to fail in time simply because they are evil. Conversely, "free" governments (of which the U.S., of course, is assumed to be a shining example) are "good", because they recognize and heed the moral element in "natural law." Hence, disguised somewhat, is the old American Messianic presumption. We are righteous because we are moral. We are moral because we keep the law, and since this kind of lawful good inevitably triumphs over evil (another widely held assumption) war is not



necessarily inevitable. And if we keep on being "good", our way will eventually succeed in the face of evil opposition.

An eight element in the American doctrine of the just war is our assumed aversion to violence. This is ironic, for our domestic history has been the scene not only of much and varied violence but of the willingness to use violence (i.e. on the frontier) even when other, less drastic methods might have worked. In a sense, this has been a masterful exercise in effective folklore, unperturbed by troublesome historical evidence. We are ambivalent about the use of violence and force, which suggests that there are ideological rather than just circumstantial problems involved. We recognize instinctively that force is so necessary that we cannot eliminate the means for its use. It is constantly glorified in our popular culture and entertainment media, and yet we insist to any who will listen, that we abhor its use.

Humanistic man must believe that even the worst of man's evils are not insoluble or inevitable, because man is basically good, and ultimately perfectible. Therefore, war--the most terrible of sinful man's symptoms of his true condition--must be cherished and dogmatized into a non-inevitable state of being. The result is a classic case of what modern psychologists call "cognitive dissonance." We deny that war (and therefore sin) is an inevitable reality. Yet we know we have been (and are) a violent

people. The predictable result is intellectual confusion and unrecognized guilt. Our confusion cannot but include our uncertainty and impermanence in foreign policy. Our guilt finds numerous occasions for expression, among which our politicians seek opportunities to declare the high morality of our policy choices and actions.

In the actual conduct of warfare, this intellectual schizophrenia has produced near-disastrous results.

Besides, the depth of our aversion to violence must be suspect if only because of the curious ambivalence with which we have viewed, and with which we continue to view, the instrument of force. An extreme reluctance to resort to war has not implied restraint in the manner of employing force once war has been thrust upon us. This lack of restraint that we have shown in conducting war--and the lack of restraint with which we have threatened to conduct war should it once again be imposed upon us--has commonly been attributed to the indignation we feel toward the "aggressor" who initially resorted to armed force. Nevertheless, the explanation of our behavior by its reference to retributive motives does not resolve the moral ambiguities of that behavior. Still less does it show how that behavior can be reconciled with an allegedly profound moral aversion to the methods of violence.

More serious, perhaps, is the consideration that a profound moral aversion to violence cannot readily be reconciled with a view that war, even a just war, may serve as the means for bringing untold blessings to the world. Yet once we have entered upon war, there have been few nations more disposed to believe that history can be radically transformed for the better through the instrument of unrestrained violence. And in the nuclear age this belief has found its expression in a philosophy of deterrence which optimistically assumes that history can be radically transformed for the better simply by confronting would-be aggressors with the certainty of severe punishment in the form of nuclear retaliation should they seek to carry out their evil designs.<sup>16</sup>

Because our public philosophy in general and our doctrine of war in particular are so poorly thought out, the direct and tragic result has been an increasing willingness to use exponentially greater violence in order to reduce the use of force in history! For almost twenty years we have had an official policy of deterring violence of the ultimate kind imaginable to man (strategic nuclear war) by the threat of the greatest violence imaginable to man (strategic nuclear retaliation), while at the same time continually proclaiming our deep aversion to the use of force!

This is not to suggest that the policy of nuclear deterrence by the threat of massive retaliation was wrong in all respects or has not worked in the past, but to highlight that strategic nuclear forces in being underscored brilliantly a major philosophical inconsistency in the American doctrine of the just war. That inconsistency is not inevitable or unavoidable, but rather reflects the truth that nations, as individuals, "reap what they sow." A widespread aversion to theological epistemology as the foundation for a strong and workable public philosophy has resulted in philosophical chaos and the loss of a basis for deductive, normative reasoning in numerous areas of the American experience, not the least of which are our foreign (and now) strategic policies. We abhor force, yet spend vast sums to maintain a capacity to use it. We believe collective force can address security problems



that national force cannot, yet we do not submit to collective security when it is clearly not in the best interests of U.S. national policy.

This contretemps has been exacerbated by our national lust for simplistic, one-issue solutions to problems (no matter how complex the problem), and the equally great passion (especially among the adherents of Scientism) for technical and technological solutions to every problem we face. If making more of some new weapon or invention, if establishing some new program or bureaucracy, will not resolve a domestic or foreign crisis, we are dismayed, and unable to perceive other approaches which could be brought to bear upon the problem. In a sense, we are the genuine victims of our own past successes in science and humanism, which seemed to work before the world became the scene of technological horror.

A telling example of our weakness is seen regularly in the realm of international relations. Our beatific vision of a peaceable international world order is one in which cooperation, rather than conflict, can solve all problems between nations. It is inseparable from the uniquely American assumption that all men are equal, or at least deserving of equality (even though we do not behave that way domestically or internationally). We dislike intensely the idea of hierarchy (although we have failed to find a better substitute), and are pathetically fervent in our conviction that all men (yes, even the leaders of the

Kremlin) will respond to the sweet voice of reason, rather than coercion, if we can but find the right "key" or "formula" to convert them to our way of thinking.

There is no other systematic or rational explanation for our observed behavior vis-a-vis the Soviet negotiators at the SALT bargaining table. Our representatives are intensely uncomfortable with the Soviet's stony silence, and continue, in what can only be described as a compulsive manner, to make concession after concession to the Russians, in the charming, if deadly, belief that they eventually will respond in kind. Our persistence and naive faith in the innate goodness of these men is dicey, and to explain away the incredible evils of the well-documented ruthlessness of the C.P.S.U. leadership we use the old sociological and touching assertion that they are victims<sup>17</sup> of a system beyond their control.<sup>18</sup>

Because of the unique place that the use of force has had in American public philosophy it is very difficult for most to see it realistically as one segment of a whole spectrum of incrementally different interactions between states, beginning with the most amicable of relationships between old allies, all the way to outright war. This ideologically motivated, analytical isolation of the violence of war has made it more difficult to deal with in a consistent ethical system. Because force ( it is assumed) is intrinsically and absolutely different from other state

relationships, there must be clear differences between the moral issues involved in military force and those in other types of diplomatic relations.

Again, it is obvious that a certain contribution of this unrealistic dichotomy must be confusion about perceptions of problems and the choice of appropriate policies to deal with them. Here too we see the seriousness and depth of the contradiction between Statecraft in Scripture and the foreign policy outpourings of the philosophy of humanism. Christ declared war to be an inevitable reality of human existence.<sup>19</sup> In contrast, General Bradley declared that there "is no such thing as inevitable war,"<sup>20</sup> and Secretary Acheson stated that "talk about war being inevitable tends to make it so."<sup>21</sup>

Both schools of thought cannot be right. Either Christ is wrong, or General Bradley and Secretary Acheson are wrong.

The result of this thinking is the belief that the use of military force is totally unnecessary evil. Therefore, military aggression in another country is the result of a single evil leader, or ruling clique, who is misleading (temporarily) a great majority of innocent people. No other view is possible if this primary article of the faith is to be maintained, namely, that armed conflict is entirely avoidable.

This noble expectation, however far from empirical reality, provides fertile ground for the endless American



optimism about eliminating aggression and armed conflict from this world and further, that the elimination is entirely possible. Compared to the vast majority of peace-loving, benign, and cooperative people around the world, the true aggressors are few in number; and because they are so few, they must fail in the end.

Thus, if the evil are so few, and the good are so many, how can the evil minority manipulate so successfully the good majority to do their bidding? The obvious answer often given is that the evil few are so well organized that they can impose their will on the many. Once again sociology and organizational theory have provided an easy answer.

This "answer," seen through the filters of our frontier experience, becomes analogically complete and President Truman typically said as much:

"Men who wanted to see law and order prevail (in the early days of our Western frontier) had to combine against the outlaws. . . This is just what we are trying to do today in the international field."<sup>22</sup>

In practice, the problem of separating the innocent many from the guilty few becomes much more difficult, as we discovered in the aftermath of our second war with Germany; nevertheless the distinction has been jealously maintained, and it is still alive and well today.<sup>23</sup>

After World War II another element of doctrine was added. Just as a police force is established to deter crimes of violence in the domestic order (even though it is

not always successful), so force (preferably collective) must be used to prevent criminal aggression in the international order. Here then is yet another contradiction. Our moral philosophy requires that we abhor and repudiate force as an instrument of national policy, but it admits of no better way to deter aggression in the international arena. Of course, collective force must respond to perceptions of aggression, and threats to national security, in order to act. Consequently, collective forces can act only after certain analytical and moral decisions have been made to employ them. In this light, the great and naive faith of many U.S. Government officials in the United Nations is understandable, if not appealing, in the hindsight of history. In the marginal situations where overt hostility was indisputable, but aggression difficult to categorize, an obvious "out" was to have the General Assembly resolve this question. In its early years, the confidence that issues of moral uncertainty could be resolved by that body appeared to be an almost perfect solution to the anxiety created by the disparities between American doctrine and the necessary steps often required by the harsh realities of a crisis.

To make the General Assembly the true interpreter of the Charter's norms, to elevate that body from a mere global "town meeting" to the embodiment of the world's conscience and guardian of the moral law surely corresponded more to traditional American sentiments and aspirations than did the original hierarchical order of power envisaged by the framers of the Charter. In view of the commanding position enjoyed by this nation in the General Assembly during this period, the

existing identity of interests between the United States and at least two-thirds of the members of the Assembly seemed as good an insurance as could be expected that a similar identity would prevail between the dicta of a world's conscience and the necessities of American policy.

Thus the doubt that might otherwise arise over whether the use of force in a given instance conformed to the Charter and to the moral law would be removed by the General Assembly.<sup>24</sup>

The extent of the internal contradictions of the just war doctrine becomes still more apparent when the doctrinal view of peace is examined. Peace, to men like Acheson, Eisenhower, and Dulles, was not simply the absence of war, but freedom from fear, want, oppression, etc. A "moral peace"!<sup>25</sup> Peace with justice. Peace without justice is not peace. But there are numerous situations in the international order in which justice cannot be secured without some use of force. Tucker put the problem thus:

The American concept of international order cannot be described as one in which peace is consciously conceived as a value both discrete from and higher than justice; nor is security considered simply in terms of protection against the overt resort to armed aggression. Nevertheless the question remains whether a just war doctrine that so narrowly circumscribes the occasions in which force may be resorted to will not in practice lead to conceiving peace and security in these terms. Justice may be regarded as an essential concomitant of peace. Yet the critical question in this context is whether the resort to force may be judged to have a moral sanction if there is no effective alternative method for securing justice. Or is force necessarily to be regarded as an instrument of injustice when resorted to aggressively, even though such resort appears at the time as the only effective reaction against a prior injustice? A literal reading of the American just war doctrine must answer the former question negatively and the latter question affirmatively. It is true that a literal reading



of the American just war doctrine allows the conclusion that force may still be regarded as an instrument of order. But in view of the disparity arising between the circumstances in which a nation's security may be threatened, force can be regarded as an instrument of order only in a severely restricted sense.<sup>26</sup>

Ironically, there appears to be no apparent limits to the different kinds of situations which can be interpreted as coming within the scope of the just war doctrine and it is not always possible to have the stringent requirements of that doctrine agree with the necessities of foreign policy. From a theoretical standpoint, it would be absurd to deny that there will not be major divergencies between the just war doctrine and the requirements of policy implementation, if it is to be successful. Yet, in practice we function as if this were not the case, by being vague about the standards governing the resort to force, and insisting that the interested parties themselves preserve the right of interpretation of the professed international standards of conduct. On the other hand, we have believed that the task of dealing with indirect aggression should be assumed by the United Nations General Assembly.

Thus our championing of the General Assembly has been a nice mixture of our obsession for moral certainty and of our desire to employ that body as a political instrument in support of American policy. Should the Assembly prove unwilling to lend itself to the support of American policy in the future, the occasion could conceivably arise in which we would consciously choose to place ourselves in open conflict with what we have heretofore regarded as the "collective judgment of the world community."<sup>27</sup>

In rounding out this brief overview of pivotal concepts in the American doctrine of just war several other salient issues must be identified.

If war cannot be even considered, much less undertaken, unless in defense against unambiguous armed aggression, it follows that the methods and purposes employed in such a war, as well as any preparations for it, must be purely defensive in character. While this is a high sounding, altruistic and idealistic assumption, there is little evidence of it being seriously questioned, except on rare occasions, in the American public forum.

This assumption, like several others in the just war doctrine, produces problems both profound and contradictory in nature.

The first is that no scientist, politician or philosopher has ever been able to draw a hard and fast distinction between weapons that are strictly offensive and those that are strictly defensive. Even when the most effective tools of warfare were sword, shield, and spear, the distinction was never absolute. Soldiers in the Roman army were trained to use their shields, as well as their swords, offensively, and to many a barbaric tribe bested in combat by the disciplined legions of Caesar, the Roman shield was a fearsome weapon of imperial aggression.

With the advent of modern sophisticated weapons as a "gift" of Western technology, the distinction is hopelessly blurred, and the blurring is continuous all the way from

the hand-held weapons of the modern infantryman to the intercontinental strategic weapons which are supposed to deter the possible nuclear aggression of the (other) superpower.

This contradiction produces its most dangerous results in the field of foreign policy. We sincerely believe that there is a qualitative distinction between offensive and defensive weapons, and, furthermore, that our commitment to it is so self-evident that other nations, especially our potential enemies, will read that commitment as an unambiguous signal of our intentions. There is, alas, much evidence that the Russians do not, in fact, so read our intentions, and that on more than one occasion they have interpreted our verbal and non-verbal public communications as very aggressive indeed.

A second danger is generated by our unquestioned assumption that others--especially the Russians--see our words and actions precisely as we do. Thus it is possible to end up talking only to ourselves about the Russian view of policy concepts like detente and deterrence. This remarkable blindness has led us to some amazing long term defense policy decisions that would be unthinkable were we to be calmly honest about the available evidence of Russian military capabilities.

The post facto assessment of our defense preparedness shows that we have succeeded in propagandizing only ourselves, consistent with our passionate desire to see the



international order as a real expression of our own honorable, philosophical presuppositions. It has been rightly remarked that, in the fields of foreign policy and national defense, "we are our own worst enemy."

That our weapons inventory and defense force structure bear such obvious offensive (aggressive?) capabilities poses a third danger for us; that a numerically small but significant body of extreme opinion wants the U.S. to disarm unilaterally altogether. This classic American pacifist position is not only by far the simplest ideologically (if one has no weapons, one cannot be perceived as aggressive, which is for us the highest moral good in the international order) but also the most consistent with our inconsistent presuppositions. Thus it is very difficult for the theoretician and politician, who wants to maintain a strong national defense posture, to answer many of the arguments of the pacifist bloc, since both groups (with only rare exceptions) share the same basic assumptions. The faction for a strong defense is itself on the ideological defensive, and finds it much harder to justify its policies, given the contradictions identified.

There are no "accidents" in human history, if one accepts the explicit Biblical claim of God's absolute and sovereign providential control over the affairs of men and nations, and the fact that the pacifist minority segment of the opinion-making elite has been able to exert a disproportionate influence for defense reductions over the

past twenty years should be no surprise to one who examines the ideological antecedents in twentieth century secular America. The pacifist movement can raise powerful arguments for disarmament (theoretically irrelevant) that are difficult to refute. Since the Soviets could misperceive U.S. intentions from the assessment of our force structure and capabilities, they would have less opportunity to misinterpret (and thus try a preemptive attack) if there were, in fact, no U.S. weapons around to be misread. When the Soviets do misread our intentions, we are inclined to attribute the ominous error to their pathological fears arising from a distorted philosophy rather than to any inconsistencies in our communications.

Another element in the American doctrine is the equation of defense with prevention or deterrence. This too is contradictory, for while defense exists to preserve the status quo, even at the risk of repudiating preventive war under any circumstances, deterrence has been characterized by the very same people as effective because it carries the threat of violence to the aggressor society, to the point of annihilation by means of overwhelming force. If war cannot be prevented by all the non-military means available to the modern nation-state, then its prevention must be insured by leaving the potential aggressor in no doubt that he would lose infinitely more than he could ever hope to gain, should he resort to aggression.

The paradox of deterrence theory, however, lies in the degree of success it enjoys, for as long as it is not "needed" it is at best defensive (less than defensive in the classical sense of the term), but should it be employed, it becomes far more than defensive on the assumption that the aggressor must be "punished" so as to never try aggression again.

But how much beyond the requirements of pure defense must a war go in order to reform an aggressor? And how likely is the attitude of the aggressor to change for the better, once hostilities have started? Further, if the aggressor's power to wage war has not been substantially diminished, what assurance is there that he will not someday try again; perhaps with far greater determination? These are nagging questions which tend to disturb the confidence of serious thinkers in the validity of the major assumptions underlying U.S. deterrence theory. Certainly, in recent years, the C.P.S.U. has provided abundant evidence that they believe they could fight an all-out nuclear war--and win. If this be so, then the very essence of deterrent philosophy has failed, even though at a secondary level the Kremlin may not yet be ready to test its own convictions that it would survive a strategic nuclear exchange with the United States.

Hence, for the concept of deterrence to remain effective, it has had to move imperceptibly but steadily from being another means of self-defense to a means which could punish



an aggressor so severely as to deter him from ever trying again; even to a means of destroying the power of the aggressor altogether because nothing less can provide the assurance of preventing another attempt. How ironic that our philosophy of deterrence should have metamorphosed from prevention to severe punishment to total destruction, while at the same time our strategic resources have eroded drastically vis-a-vis the Soviets; from a capability for annihilation of their force structure to one, at best, of a degree of punishment which could be less severe than the retaliation we would receive from them!

Then there is the great issue of the influence and role of post World War II military technology upon the just war doctrine.

What the moral law permits in order to deter aggression and to preserve peace, it must equally permit in order to resist aggression and restore peace. In either case the purposes sought are the same--defense and peace--and the only questions that remain concern the most effective means for realizing these objectives. The problems of deterring or resisting aggression are thereby transformed into "technical" questions governed by political, military, and, of course, economic considerations.<sup>28</sup>

When the opportunity is afforded to survey the extensive literature of the last twenty-five or so years on the "strategic debate" it is difficult not to be horrified at the way in which the great questions of spiritual values, human lives, the survival of nations, and profound ethical issues are subordinated, in cavalier fashion, to sophisticated technological discussions of nuclear effects, etc.

In making this observation, a caveat is in order. The intent is to neither discount nor discredit the tremendous scholarly effort that has been invested in attempting to understand and control the strategic nuclear balance. Many of the articles and books are thought-provoking, insightful and of excellent quality, contributing substantially to the nuclear debate. As with the tragedy of spiritual decay in the institutional church, the dynamic problem is not so much what the church has done and said as what it has not done and not said; in the strategic literature the absence of substantive philosophical and theological thinking and, of course, a derivative and systematic ethical debate about the strategic problems is almost total. The assumptions held by those involved in this shocking tendency to concentrate almost exclusively upon statistical and technological assessments, and later upon computerized models, have been challenged by a few "mavericks" like Anatole Rappaport (Strategy and Conscience), but they are a definite minority. The practical effect of this academic and political mindset has been to concentrate almost exclusively on questions of methodology of weapons utilization, policy implementation, hypothetical and political circumstances. The moral issues, if mentioned, are usually regarded as unchanging and settled, and therefore beyond dispute. Certainly, they are almost never addressed. When, on rare occasions, we have exhibited an awareness of the need for moral justification of American military strategy,

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nearly always it has been directed to the means and methods of the warfare in question (the "how") but not the long term purposes supposedly served by that strategy (the "why"). Once again it is a case of our intense preoccupation with symptoms, while we ignore the more basic causes.

The development of nuclear weapons (strategic and tactical) has been the technological factor which has prevented us from returning to the simplistic days of pre-war isolationism. They have forced the development of a whole new branch of policy science (strategic studies) which has radically changed classic concepts of defense and aggression, forced new interpretive demands upon the American just war doctrine and, because of these weapon's awesome destructive potential, called into question as never before many of our basic assumptions about statecraft, U.S. foreign policy, and the use and place of military power. Yet the evidence is that these issues, with a few notable exceptions, still have not been well thought through and, further, that nuclear weapons policy lags considerably behind technological developments in the weapons and their associated delivery systems.

The first ominous forebodings of a basic change in the historic Christian concept of limited war for limited goals came with the notion of "patriotism," which evolved in the French Revolution. For the first time in history this led to the deadly notion of "a nation in arms," in which the entire state, down to the humblest non-combatant child, was seen as part of the war effort.



The Civil War produced a concept of victory more encompassing than that common in Europe in centuries past, one which foreshadowed the World War II idea of unconditional (total) surrender as an inseparable requirement of "total victory." And World War II saw an appalling increase of direct involvement of unarmed and defenseless citizens in the greater military violence of technological warfare. The saturation bombing of cities best typifies this phenomenon. The philosophy that a civilian population can make no claim to immunity was, in a very real sense, "set in concrete" with fearful effectiveness when President Truman made his decision to drop the atomic bomb on Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Since then the technological advances in nuclear weaponry have made those two bombs antiques by comparison, with new orders of magnitude of destructiveness now available to the possessors of fusion weapons. Whole populations, even nation-states, can be "eliminated" more effectively and extensively than ever. Total war is no longer a phrase with limited and very relative application. Between the short term blast, heat and shock capabilities of multi-megaton weapons, and the long-term radiological effects, the potential now exists for killing a significant majority of the world's population.

The most terrible irony of all is that no nation or leader ever consciously set out to make war total, as a just and reasonable doctrinal goal. Rather, the rise of

materialism, the exponential increase in weapons technology, the intensifying impulses of exaggerated nationalism and xenophobic pride, and the breakdown of a sound epistemology based in Biblical theology--replaced with a philosophically bankrupt humanism--have combined to make war, and the theory of war, more and more total. In a sense, nuclear weapons have become the providential means of highlighting the utter poverty of our philosophy and ethics of statecraft and national policy, because the old circumstantial constraints that severely limited warfare in the past--economic considerations, transportation and communication problems, etc., have all been solved with the advent of nuclear weapons.

Furthermore, the most subtle expression of the darkest side of man's sinful nature has found application in this grim arena. While we have become more conscious of the potential horror of nuclear warfare, we appear to be adrift and almost helpless to resolve the problem, incapable of dealing effectively with it at its causal levels and, instead, putting nearly all our corrective efforts in the basket of technological assessment of various details and statistical comparisons of tangible weapons resources. In a sense, we are moving down a philosophically sterile path, a materialistic treadmill, and seem to be so mesmerized by the dynamic analytical process in which we are involved that we cannot dismount.

An issue of critical importance to this complex problem must be noted. That is the strong tendency in the strategic and pacifist literature to view nuclear weapons as entirely "unique" and, therefore, the moral issues connected with their use as also being "unique."

This assumption makes any effort to arrive at a philosophically consistent national security policy immeasurably more difficult, for while there are strong intuitive and emotional reasons for so regarding thermo-nuclear weapons, even a cursory study of their nature and effects makes such a contention hard to support. If nuclear weapons effects are to some degree unique in a functional sense, it is in the vast efficiency of their capabilities and their long term after effects. To put it crudely, their uniqueness is in the awesome degree to which they can provide "more bang for the buck."

The fundamental problem with nuclear weapons, then, is not really their technological or military uniqueness but the emotional and circumstantial capacities they "possess" for subverting our understanding of the more basic doctrinal issues and problems. These, after all, will be the ultimate determinants of their "use" even is that "use" remains a deterrent "non-use."

Put it another way, the real problem is not technology but an inconsistent and inadequate public policy, devoid of any theological foundation which in past circumstances could pass an uncritical muster, but which is now seen to



be weighed and found wanting. Nuclear weapons have illuminated the flaws, the omissions, the inconsistencies and the shallowness of the American doctrine of statecraft in general, and the just war, in particular. If anything positive at all can be said about nuclear weapons, it is that their development and deployment have slowly and inexorably forced us, in spite of ourselves, to admit--reluctantly--that something is very wrong with the public philosophy.

At its core, the most grievous philosophical sin and unctious irresponsibility has been to deny the nature of fallen man. In denying sin, we are forced by our pride and disobedience to invent a non-existent fantasyland that consumes untold resources and effort, with terrible opportunity costs, to justify its existence. This exercise itself has produced problems in reconciling fact with fiction that make the fabled emperor of the invisible clothes look like a hard-nosed exponent of realpolitik by comparison. In denying sin, we also deny the unpleasant but necessary concomitants for controlling its (otherwise) destructive expression, which God Himself has laid down. These include the admission of the danger of trusting our own wisdom, the searching of Scripture for the explicit means to use, and the controlled and disciplined use of force, always subordinated to a well-thought-out ethical system derived directly from the Biblical theology of responsible statecraft. Of course, such an admission and

activity is humbling, and to Western man, puffed with the intellectual pride of a humanism gone berserk , this is a bitter pill to swallow. It appears we would rather destroy ourselves with our inventions than bow our heads and hearts and admit that we are not only wrong but cannot survive as a nation without the wisdom of God's word and the mercy He extends to those who humble themselves before Him.

It does not take a great intellect to see that we are literally destroying ourselves in the name of humanistic wisdom. We are doing this at almost every level of society, in taxing the middle class into bankruptcy, taxing business into closure, forcing investment capital overseas and fixed incomes into poverty levels, putting administrative monstrosities and worthless bureaucracies on the sore backs of taxpayers, and subsidizing criminals while penalizing law abiding citizens in ways too numerous to mention. Perhaps most of all, our policy of deterrence has been so eroded by changes in technology and superpower force structures that the ultimate disaster of nuclear war will be brought to pass (oh irony of ironies) most probably by that sincere but inadequate doctrine which sought to prevent it at all costs. Tucker has captured the heart of this relationship between modern weapons technology and our present moral dilemma:

If it seems too extreme to insist that technology literally imposes moral dilemmas on men, it does not appear excessive to conclude that technology may render irreconcilable moral demands men had previously been able somehow to reconcile. Technology cannot make men bad, but it may surely

give rise to circumstances in which it is increasingly difficult to be good. The restraint and moderation men practice are not unrelated to the anxieties they experience, anxieties they have not conjured up from tortured imaginations but which result from an awareness of the harm others may in fact inflict on them. In this sense at least, technology invariably limits the alternatives men will consider and restricts the choices they will make.

Of course, a simple, almost primitive, view will insist that the fortunate consequence of technological innovation is that it encourages only "aggressors" to pursue their evil designs. Experience might have taught us, however, that technology may tempt not only aggressors but the victims of aggression as well. The latter are not somehow provided with a natural immunity from the temptations posed by technology. They are not exempt from the temptation to assume that technological advance must always work to their advantages, presumably because they are the more virtuous. Nor have they been free from the temptation to entertain radical solutions to the security problem or from justifying these solutions by the claim that their purposes in employing technology are purely defensive in character. By a "logic" that is as recurring as the history of conflict, the potential victims of aggression may thus become in turn the potential aggressors.<sup>29</sup>

And further, he faces squarely the egocentric causes of our dilemma:

These considerations suggest that the strategy of nuclear deterrence has its deepest roots in what might well be termed an act of faith. As such, that strategy must in the final analysis prove independent of prudential calculation and rational considerations. The "higher rationality" of deterrence might therefore be formulated in the following manner: It is not prudence but faith in ourselves and in our purposes that is ultimately needed to achieve the goal of banishing aggressive force from history. To persuade the would-be aggressor we need only first persuade ourselves. To convince the adversary that we would act in the manner threatened, it is indispensable to convince ourselves that we would so respond. As long as we believe, others will believe. And as long as others believe, they will not act. The key to a successful strategy of nuclear deterrence lies wholly within ourselves.<sup>30</sup>



It would be hard to imagine a more absolute fulfillment of the Biblical warning about self understanding, which applies as well to nations as to individuals: "There is a way which seems right to a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death."<sup>31</sup>

In concluding this brief assessment, the fruits of a research effort undertaken within another department (Management) at the Naval Postgraduate School are mentioned as having some bearing on this subject. The above discussion posited the thesis that we Americans do not want to face for the most part, the ethical and philosophical problems inherent in the development and deployment of nuclear weapons. The research project set out to test this hypothesis, with the additional assumption that U.S. armed forces officers who had served in nuclear weapons billets before coming to the Postgraduate School as students should be a group of people who have thought seriously - if anybody has - about these policy problems. The results of the survey appear to indicate otherwise; that the cultural conditioning and on-the-job social environment can be strong enough to override the powerful inducements to discussion and reflection about the significance of nuclear weapons that would seem to come from a hands-on, professional exposure to them. This study is included in this thesis as Appendix I.

## FOOTNOTES

6. Czarist Russia is a classic example of this phenomenon. In spite of being a totalitarian and repressive state, the Russian involvement in World War I contributed significantly to the success of the Bolshevik takeover.
7. The moral reality of war is divided into two parts. War is always judged twice, first with reference to the reasons states have for fighting, secondly with reference to the means they adopt. The first kind of judgment is adjectival in character: we say that a particular war is just or unjust. The second is adverbial: we say that the war is being fought justly or unjustly. Medieval writers made the difference a matter of prepositions, distinguishing jus ad bellum, the justice of war, from jus in bello, justice in war. These grammatical distinctions point to deep issues. Jus ad bellum requires us to make judgments about aggression and self-defense; jus in bello about the observance or violation of the customary and positive rules of engagement. The two sorts of judgment are logically independent. It is perfectly possible for a just war to be fought unjustly and for an unjust war to be fought in strict accordance with the rules. But this independence, though our views of particular wars often conform to its terms, is nevertheless puzzling. It is a crime to commit aggression, but aggressive war is a rule-governed activity. It is right to resist aggression, but the resistance is subject to moral (and legal) restraint. The dualism of jus ad bellum and jus in bello is at the heart of all that is most problematic in the moral reality of war.

Michael Walzer, Just and Unjust Wars, Basic Books, Inc., New York, 1977, p. 21.

8. The strategist is not unaware of confusion and disorder in the field; nor is he entirely unwilling to see these as aspects of war itself, the natural effects of the stress of battle. But he sees them also as matters of command responsibility, failures of discipline or control. He suggests that strategic imperatives have been ignored; he looks for lessons to be learned.

The moral theorist is in the same position. He too must come to grips with the fact that his rules are often violated or ignored--and with the deeper

realization that, to men at war, the rules often don't seem relevant to the extremity of their situation. But however he does this, he does not surrender his sense of war as a human action, purposive and premeditated, for whose effects someone is responsible. Confronted with the many crimes committed in the course of a war, or with the crime of aggressive war itself, he searches for human agents. Nor is he alone in this search. It is one of the most important features of war, distinguishing it from the other scourges of mankind, that the men and women caught up in it are not only victims, they are also participants. All of us are inclined to hold them responsible for what they do (though we may recognize the plea of duress in particular cases). Reiterated over time, our arguments and judgments shape what I want to call the moral reality of war-- that is, all those experiences of which moral language is descriptive or within which it is necessarily employed.

Walzer, pp. 14-15.

9. To justify any action full of moral overtones is reasonable even if the substance of the justifications may be unreasonably wrong and even immoral by our lights.
10. Robert W. Tucker, The Just War, The Johns Hopkins Press, Baltimore, 1960, p. 1-12.
11. Trial of Major War Criminals before the International Military Tribunal, 1947, II, 149.
12. November 1, 1956 Department of State Bulletin, XXXV, 752.
13. Tucker, pp. 15-16.
14. Hearings before the Joint Senate Committee on Armed Services and Committee on Foreign Relations, Military Situation in the Far East (82nd Congress, 1st Session) Part III, p. 1720.
15. News Conference, July 2, 1957 (State Department Bulletin, XXXVII, p. 143).
16. Tucker, pp. 21-22.
17. George Kennan, A Current Assessment of Soviet-American Relations Remarks of a meeting of the Council on Foreign Relations held in Washington, D.C., 22 November 1977.



18. The most pernicious contribution of the social sciences (invented in this country) has been the victim theory to explain criminal behavior in individuals. It has been a philosophical cornerstone of the secular priesthood (psychology and psychiatry) which, in the twentieth century, has supplanted the ministers, priests and rabbis as the God-ordained healers of problems both spiritual and emotional in nature. Its effects have been so extensive as to be unmeasurable, not the least of which has been to radically alter the entire philosophy and functions of our legal system, school system, policy system, military structure and the government bureaucratic picture at every level. This subject is so vast that extensive scholarly research would be needed to explore adequately its causes and effects.
19. For the Biblical exposition of this subject, see the Chapter on the Biblical view of war.
20. Remarks made at Palm Beach roundtable on "War or Peace," March 2, 1953, Department of State Bulletin, XXVIII, p. 412.
21. Television interview, September 10, 1950, Department of State Bulletin, XXIII, p. 406.
22. Harry S. Truman, address at Dedication of the Chapel of the Four Chaplains, Philadelphia, 3 February 1951, Department of State Bulletin, XXIV, p. 283.
23. The picture of a world divided into the evil few and the innocent many may become blurred by the passions engendered during a period of war, but it has never been erased. Even a policy of unconditional surrender must somehow be adjusted to it. During World War II President Roosevelt took care to emphasize on more than one occasion that: "In our uncompromising policy (i.e., unconditional surrender) we mean no harm to the common people of the Axis nations. But we do mean to impose punishment and retribution in full upon their guilty, barbaric leaders." (Bulletin, VIII, 146) And in the war crimes trials that followed the war, American tribunals consistently professed this distinction. Thus, in one of the post-Nuremberg proceedings dealing with those accused of crimes against peace the court declared: "The defendants now before us were neither high public officials in the civil government nor high military officers. Their participation was that of followers and not leaders. If we lower the standard of participation to include them, it is difficult to find a logical place to draw the line between the guilty and the innocent

among the great mass of the German people. It is, of course, unthinkable that the majority of Germans should be condemned as guilty of committing crimes against peace. This would amount to a determination of collective guilt to which the corollary of mass punishment is the logical result, for which there is no precedent in international law and no justification in human relations." The I.G. Farben Trial, Law Reports of Trials of War Criminals, X (1949), 39. Given this distinction, the measures taken in war which affect the "common people" of the aggressor state cannot be accorded a punitive interpretation--they are not "acts of punishment" but acts which, however, unfortunate in their "incidental" effects, are made "militarily necessary" in order to defeat and to punish the true aggressor. Observers have been inclined, for the most part, to attribute this picture of a world divided between the evil few and the many good to our belief in the inherent goodness of man and the inevitability of human progress. Perhaps of equal significance, however, is a much simpler though somewhat less complimentary explanation, i.e., the exception to date of the American continent from the ravages of modern war. Whether the attitude we have heretofore manifested in war could survive in hostilities carried directly to American territory remains to be seen. Elmer Davis once ventured the opinion that "if a few Russian atom bombs were dropped on American cities, I doubt if our statesmen would find it advisable to say anything more about how we love the Russian people." "Vox Populi and Foreign Policy," Harper's, June, 1952, p. 72.

The above from Tucker, footnote of p. 72-73.

24. Tucker, pp. 44-45.
25. Secretary of State Dean Acheson, 20th September 1950 address before the U.N. General Assembly, Department of State Bulletin, XXIII, p. 529.
26. Tucker, pp. 32-33.
27. Tucker, pp. 52-53.
28. Tucker, p. 100.
29. Tucker, pp. 199-200.
30. Tucker, p. 188.
31. Proverbs 14:12.

#### IV. TOWARD A BIBLICAL THEOLOGY OF STATECRAFT AND THE JUST WAR

##### A. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE PRESENT THEOLOGICAL PROBLEM

The chief difficulty in formulating a Biblical exegetical theology of contemporary government, respecting the conduct of foreign affairs in general, and warfare in particular, is in penetrating the awesome accumulation of half-truths and unrecognized "inaccuracies" that surround the nebulous idea of "Christianity" in our secularized culture. A major contributor to this contretemps is the institutional church and its colleges and seminaries.

The speculative theology movement originated in the 1800's in the School of Theology at the University of Tubingen, Germany.<sup>32</sup> A progressive denigration of confidence in the inspiration, authenticity and accuracy of the original Bible texts was accomplished under the guise of "higher textual criticism." The effect was to make the Word of God less relevant to those who believed in this sophisticated system of skepticism, both in terms of personal belief and societal norms. Seminary professors and pastors who were trained in the higher textual criticism (or negative criticism) school, preached the new "social gospel," noteworthy for its emphasis on neighborly "do-goodism" and its consistent intellectualism. The Bible,



if used at all, served merely as a springboard for speculation that, more often than not, demonstrably contradicted long-accepted Biblical doctrines. This social gospel became the ultimate intellectual basis for the "anything goes" gospel of the 1960's.

The erosion of public confidence in the validity of the Bible as a societal norm was accelerated by the repetitious preaching of a constellation of false platitudes which became so embedded in the American culture that they presently form the essence of a secular religion of "conventional wisdom."<sup>33</sup>

Biblical theology is only derivative and exegetical, not speculative. Speculative theology is therefore a contradiction in terms. While it is not the purpose of this study to refute speculative theology as such, it has been the source of a vast misunderstanding in America about what the Bible has to say on almost any subject, and on civil government in particular. It is no exaggeration, nor is it unkind, to insist that most Americans are Biblically illiterate, innoculated with just enough sanctified nonsense about the Bible to prejudice most attempts at careful exposition. Slogans require far less intellectual effort to understand than logical analysis based upon carefully examined presuppositions, and this mentality has been very successful in obscuring the truth in the area of the Biblical ethics of statecraft. Misunderstanding has focused around "killing," where the

commandment "thou shalt not kill" is read as prohibiting all killing under all circumstances, including even that undertaken within the context of military or police service.

The thesis of this research is that there exists a Biblical theology of statecraft (foreign relations) and tangible support for the ethical and moral concept of the just war. This study will set forth systematically, though not exhaustively, the Biblical teaching on Civil government and the conduct of war, highlighting the commonest areas of misunderstanding on these subjects.

## B. FOREWARD

There are five presuppositions underlying the research mode of this subject that must be mentioned, however briefly:

First, though a demonstration of the reasonableness of this supposition on the basis of internal and external textual evidence would fill a large volume, the confidence of this writer in the testable historical, scientific, and theological trustworthiness of the Biblical texts is based not on "blind faith" but upon an extensive examination of all the categories of attesting evidence, covering more than fifteen years.

Second, the author holds that the internal and external evidence richly support the internal claims of Scripture about its Divine authorship with a consistency unmatched

by any other document, ancient or modern. Virtually all of the known ancient writings, whether sacred or secular, are supported by one or two early manuscripts, often copied centuries or millenia after the author wrote. The Bible, on the other hand, consisting of the sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments, is uniquely supported textually to an extent unequalled by any other book: namely, in excess of 1400 ancient manuscripts, some having been written within a few years of the originals. Whether an individual ultimately accepts or rejects the claims of Scripture concerning its origins, intellectual honesty demands recognition of the absolute nature of these internal claims to Divine authorship.

All Scripture is God-breathed<sup>34</sup> and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correcting, for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.<sup>35</sup>

For no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.<sup>36</sup>

These claims are so stated that they cannot be half-true. They stand or fall together. Either they are true without qualification or they are not. The nature of the claims precludes the third option of truth being intermingled with error.

The third presupposition underlying this study is that there is an intended, clear, discernible meaning for the vast majority of Biblical texts.<sup>37</sup> So much is made today of those (usually narrow) areas of differing interpretation that little recognition is accorded to the



vast area of agreement among serious Bible scholars who accept the existence of a disciplined, biblically originated science of hermeneutics. Serious students of Scripture, even if unable to read either classical Hebrew or Koine Greek, can nevertheless attain a sufficient understanding of Biblical principles with the investment of reasonable exegetical effort. The area we are concerned with here is especially noteworthy for its simplicity and clarity, being far less open to interpretation than most other controversial Biblical subjects.<sup>38</sup>

The fourth presupposition is that there are several English language editions of the Old and New Testaments available which are excellent translations of the best Hebrew and Greek texts, and many of those original language texts, in turn, are accurate renditions of the original autographs. There have been so many recent discoveries of ancient manuscripts and tablets attesting extant manuscripts that there is little disagreement among scholars on the content of the original writings.

The Dead Sea Scrolls are a case in point. One of the manuscripts from that discovery is an entire text of the book of Isaiah, nearly 1,000 years older than the earliest known manuscripts of the Prophet.

Textual scholars estimate that there are approximately forty words in the entire Old Testament about which there are real disagreements, or doubts as to their authenticity, and none of these affect or impair a single substantive

doctrine or historical fact.<sup>39</sup> Hence a high order of confidence in the trustworthiness of the best available original language manuscripts, and those translations which faithfully reproduce these in English, is entirely reasonable and not inconsistent with the standards of modern scientific, empirical scholarship.

The translation principally quoted in this thesis is the New American Standard Version.<sup>40</sup> The New American Standard Version (NASV), along with the New International Version (NIV), is quite distinct from the many paraphrases on the market today which make no pretense of accuracy with the original Hebrew and Greek texts.

The fifth presupposition is that the proper business of Biblical scholarship--as defined by the Bible<sup>41</sup>--is not the formulation of opinions (however exalted or excellent they may seem or claim to be) or the advancement of suppositions. The only legitimate activity afforded students of Scripture, on the basis of its own mandate, is to carefully exposit that which is always there, as systematically and completely as possible.<sup>42</sup> Any study of Scripture, to honor the Creator, must diligently seek to set forth the principles it contains, as free from bias as possible. While perfection in achieving this goal must elude any exegete, by virtue of human frailty, this study will attempt to substantiate every principle addressed with textual and contextual evidence.

A brief word is in order concerning the three didactic levels found throughout Scripture. The word of God conveys its truth in three modalities namely by precept, normative and non-normative example, and "good and necessary" inference. Obviously, clear precept is the easiest to understand and deal with. The Scripture, being consummately honest concerning the sinful nature of mankind, reports some examples of disobedient behavior that were never intended to be normative. Example, then, requires a higher level of contextual support to establish any claim to normative authority. Good and necessary inference is the third and most difficult level of exposition. It requires a degree of logical competence in those who undertake it, inasmuch as the underlying presuppositions must be identified, and the methodology by which conclusions are drawn from those presuppositions recognized and understood. Anything less dilutes the legitimacy of such conclusions.

#### C. ON CIVIL GOVERNMENT

The Bible presents a rich body of information on the subject of government from the first book of the Pentateuch<sup>43</sup> through the Revelation of St. John, much of it in declarative, propositional form. Virtually every aspect of government that is discussed in the Old Testament is substantiated, and sometimes enlarged upon, in the New.

The principal basis of civic rectitude and the enforcement of God-ordained norms of societal behavior



derives from theological truths which transcend individual feelings, governments, circumstances or philosophies. These include the revelational proposition that man is made in the image of God and, being owned by God, is expected to conform his behavior to Divinely established standards, for which conformity, or lack thereof, he will be held accountable.

Man, acting in concert, is awarded a degree of real authority patterned after the Lordship of the Creator Himself. The highest duty of government is to uphold the integrity and safety of individuals, precisely because they are the image bearers of God's own character and personality. This conferred authority is reflected in the cultural mandate given to Adam in the garden of Eden, in which he was commanded to:

. . . rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky, and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.

And God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. And God blessed them; and God said to them, "Be fruitful, and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky, and over every living thing that moves on the earth."<sup>44</sup>

After the fall, when sin entered into the human race, the mandate was never withdrawn, but rather attended with new difficulties, which would rob man of much of the joy and satisfaction in his work originally intended for him by God. As far as the cosmos was concerned, thorns and thistles would now infest the ground, making the production

of food and the struggle for survival an ongoing battle with adverse elements including weeds and pests. Humanity would no longer be benign, but continually troubled by the sinful behavior of all its members, requiring certain kinds of collective control for the good of society. In this context of anthropological tragedy, the Lord considered it imperative for us to remember His abstract revelations concerning the origin and purpose of man, as God's image bearer, requires of him the consistent enforcement of specific sanctions against lawbreakers.

The failure of a given government to recognize its obligation to the Godhead as its first *raison d'etre* is to guarantee that its members will eventually slide into relativism, where all views are considered as personal opinions, equally valid (or invalid) and eventually the very legitimacy and existence of that government will thus be called into question.

In the period immediately following the flood, God laid down this specific requirement:

And surely I will require your lifeblood; from every beast I will require it. And from every man, from every man's brother I will require the life of man. Whoever sheds man's blood, by man(kind) his blood shall be shed, for in the image of God He made man.<sup>45</sup>

It was intended for mankind (acting in concert), rather than man as an individual. Capital punishment was to be applied to a proven murderer, not to those who committed accidental manslaughter, or killed in the line of military duty.

To underscore the fact of an early distinction made between individual and civil responsibilities laid down in Scripture, it is instructive to note that this first statement of the commandment requiring capital punishment for proven murderers antedates, by many centuries, the Mosaic law, which also forbade murder, and specified a wider range of application for capital punishment.<sup>46</sup>

The simplistic notion prevalent today that the Bible (and, by inference, Christianity) forbids any and all killing not only fails to deal with this Divine commandment spoken to Noah, but feeds on the translational error perpetrated for over 400 years in most English language editions of the Bible. It is simply incorrect to render Exodus 20:13 and Deuteronomy 5:17, "Thou shalt not kill." They properly read, "Thou shalt not murder."<sup>47</sup>

At this point some some may object that it is not legitimate to draw inferences for contemporary government from the Old Testament, since the Sinaitic lawcode explicitly established a theocratic government, which would be impossible and improper to undertake today. However, Scripture does not leave us in an impasse concerning this valid question, for although Jesus Christ clearly distinguished between the secular authorities and the visible, institutional church, both in His day and for the balance of history, He never even questioned the legitimacy of civil government. He did this in three ways. First, by refusing to allow the Jewish people to make Him into their secular



king. Second, by emphatically declaring that, "My kingdom is not of this world."<sup>48</sup> Third, by ordering his disciples, and the Pharisees, to pay taxes to the secular Roman government, in addition to carrying out their spiritual obligations to God.<sup>49</sup> Furthermore, He was jealous to underscore the validity of the Old Testament Biblical principles given to rulers and judges for the proper conduct of government, the judiciary, and the enforcement of the civil laws.<sup>50</sup>

The Apostle Paul, writing to the small congregation in Rome, the Imperial seat of the Empire, commanded that

every person is to be in subjection to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God. Therefore he who resists authority has opposed the ordinance of God; and they who have opposed will receive condemnation upon themselves. . . . For because of this you also pay taxes, for rulers are servants of God, devoting themselves to this very thing. Render to all what is due them, tax to whom tax is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honor to whom honor.<sup>51</sup>

Here Paul has only expanded the inferences in Christ's instruction to "render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's."<sup>52</sup> And just as the duties of the citizen to the state are clearly spelled out in Scripture so are the duties of rulers.

Secular authorities, or kings, are to rule according to the commandments of Scripture, both with respect to their own personal conduct, and the government of the state, and to continually remember that they are

appointed to their office by God. Hence they are accountable to the Lord for their personal behavior and their stewardship of office.

. . . You shall surely set a king over you whom the Lord your God chooses. . . neither shall he multiply wives for himself, lest his heart turn away; nor shall he greatly increase silver and gold for himself. Now it shall come about when he sits on the throne of his kingdom, he shall write for himself a copy of this law on a scroll in the presence of the Levitical priests. And it shall be with him, and he shall read it all the days of his life, that he may learn to fear the LORD his God, by carefully observing all the words of this law and these statutes, that his heart may not be lifted up above his countrymen and that he may not turn aside from the commandment, to the right or the left; in order that he and his sons may continue long in his kingdom in the midst of Israel.<sup>53</sup>

The rulers are to remember that they are God's vicegerents, and it behooves them to watch "with all care, earnestness and diligence, that in their administration they may exhibit to men an image, as it were, of the providence, care, goodness, benevolence and justice of God."<sup>54</sup>

When both Moses and Jehoshaphat wished to exhort the judges of the Israelites to discharge their duty in an upright manner, they did so by calling upon the principle mentioned above. Moses said, "Judge righteously between every man and his brother, and the stranger that is with him. For the judgment is God's."<sup>55</sup> And Jehoshaphat admonished them, "Take heed what you do, for you judge not for man, but for the Lord, who is with you in the judgment. Wherefore now let the fear of the Lord be upon you: take heed and do it; for there is no iniquity with the Lord our God."<sup>56</sup>

In the application of just punishments for clearly proven crimes, magistrates act not for themselves, but rather execute the judgments of God, unembarrassed by the commandment, "Thou shalt not murder," because its prohibition does not apply to them in their official capacity. Thus, we ought to recognize that homicide should never go unpunished, and for this reason the Scripture has put the power of the sword into the hands of the magistrate. To hurt and to destroy unilaterally are incompatible with the character of the godly, but for the state to avenge the afflictions of the righteous at the command of God is neither to hurt nor to destroy.

Perhaps the most ironic and tragic aspect of a humanism which unbiblically presupposes the innate or basic human goodness of man is that the claimed high regard for the dignity of man has led eventually to the monstrosity of murdering millions of unborn children in the name of individual "rights," an urban populace terrified by violent criminals often released or unpunished by the courts, Christian schools savagely attacked by the Internal Revenue Service for being racially biased, and euthanasia being proposed as a desirable solution for the aged by those whose duty it is to heal and protect life, and those supposed to uphold social moral standards.

The failure to recognize the distinction between biblical prohibitions binding upon private individuals and the enforcement of required punishments carried out by



servants of the civil government has led to these and many other social tragedies in the United States. The unwillingness to avenge the afflictions of the righteous by the ungodly is to sin against the revealed wisdom and will of a Holy Creator, and thereby opens mankind needlessly to all manner of harmful excesses, violence and crime.

A final point needs to be stressed in connection with the foregoing. The power of the state to suppress evil and uphold civil rectitude ultimately depends upon its ability and willingness to enforce its own laws--by the sword if necessary. Justice becomes impossible without the power or will for enforcement, and the courts of such a nation become a mockery of justice so serious that God has committed Himself to severely punishing those leaders who fall into this evil. Hence the unqualified prohibition of all killing, including that of capital punishment, could become a major cause of more killing and destruction, within and without, for the state which holds such poisonous ideology in its collective consciousness.

#### D. ON WAR

In attempting to set forth the Biblical position on the causes and conduct of war by legitimate governments, it is necessary to restate unequivocally that this is intended to be exegetical, and in most points will be diametrically opposed to conventional suppositions about

the "Christian" view of war. Much of what passes today as Christian thinking is not that at all, if we properly mean by "Christian" that which derives its nature (or essence) and application solely from the Scriptures. Christ's stinging indictment of the intellectual elite of His day could be applied as well to the opinion makers and speculative theologians of our day:

You have made the word of God of no effect by your tradition. You hypocrites, rightly did Isaiah prophesy of you, saying, "This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. But in vain do they worship me, teaching as their doctrines the precepts of men!"<sup>57</sup>

The theologians of the Reformation recognized that the ultimate epistemological principle expressed in the word of God is the fact that God IS.<sup>58</sup> From this beginning all else flows, including the reason for man's existence, and the nature of the revelations given to men about the Lord Himself, and His dealings with men. For example, Calvin's Institutes of the Christian Religion begin by addressing the subject of the knowledge of God, and everything else discussed takes its departure from what is established under that head. Thus, when a particular subject is expounded from Scripture, most of the theologians with a Reformation commitment will first check to see if there are any implications for that issue in the being of God Himself. The subject of War is no exception to this practice, and is particularly well suited for study from this perspective.

A further axiom must be identified at this juncture. It is here assumed that when the conduct of war by government(s) is addressed, that the government under study is legitimate according to Biblical criteria. There is but one apparent "exception" to the Biblical precept that rebellion against a government ordained by God constitutes one of the most serious of all iniquities. That exception is that all the criteria for loss of legitimacy must be met before resistance is justified. A ruler (or rulers) then, has the right to conduct war according to the constraints of God's word, and internal rebellion constitutes an act of war. Hence, while not mentioned in the section on government it will be included in the subject of the conduct of war.

In an age that has exalted indiscriminate sentimentality to the level of sacred dogma, it may come as a distinct surprise to many that the Lord declares Himself to be a "Man of War,"<sup>59</sup> or as the NASV translates this text, "The LORD (JHWH in the original Hebrew) is a warrior; the LORD is his name." Nor is such a view confined to the Old Testament. Almost the final view of Christ given in Scripture is that of Commander-in-Chief of the armies of heaven:

And I saw heaven opened; and behold, a white horse, and He who sat upon it is called Faithful and True; and in righteousness He judges and wages war. And His eyes are a flame of fire, and upon His head are many diadems;. . .and He is clothed with a robe dipped in blood; and His name is called the Word of God. And the armies which are in heaven,



clothed in fine linen, white and clean, were following Him on white horses. And from His mouth comes a sharp sword, so that with it He may smite the nations; and He will rule them with a rod of iron; and He treads the wine press of the fierce wrath of God, the Almighty. And on His robe and on His thigh He has a name written, "King of Kings, and Lord of Lords."<sup>60</sup>

Furthermore, this is entirely consistent with Christ's view of Himself during his earthly ministry, where in He declared, "Do not think that I came to bring peace on the earth; I did not come to bring peace, but a sword."<sup>61</sup>

The objection may be raised that this is inconsistent with the angelic proclamation of "Peace on earth, good will to men,"<sup>62</sup> at the time of Christ's incarnation. This single mistranslation has caused much harm among mankind, including the widespread false assurance of God's favor. It is also an example of the incalculable consequences of failing to accurately translate the Scriptures from the original languages, which can foster an entirely false theology held in all sincerity by multitudes. No less a prestigious and highly regarded translation than the King James Version is the original perpetrator of this error. Properly translated, the angelic proclamation conveys a concept quite at odds with the assumption of a blandly tolerant God of love for whom the righteous judgment of the unrepentant is unthinkable. The declared promise is clearly and specifically affirmed: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men with whom He is well-pleased." (my italics) Those with whom God is well-pleased are the redeemed, and no others; and despite differences

over the interpretation of who constitutes that favored company, there is a clear textual implication that there must be some with whom He is not well-pleased, for otherwise the declaration would make no sense.

Because conventional wisdom postulates a God whose only characteristic is indiscriminate love, there is a strong tradition among institutional churches to ignore, or attempt to explain away, those New Testament passages which counter the comfortable "love" assumption. John 3:16, the most widely quoted text of the Bible, illustrates the point. It is seldom read in context, for it is then impossible to maintain a position of universal benignancy with respect to the coming of the Messiah.

For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send the Son into the World to judge the world; but that the world would be saved through Him. He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.<sup>63</sup> (my italics)

New Testament theology is explicit on the subject of warfare between God and man ". . .because the carnal mind is at enmity with God."<sup>64</sup> And, ". . .do you not know that Friendship with the world is hostility (lit. enmity) toward God?"<sup>65</sup>

In describing unbelievers in their natural state, Paul does not hesitate to call them enemies (of God). "Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall

be saved from the wrath of God through Him. For if while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God. . ."<sup>66</sup>

We find, then, that the New Testament, far from repudiating or diluting the Old Testament concepts concerning warfare, actually builds on them, and includes the doctrine that God pictures Himself at War with the ungodly, and Himself in the role as the Warrior of all time.

Indeed, if we take the Scriptural view of man, we are forced to admit that warfare is so much a part of human existence that it cannot be ignored or wished away. It will either be faced maturely and wisely, or foolishly, by a nation. The leaders who fail to contend realistically with its causes, nature, and control are actually foredoomed to a greater vulnerability to war in the end!

It is very difficult for Western man, inoculated with anthropocentric scientism, to admit to the sinful nature inherent in all humans, which is claimed in Scripture. The perfectibility of man is so fundamental an assumption of humanism that sociologists and philosophers have developed a whole constellation of theories about war which seek the causes of warfare everywhere but in man's nature.

That these attempts have failed can be strongly argued from the observation that efforts are still being made to find a "satisfactory" explanation for the causes of warfare. Obviously, if the existing explanations were "satisfactory," the search for new ones would become pointless.



The Bible periodically declares that war cannot, and will not, be eliminated on earth until God Himself terminates human history. The most vivid instance of this position is found in the gospel of Matthew, where Christ is reported to have enumerated the signs heralding His second coming, and also pointed out that, "You will be hearing of wars and rumors of war. . .for nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. . ." <sup>67</sup> Mark and Luke also recorded this promise in their gospels (13:7-8 and 21:9-10 respectively). This view is neither pleasant nor popular, and resistance to it is not new.

In the days of Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel one of the most notable marks of the false prophets who had multiplied in the land was their constant proclamation of "peace, peace" <sup>68</sup> when there was, in fact, no peace coming, but certain war.

And they have healed the wound of my people slightly, saying, "Peace, peace," but there was no peace. . .For from the least of them even to the greatest of them, every one is greedy for gain. And from the prophet even to the priest, every one deals falsely. <sup>69</sup>

Certainly this message of appeasement and threat denial by the leaders of that day has a curiously modern ring. The gravity of their false ministry and message of hope was then addressed:

Were they ashamed because of the abomination which they had done (propagating the false message of peace)? They were not even ashamed at all; they did not even know how to blush. Therefore they shall fall among those who fall; at the time that I punish them, they shall be cast down, says the Lord. <sup>70</sup>

Israel's willingness to listen to these illegitimate and self-appointed spokesmen for God led to certain disaster at the hands of her enemies for the acceptance of false reassurance led to inadequate preparation for war, spiritually and militarily.

In summary, the only genuinely bright spot in this somber picture is the reasonable hope that leaders can minimize, manage, and even avoid warfare on occasion--if they are willing to admit its true causes, to face it for what is it, and to control armed conflict according to the wise guidance of Scripture.

There is a fundamental presupposition of Christology which must be posited before additional thoughts of the Lord Jesus Christ on the subject of war and the military are examined. That is that Christ, as the claimed Son of God, the Word made flesh, was without sin.

Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin.<sup>71</sup> (my italics)

The implications of this are enormous, for Christ continually rebuked sinful behavior<sup>72</sup> by those with whom He came in contact, which was consistent with his righteous nature. When He dealt with the Samaritan woman at the well,<sup>73</sup> He did not hesitate to confront her with her sins of sexual impurity. He confronted Zaccheus, the tax collector at Jericho, with his sin of embezzlement,<sup>74</sup> the Scribes and Pharisees with their theological hypocrisy,<sup>75</sup> and His own disciples with their sins.<sup>76</sup>

A pastoral principle of our Lord thus may be extracted from the Gospels. When He dealt with people, if they had sins of role, occupation, behavior, or relationship, He did not hesitate to rebuke the particular iniquity, doing so as part of His messianic ministry.

If we remember this principle, then there is a startling inference in Jesus's remarks about war and the military. He never rebuked anyone enlisted in the military for serving in what many assume is a basically iniquitous occupation. On the contrary, Christ actually used the institution of the military, and the proper conduct of warfare, to illustrate transcendent spiritual principles of His kingdom which is "not of the world."<sup>77</sup>

To begin with, Christ did, in fact, allow that the conduct of war can be the proper business of rulers:

Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after Me cannot be my disciple. . . Or what king when he sets out to meet another king in battle, will not first sit down and take counsel whether he is strong enough with ten thousand men to encounter the one coming against him with twenty thousand? Or else, while the other is still far away, he sends a delegation and asks terms of peace.<sup>78</sup>

A king may elect to sue for peace terms if he cannot muster the resources to prosecute the war with a reasonable probability of success, and this particular example of intelligent choice in the realm of statecraft is employed by Christ as a call to Christian commitment, with our eyes open about the "cost" of discipleship. This in no way puts a perjorative cast upon the prerogative of the



king to undertake war. Rather, the didactic power of the simile is that, if he goes to war, he had better do it wisely with respect to his manpower reserves.

This perception is consistent with Old Testament commandments concerning contemplated war. "Prepare plans by consultation, and make war by wise guidance."<sup>79</sup> And "By guidance you will wage war, and in abundance of counsellors there is victory."<sup>80</sup> War, if it is to be waged at all, requires careful planning and wise counsel. The Scripture is also more honest about unpleasant truths than most politicians, for it candidly admits that there is indeed, ". . . a time of war. . ." just as there is ". . . a time of peace. . ."<sup>81</sup>

Christ never suggested that men should seek discharge from a military establishment, nor did Biblical leaders deride warriors. When our Lord dealt with the Centurion (an officer in the Roman Army occupying Palestine) who had requested Christ's intercession for his seriously ill servant, Christ strongly commended him as possessing greater faith than anyone in Israel.<sup>82</sup> Yet our Lord said not a word about resignation of this man's commission in the army. It is inconceivable that the sinless Messiah would fail to urge resignation from the hierarchy of the hated occupation army, were that action essential to validate repentance, faith and godliness. Christ never hesitated to demand of His followers when appropriate, a high order of commitment which could involve the loss of

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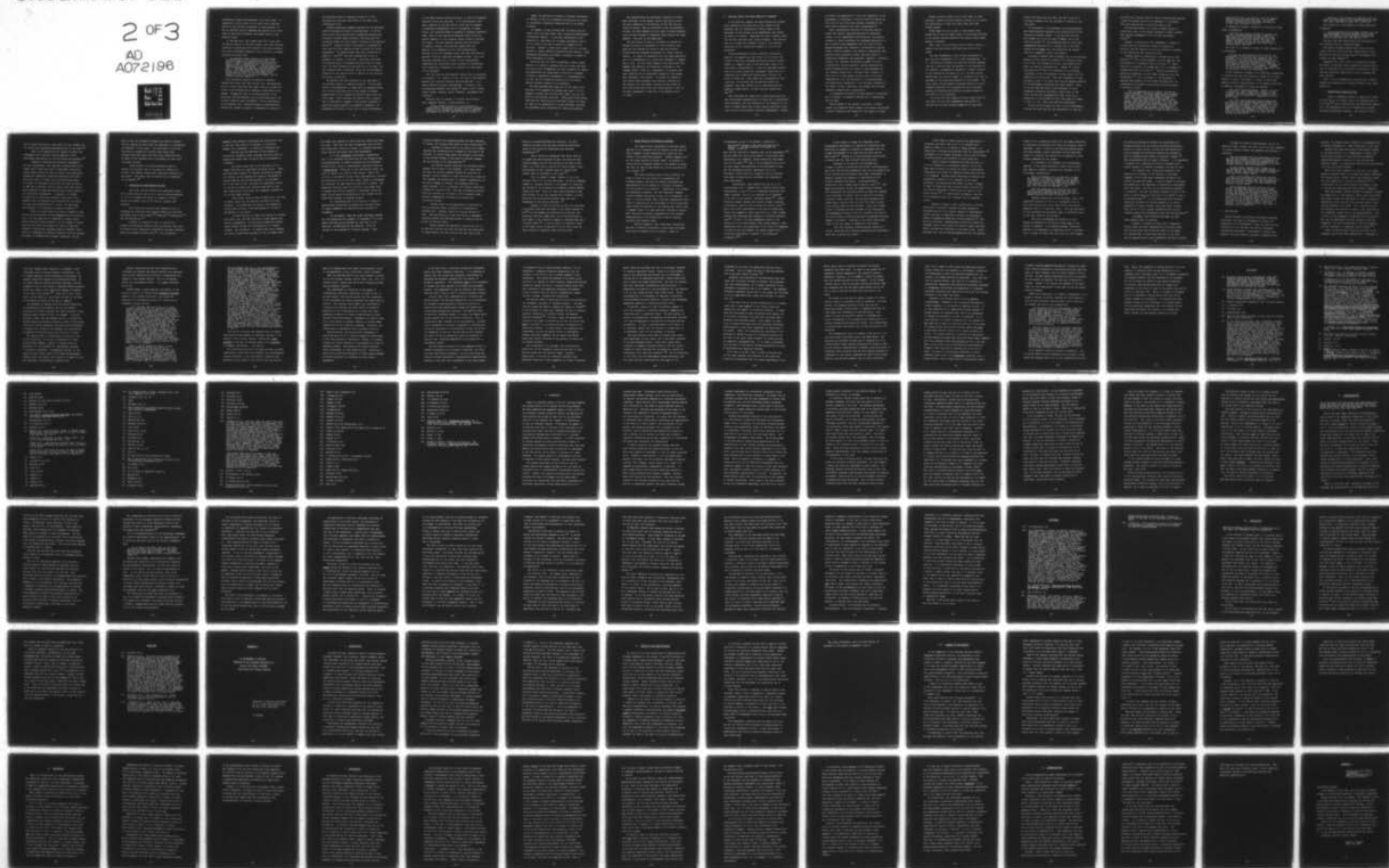
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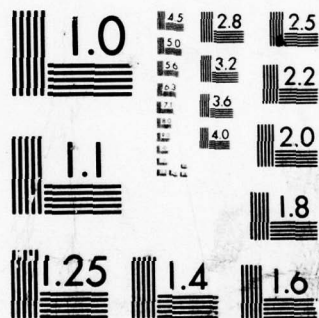
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possessions, family and sometimes, even life itself. To appreciate the full force of our Lord's tacit legitimization of the military occupation in this instance, it may be recalled that He commended few people in the three years of His public ministry, and almost never in such powerful terms.

In the same vein, when Israel went out to hear John the Baptist preach by the river Jordan, and there received instruction concerning their behavior that would authenticate their professed repentance, John's words to the Roman soldiers are significant:

• He therefore began saying to the multitudes who were going out to be baptized by him, "You brood of vipers, who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Therefore bring forth fruits in keeping with your repentance". . . And the multitudes were questioning him, saying, "Then what shall we do?". . . And some soldiers were questioning him, saying, "And what about us, what shall we do?" And he said to them, "Do not take money from anyone by force, or accuse anyone falsely, and be content with your wages."<sup>83</sup>

John the Baptist called his hearers to behavior changes which were more than trivial (e.g. tax gatherers were to collect only what was legal), and yet he said not a word to the soldiers about seeking a conscientious discharge. He did tell them to be good soldiers, to not abuse the civilian populace, and to graciously accept the contract terms of their enlistment! Such an exhortation is not possible for a righteous prophet indiscriminately calling all classes of people to repentance if service in

the military forces is inherently sinful or if the military as an arm and institution of the state were intrinsically evil.

Another significant example dealing with the spiritual needs of military men must be included here. It is the rich account which records God's redemptive dealing with Cornelius, another Roman centurion, who along with his household became the first Gentile converts in the apostolic period.<sup>84</sup> Cornelius was so very earnest in seeking the Lord that his Godly behavior became a subject for Divine remembrance. The apostle Peter was first instructed by means of a vision<sup>85</sup>, and then commissioned, to go to Caesarea to minister to this man. When Peter concluded his teaching there, he baptised Cornelius and his household, but said nothing about getting out of the army, now that Cornelius was a Christian, which was an unthinkable omission for the Apostle Peter if service in the military was wrong in principle.

The Apostle Paul also attested to the legitimacy of the military career in compelling fashion. In his great letter to the Ephesians, he began with the amazing revelation of God's electing love for His people in Christ, planned from the dim reaches of eternity before ever the world began. Paul concludes the epistle with a ringing call to believers to engage in the militant struggle of spiritual warfare against the kingdom of darkness. He strengthens the force of this call by using the metaphor



of the Roman soldier donning his armor, to show how preparedness and victory are achieved. It is inconceivable that Paul, inspired by the Holy Spirit, would use the example of something fundamentally evil to illustrate, in great detail, the God-given means of growing in personal righteousness. Even if one rejects the Biblical claim of the inspired character of its contents, there is still a problem with logic. The most radical sceptics from the school of negative textual criticism have agreed that the Epistle to the Ephesians is the "most authentically Pauline" of all New Testament books, and that Paul was the greatest intellect among New Testament writers. Can it be seriously proposed that a writer of such demonstrated competence and consistency would introduce so distracting and incongruous a metaphor as to undercut the very heart of his teaching?

Not only does the Lord Himself figure often in Scripture as a warrior, (cf. Joshua 5:13-15), but many of His greatest prophets and choicest servants were military men, or at least conducted military undertakings. Included in this distinguished assembly are Abraham,<sup>86</sup> Moses, Caleb, Joshua, Gideon, Barak, Jonathan, David, Hezekiah, Jehoshaphat and Cornelius.

Were all this not enough to convince the doubting, Paul commanded Timothy, a young minister, to

Suffer hardship with me as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. No soldier in active service entangles himself in the affairs of ordinary life, so that he may please the one who enlisted him as a soldier.<sup>87</sup>



Again, the problem of internal or textual consistency is raised, if Paul is interpreted as using an evil simile to illustrate a righteous characteristic of the gospel ministry.

In summary, we may conclude that the Bible does not teach, nor in any way infer, that a military establishment is basically immoral. It has been established by God Himself as a legitimate and necessary profession, and it is not wrong in His eyes to serve as a member of the military. Indeed it constitutes a great sin if a citizen refuses to render lawfully required military service. Thus professing Christians are morally obligated to submit if their government so orders.

The Bible does not teach a pacifistic stance toward threats to a nation's existence and well being, and lays down as the most fundamental duty and obligation of rulers and magistrates the unapologetic protection of upright citizens by appropriate punishments to transgressors of the law, and the collective protection of the nation against external threats to its existence.

The real problems that arise out of the need of the military to be prepared for warfare, even when it is not engaged in actual war, and from war itself, are not the fault of the military structure. These grave difficulties come from the collective and individual conduct of those who make up the membership of a given military, and from the government which furnishes its orders and policies.

The understanding and successful correction of these grave problems (to any degree) cannot take place without the prior admission of the Biblical truths that men are sinful by nature, that all societies of men are imperfect, at best, and that warfare will be a part of human existence until the Lord returns to terminate human history and judge mankind. That part is non-negotiable.

The only choice we have in the matter of warfare is whether we choose to understand it from a Biblical perspective, and whether we choose to heed the Biblical instructions and warnings concerning its conduct and prevention. It cannot be eliminated from the human experience, and it is presumptuous at a level with blasphemy to suggest that it can. But for those leaders of any nation who will examine with humility the Scriptural teachings on this unhappy subject, there is a reasonable, non-utopian hope that conflicts can be diminished, managed to some degree and, sometimes, even avoided. How great the tragedy of that nation which bypasses this realistic blessing for the illusion of total peace, thereby setting itself up for a much worse war in the end; worse because it will be the more unprepared to cope with it successfully when it comes.

## E. BIBLICAL ETHICS AND MORAL BEHAVIOR IN WARFARE

In the previous chapter the rigid distinction between moral behavior by military men in the context of war fighting, and the (theoretical) ethical issue of the existence of the military as an organization was crucial for what is to follow. There was one issue, however, which did not fall precisely into either category. That was the case of a citizen who refuses to serve in the military structure of his country when ordered to do so by his government.

This disobedience to lawful authority constitutes explicit sin against the law of God, but not within the context of Biblical standards governing military conduct. Rather, it remains a part of the more basic issue of an individual's responsibility to obey the legitimate government of his land unless that government orders him to do something that clearly and unequivocally violates the Biblical moral law. Only under such circumstances could a man say, as did Peter and the Apostles before the Sanhedrin when they ordered him to cease preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ, "We must obey God rather than men."<sup>88</sup>

The individual who takes such a stand takes upon himself the awesome responsibility of being able to demonstrate, from Scripture, that his resistance to the pressure of the state is based solely upon a very clearly identified violation of one or more distinct Biblical commandments. Should



he distort the application of this one "exception" to the requirement of obedience, he will be held accountable before God for one of the more severely condemned of all sins--that of rebellion and civil disobedience.<sup>89</sup>

Thus, conscientious objection to military service, unless that service requires some kind of unbiblical conduct, is not supportable from Scripture, and serious attempts to twist Scriptures into presumed approbation of such a position are remarkable only for their failure. Religious groups which advocate a conscientious objector stance, without exception, are unable to demonstrate that position from a Biblical context, and must resort to traditional humanistic and moralistic arguments. Parenthetically, U.S. military law permits a person to hold a conscientious objector position, and an individual who seeks discharge within the limits of that statement is not breaking federal law. The point here, however, is that this in no way changes the fact that he is still breaking God's law, and therefore it is intellectually and exegetically impossible to use the Bible honestly as the basis for such a decision, even though that military regulation permits such a possibility.

In addressing the matter of moral behavior of military men in warfare, an important distinction in terminology must be made.

Ethics refers to the system, or science, of right conduct and character which treats of the nature and grounds of moral obligations and regard for the rights of others.

Morals or moral conduct on the other hand, if used precisely, refers to actual behavior carried out in accord with perceptions of right and wrong based upon some ethical system.

These terms will be so used in this thesis, even though that is not the case in much of the current writing on the subject matter related to the ethical and/or moral aspects of warfare.

What, then, is the Biblical view of moral conduct in warfare, and the ethical principles upon which it is based?

The most fundamental of all ethical principles is also the most fundamental one of sound epistemology. God is. Because all existence has true and ultimate meaning only as it derives from, and relates to the existence of the immortal, unchangeable, omnipotent, eternal, Creator of the heavens and the earth, so too, the only ethical system which can ever be immune to collapse is one that is grounded in the being and character of God Himself. The long history of philosophy's continual failure to find a workable substitute for the person of God for giving meaning to existence and ethics is eloquent witness to the truth of this contention.

It is more for this reason of Divine origin than for any other that the ten commandments have served for millenia as the most elevated summation of high moral



conduct the world has ever seen, and that in spite of countless attempts over the centuries to destroy or set them aside.

In the preface to the decalogue the epistemological and charactological foundation and justification of the law-code is clearly stated. "I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery."<sup>90</sup> The Israelites were to obey these commandments because God is, because God is the Lord, because He was their Lord, and because He had brought them out of Egypt by a might deliverance.

By direct statement and by analogy, all of the Biblical system of ethics finds its genesis in the person of God. God is holy, and because He is holy, and righteous and pure, He cannot do anything evil. Indeed, He "cannot look upon evil"<sup>91</sup> and He is obligated by the internal consistency of His own character to deal justly with the commission of sins by men. The first expression of that justness is seen in the fact that He gives mankind definite and understandable guidelines for right conduct. Thus, on the one hand men cannot claim ignorance of God's standards of personal and public conduct and, on the other, should they transgress His laws, there is no mystery as to the standard by which they shall be judged if they do not repent and seek His forgiveness.

As soon as one accepts the fact of God's sovereignty over all the earth and His just prerogative to tell men



how they are to behave then the issue of determining personal conduct in warfare should be no different, in principle, from that same process in any other area of life.

As mentioned before, if a king or leader decides to enter into a war, he is morally obligated to make a careful and realistic assessment of his own and the enemy's forces.<sup>92</sup>

However, in arriving at that assessment, a leader is to seek wise and trustworthy counsel in making his decision, and the failure to do so can constitute evidence of his reprobation and rejection by God.

"Prepare plans by consultation, and make war by wise guidance."<sup>93</sup> "For by wise guidance you will wage war, and in abundance of counselors there is victory."<sup>94</sup> "Where there is no guidance, the people fall, but in abundance of counsellors there is victory."<sup>95</sup> "Without consultation plans are frustrated, but with many counsellors they are established."<sup>96</sup> But in contrast to the blessings of seeking wise guidance are the solemn warnings about the consequences of arrogant and unilateral decision making in matters of state:

And you neglected all my counsel, and did not want my reproof; I will even laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your dread comes, When your dread comes like a storm, And your calamity comes on like a whirlwind, When distress and anguish come on you. Then they will call on me, but I will not answer; They will seek me diligently, but they shall not find me, Because they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the Lord. They would not accept my counsel, They spurned all my reproof. So they shall eat of the fruit of their own way, And be

satiated with their own devices. For the waywardness of the naive shall kill them. But he who listens to me shall live securely, And shall be at ease from the dread of evil.<sup>97</sup>

In speaking of Israel's rejection of the Lord in their times of prosperity:

For they are a nation lacking in counsel, And there is no understanding in them. Would that they were wise, that they understood this, That they would discern their future! How could one chase a thousand, And two put ten thousand to flight, Unless their Rock had sold them, And the Lord had given them up?<sup>98</sup>

And later on in Israel's history the same warning note is reiterated:

Let all the earth fear the Lord; Let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of Him. For He spoke, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast. The Lord nullifies the counsel of the nations; He frustrates the plans of the peoples. The counsel of the Lord stands forever, The plans of His heart from generation to generation. Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord, The people whom He has chosen for His own inheritance.<sup>99</sup>

A most instructive example of the national consequences of ignoring the Lord was proposed to Israel as an object lesson by Isaiah, the Prophet, in which he noted some behavior patterns characteristic of the ungodly which have an ominous counterpart in modern day America:

The oracle concerning Egypt. Behold, the Lord is riding on a swift cloud, and is about to come to Egypt; The idols of Egypt will tremble at His presence, And the heart of the Egyptians will melt within them.

So I will incite Egyptians against Egyptians; And they will each fight against his brother, and each against his neighbor. City against city, and kingdom against kingdom. Then the spirit of the Egyptians will be demoralized within them; And I will confound their strategy, So that they will resort to idols and ghosts of the dead, And the mediums and spiritists.

Moreover, I will deliver the Egyptians into the hand of a cruel master, And a mighty king will rule over them," declares the Lord God of Hosts.<sup>100</sup>

And further on in the prophets a similar admonition to Babylon:

You are wearied with your many counsels; let now the astrologers, those who prophesy by the stars, those who predict by the new moons, stand up and save you from what will come upon you. <sup>101</sup>

And what came upon Babylon was total devastation by the military force of a merciless enemy.

The prophet Jeremiah warned Israel that even the counsel they did have would fail them because of their rejection of the Lord and His Word,<sup>102</sup> and Exekiel proclaimed the same message.<sup>103</sup>

Assuming then, that a nation's leaders are blessed with godly counselors, those counselors must give advice that is consistent with God's Word if they are to entertain any reasonable expectation of God's blessing upon their efforts.

Thus, in the contemplation of possible war, certain reasons are insufficient to justify conflict, and others require it.

#### 1. Insufficient Reasons For War

First--a reasonable effort to negotiate in order to avoid war is to be made, and is the preferred path in God's eyes,<sup>104</sup> and in this process of preventative negotiation, the ambassadors are to be treated with courtesy and granted diplomatic immunity. The failure to do so



can in itself constitute a just cause for war, inasmuch as the envoys were legitimate representatives of the state.<sup>105</sup>

War is not permissible for reasons of greed (the commandment which forbids coveting applies to both individuals and nations) or lust for power and prestige.<sup>106</sup>

Reasons of ideology and theocratic presumption are also unacceptable, for theocratic justification is no longer valid (there have been no legitimate theocracies except Israel before the time of Christ), and ideological reasons are essentially spiritual deviations from God's word which should be dealt with using spiritual means. Of course, an ideological conviction can lead one nation to make war on another, and the latter would then behave quite properly in resisting any military threat caused by the ideological assumptions. Conversely, an attempt to wage war for ideological reasons constitutes a presumption that the Almighty has conferred upon one nation the right and responsibility to correct the spiritual shortcomings of its neighbors by means of warfare.<sup>107</sup>

There is a particular irony here in America's case, for as we have rejected the knowledgeability of an absolute God, or of any absolutes in standards of conduct which derive from His being and person, we have tended to become more absolute about the reasons for which we wage war! Instead of limited and reasonable goals of warfare, which would be consequences of mature statecraft (such as forcing the enemy to withdraw from occupied territory), we have

gone to war for incredibly arrogant and absolute reasons such as "making the world safe for democracy" or unconditional surrender "of the enemy." The sad result of this has been that our enemies on occasion have fought like cornered rats when that could have been avoided and then, in spite of the terrible cost in bloodshed, we have "lost the peace" as well.

Genuine peace is the most desirable state of affairs for a nation, and it is simply not possible to justify a pre-emptive attack upon a peaceable neighbor for any reason. Any nation that so behaves will be punished by God Himself.<sup>108</sup>

## 2. Sufficient or Just Reasons for War

The first, and most obvious and legitimate reason for a nation going to war is if it has war declared against it, or if it becomes the object of invasion or attack across its borders, even if war has not formally been declared.

Thus Judah was justified (and blessed of God) in attacking the countries whose armies invaded its territory, including those of the Syrians,<sup>109</sup> Moabites,<sup>110</sup> Midianites,<sup>111</sup> and the Philistines.<sup>112</sup>

A subset, or variant of this, is war for the purpose of recovering territory that has recently been lost, as distinct from irredentist claims which may span centuries since the alleged or actual loss.<sup>113</sup> The inferential

argument from Scripture concerning this distinction lies in the fact that there is no precept, or historical example for a precedent, to justify an irredentist war.

War may also be conducted for the purpose of evicting an occupation army, although this point must be handled with great care, as far as the Old Testament is concerned.

The unique issue here is the existence of the Judean theocracy as a legitimate political entity. There have been many attempts to institute theocracies throughout history, as far ranging and varied as the Mayans in Central America, and the Philistines in the Mid-East. But in the eyes of God, they were not legitimate because (1) He did not ordain and institute them and (2) they were established by men under the (imagined) headship of one or more pagan deities.

Only Israel, from the time of Moses until the time of Samuel, meets all the Biblical criteria for a pure theocracy. God instituted the nation, with Himself as titular Head of State, involving Himself in the day to day affairs of the nation.

In this capacity, He dealt with Israel as a Father does with a son, and when the nation sinned against Him and His commandments, the Lord would chasten His people, nearly always through the instrumentality of foreign invasion and occupation. In almost every such instance, the hated invaders were allowed--by God--to remain until



His people had repented of their sins and turned from their evil ways. When this had been accomplished then the Lord would graciously raise up a leader, or otherwise providentially deliver His people from thier oppressors.

It is this spiritual chastisement (remembering that in the theocracy the political and the religious were indistinguishable) by means of warfare and its attendant problems which cannot be legitimately replicated today as a causus bellum. There are no true theocracies today, and none can validly lay claim to such status. Hence, the eviction of occupation forces, while legitimate as a function and responsibility of the civil state, cannot be undertaken for precisely the same reasons as was done in Israel. The applicable Biblical basis for eviction of an enemy force is simply that God has committed to sovereign states the power of the sword for protection of the citizens of that state from internal or external threats.

An interesting case in the history of Israel is particularly instructive concerning the continued right to retain possession of territory after centuries of occupation.

In the Exodus, Moses had sought peaceable passage for the Israelites with payment, if necessary,<sup>114</sup> for any water used while going through the territory of the Amorites, the Moabites and the Edomites. With the refusal of this request of "innocent passage," these

nations attacked God's wandering people and were defeated by Israel, who occupied some parts of their territories.<sup>115</sup>

Hundreds of years later in the days of the Judges, Jephthah was confronted with a request by the king of the Amorites to return these lands, and refused on the basis of the initial refusal of the right of innocent passage and the outcome of the resulting war.<sup>116</sup>

One further ethical principle for sovereign states emerges from a study of this passage. If a state seeks the right of innocent passage through the territory of another, without seeking to obtain territory as a result of that passage, and particularly if adequate compensation for any use or damage is offered, then passage cannot be justly refused. If it is refused, the refusal constitutes a sufficient cause for war. This may be properly inferred from this incident on the basis of God's declared supernatural strengthening of Israel and blessing the victorious outcome.

Another cause of war legitimized in Scripture is that of entering combat on behalf of a threatened or attacked ally. However, there is a crucial proviso to this. The qualification is that the treaty or agreement existing between the sovereign states in question must be proper in Biblical terms.

Mutual defense and assistance treaties are not to be made with nations that hate the Lord and His principles of righteousness, nor with nations that have had a long

record of untrustworthiness and hostility. If such treaties are made, that may well constitute sufficient cause in God's eyes for chastening such national disobedience.<sup>117</sup>

And it should be remembered that while there is no longer any true theocracy as such, the Lord not only claims Lordship over all the nations on the face of the earth, but holds them to account for their conduct, their relationship to Him, chastens them for iniquity and blesses them for obedience to His word.<sup>118</sup>

Once a covenant is made, however, it is to be honored, even if it is less than ideal. We find a stunning example of covenant fidelity in the example of Joshua who was tricked by the Gibeonites into making a mutual defense treaty with them. Later on, when Joshua realized he had been tricked, he not only honored that covenant, but even protected the Gibeonites militarily when they were endangered by the jealous Amorites.<sup>119</sup>

Finally, it must be pointed out that not only does a sovereign state have the power of the sword ordained by God<sup>120</sup> for the purpose of protecting its citizens, and punishing those who commit evil, but it has the power to levy taxes on its citizens to support a standing army and/or police force.<sup>121</sup> It is the duty of citizens to serve in the armed forces if required to do so, and to pay the taxes required to maintain these forces as well.



### 3. Moral Conduct of Soldiers in Warfare

The logical first requirement of military ethics spelled out in Scripture for the soldier is best seen in Paul's example of good soldiering as a model for the conduct of the Christian ministry. "Suffer hardship with me, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. No soldier in active service entangles himself in the affairs of everyday life, so that he may please the one who enlisted him as a soldier."<sup>122</sup>

The clear inference here is that a soldier, in order to carry out his duties in a responsible and honorable manner, must give up certain privileges and opportunities (if not rights) of civilian citizenship for the duration of his service. Soldiering is an intense and demanding occupation, one that inherently demands certain personal sacrifices of each one so committed. Indeed, it could be argued that a military organization which tries to duplicate all the privileges of the civilian life style within the military or, put another way, which tries to suggest there is no real sacrifice involved in enlistment, may well be laying a groundwork for the ultimate demoralization of its troops when a time of testing, sacrifice and hardship comes.

Without exception, each individual entering the military is warned by Scripture to have right attitudes about their occupation and its conduct. Under no

circumstances is war to be enjoyed, or gloried in :

Show Thyself strong, O God, who has acted on our behalf. . . .He has scattered the peoples who delight in war.<sup>123</sup>

And, "He who rejoices at calamity will not go unpunished."<sup>124</sup>

And for those who "live by the sword," in the sense that soldiering is an obsession, Christ warns that they shall "die by the sword."<sup>125</sup> War is to be understood as one of the most tragic manifestations of the sinfulness of man, and the discerning soldier, especially if he is a Christian, should enter his occupation with an attitude that might be described as intelligent and responsible heavy heartedness.

Nevertheless, these admonitions are not to be misconstrued so as to suggest that a soldier should fight halfheartedly, since he is in a sometimes distasteful and tragic business. He is to do whatever he is commanded to the best of his ability, including combat.<sup>126</sup> Indeed, Scripture clearly teaches that mature courage in warfare is distinctly a gift of God to those who trust in Him,<sup>127</sup> and in the Lord's exhortation to the sons of Israel when Joshua took command of their army there is a clear linkage between true godliness and courage in a military undertaking.<sup>128</sup> In one of the more remarkable events in the history of God's chosen people, when Joshua speaks to them immediately after being appointed to the office of commander-in-chief by the Lord Himself, the people respond with a collective exhortation to Joshua to "be strong and courageous!"<sup>129</sup>

In the issue of courage and commitment as an indispensable requirement of responsible soldiering, each individual so engaged is required to understand that his courage and strength is to come from the Lord, and nowhere else.<sup>130</sup> Nowhere is it more painfully obvious than in battle that the "arm of flesh" alone will fail.

Trusting in the Lord for his strength and courage, a soldier is protected from pride, from paralyzing fear, and from foolish presumption about his own capabilities. Of all the Biblical principles which apply universally to mankind, perhaps none applies so consistently as the Biblical warning about pride: "Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall."<sup>131</sup> Even pagan and ignorant, as well as sophisticated cultures, have recognized that excessive pride can mean the downfall of an individual or nation, and by virtue of its unique functions, dress, and role, the military profession has always been a fertile field in which the tares of pride could quickly take root and flourish. Thus, even though "pride" is perhaps the most stressed of all ideological and pedagogical notions in the U.S. forces, in the eyes of God the attitude of pride constitutes the greatest possible danger to a soldier. Trusting in the Lord's sufficiency alone is the only means of escape from this snare.

Once the ethically oriented soldier enters into battle, there are still Biblical guidelines and constraints which are to govern his conduct.



First, when an enemy is given the opportunity to surrender, and does, then he is to be treated with a degree of mercy (i.e. he should be taken prisoner, vice being slain, although his goods may still be confiscated).<sup>132</sup> Conversely, if he refuses surrender, then he may be killed in battle without any violation of God's moral law.

When an enemy is defeated and taken prisoner, he is to be treated in a non-barbaric fashion, but at the same time he should not become the object of sentimental forgiveness that blurs the combatant status while the war is in progress. Because wicked king Ahab (of Israel) was excessively tolerant in his treatment of his cruel adversary, the Syrian king Ben-hadad, God sent a prophet to Ahab to inform him that he would forfeit his life for his foolish snatching of defeat from the jaws of a God-given victory.<sup>133</sup> In other words, prisoners of war are to be treated as such, not tortured, but not pampered either.

Whether in peace or war, soldiers are to confine their acts of military violence to enemy combatants. Civilians are not to be cruelly treated or unnecessarily killed, and even in peacetime a soldier is obligated to behave circumspectly among the civilian populace.<sup>134</sup> Warfare is a terrible, "demoralizing" activity by almost any standard, and its very nature of violence, death, pain and horror can numb the conscience of the best of men. Understanding this, one can perhaps appreciate more the gracious

wisdom of God in making provision for this great difficulty in requiring a disciplined life style for soldiers, even in peacetime. Hence, conduct of the military persons among civilians assumes a major importance for the long term benefit of soldiers, and should not be slighted by a discerning commander for any reason.

So concerned is the Almighty for a disciplined approach to the severe problems of combat that He even gave explicit commands concerning the treatment of the environment during battle:

When you besiege a city a long time, to make war against it in order to capture it, you shall not destroy its trees by swinging an axe against them; for you may eat from them, and you shall not cut them down. For is the tree of the field a man, that it should be besieged by you?

Only the trees which you know are not fruit trees you shall destroy and cut down, that you may construct siegeworks against the city that is making war with you until it falls.<sup>135</sup>

Needless destruction of food bearing, hence, life-supporting resources is not to be considered, even if they would have a high, short term utility cost and an immediate value in a tactical crisis. The long term price of lost resources and diminished sense of restraint would be too high, even for the victors.

The use of stratagems and deception is also explicitly permitted in Scripture--though only in the context of warfare. In the Exodus passage, celebrated because of its apparently contradictory ethics (contradictory, it might be noted, only for those who cannot grasp

the Biblical distinction between the requirements for personal morality and the ethical principles governing a nation in a state of war), we find the Lord declared as richly blessing the two Hebrew midwives who refused to kill the Israelite male babies at Pharoah's command.<sup>136</sup> They accomplished this by lying to Pharoah. It is impossible to explain how a righteous God could countenance such conduct except by a wartime contingency--as was the case.

In a similar vein, Joshua used deception very effectively in several of the battles of the Canaan campaign, as did other great commanders throughout the history of Judah and Israel. A kind of subset of strategy and deception is the gathering of substantive intelligence about the enemy. And this too is unequivocally mandated in Scripture. The most celebrated instance of this is the group of twelve spies who were sent out by Moses to spy on the promised land.<sup>137</sup> It is enlightening that Scripture faithfully records God's severe judgment on an entire generation of adults (except Joshua and Caleb) because they, and 10 of the 12 spies, pessimistically and dishonestly slanted the intelligence which had been gathered.<sup>138</sup>

Gentlemen, even Christian gentlemen, do read other people's mail--in wartime.

Finally, it should be noted that a commanding officer bears the great responsibility for being honest with his men about the nature and threat of the enemy, for warning them to trust first and only in the Lord, and for warning them to acquit themselves like men in battle.



Perhaps the words of King Hezekiah, one of the greatest kings of Judah, are still one of the best examples of a godly balance between encouragement and warning to ones men:

Now when Hezekiah saw that Sennacherib had come and that he intended to make war on Jerusalem, he decided with his officers and his warriors to cut off the supply of water from the springs which were outside the city; and they helped him.

So many people assembled and stopped up all the springs and the stream which flowed through the region, saying, "Why should the kings of Assyria come and find abundant water?"

And he took courage and rebuilt all the wall that had been broken down, and erected towers on it, and built another outside wall, and strengthened Millo in the city of David, and made weapons and shields in great number.

And he appointed military officers over the people, and gathered them to him in the square at the city gate, and spoke encouragingly to them, saying, "Be strong and courageous, do not fear or be dismayed because of the king of Assyria, nor because of all the multitude which is with him; for the one with us is greater than the one with him. With him is only an arm of flesh, but with us is the Lord our God to help us and to fight our battles." And the people relied on the words of Hezekiah king of Judah.<sup>139</sup>

#### F. THE JUST WAR

Having examined the Biblical principles concerning statecraft, the right of governments to exist, the responsibility of governments to bear the sword for the protection of its citizens, the ethical principles constraining government's involvement in warfare and, finally, the moral behavior required of members of the

military, the question which remains to be addressed from a Biblical standpoint is, "What constitutes a just war?"

Because this issue has become so emotionally charged in the United States, it is appropriate to recall that the Biblical concept of a just war and the American traditional-humanist concept of a just war are very different indeed. In some points they are even antithetical --yet they are often confused.

While the first category of a just war is no longer possible (because there is no longer any earthly theocracy, and because direct, verbal, short term revelation ceased with the completion of the book of Revelation)<sup>140</sup>, a consideration of its nature should be included in order to clarify the underlying and valid ethical framework.

When God, Himself, usually through His prophets, ordered His people to go to war against a nation which had become intolerably wicked and idolatrous, in order to punish--or exterminate--them, obviously that war was just by every ethical standard of the Bible. Such a war was so just and righteous that failure to carry it out, precisely as God commanded, carried with it an extreme penalty. This, in fact, is what happened to King Saul when he failed to kill all the Amalekites and their animals as God had commanded. For this disobedience he lost his kingship and was confirmed in a reprobate status forever.<sup>141</sup>

Today, if anyone should claim (as was done in the Crusades) that he had been commissioned to undertake a

"holy war" against some "heathen" or "infidels," that individual would be acting contrary to Scripture. God no longer speaks by direct revelation to His people, He speaks through His inspired and authoritative Word. He no longer heads an earthly political theocracy, and His kingdom is "not of this world;" otherwise Jesus's servants would have fought on His behalf with weapons of warfare at the time of his arrest.<sup>142</sup> There are no more "holy" wars, nor can there be, until Christ returns at the head of the armies of heaven on the Day of Judgment.

The purposes of warfare since the second destruction of Jerusalem are more mundane, and yet the ethical principles of conduct required for those involved in their planning and/or execution have not changed. If we are willing to admit that God Himself saw fit to conduct His warfare against disobedient nations by means of His people, then we can better understand the nature and universality of warfare and, looking to His example and instructions, be preserved from moral decay when involved in combat.

The second order of justification for going to war is still Biblical, but not as a consequence of direct Divine verbal command. Rather, it results from the perception of, and response to, unmistakable jeopardy to a nation's existence. As suggested already, in the case of actual attack there is no longer any meaningful question about the threat, and a nation so abused is just, and justified in prosecuting a defensive war.



However, among ethical men those anguished souls concerned with warfare and related subjects have agonized over the most vexatious and difficult circumstances with respect to war between nations. This is the painful matter of a pre-emptive attack. It is ever justified? Can it be?

Charles Hodge, a great American theologian, in the section on War in his three-volume Systematic Theology, admits to this extreme difficulty, and allows the possibility of pre-emptive attack if a certain set of stringent criteria are met.

It is conceded that war is one of the most dreadful evils that can be inflicted on a people; that it involves the destruction of property and life; that it demoralizes both the victors and the vanquished; that it visits thousands of non-combatants with all the miseries of poverty, widowhood, and orphanage; and that it tends to arrest the progress of society in everything that is good and desirable. God overrules wars in many cases, as He does the tornado and the earthquake, to the accomplishment of His benevolent purposes, but this does not prove that war in itself is not a great evil. He makes the wrath of man to praise Him. It is conceded that wars undertaken to gratify the ambition, cupidity, or resentment of rulers or people, are unchristian and wicked. It is also conceded that the vast majority of the wars which have desolated the world have been unjustifiable in the sight of God and man. Nevertheless it does not follow from this that war in all cases is to be condemned.

This is proved because the right of self-defense belongs to nations as well as to individuals. Nations are bound to protect the lives and property of their citizens. If these are assailed by force, force may be rightfully used in their protection. Nations also have the right to defend their own existence. If that be endangered by the conduct of other nations, they have the natural right of self-protection. A war

may be defensive and yet in one sense aggressive. In other words, self-defense may dictate and render necessary the first assault. A man is not bound to wait until a murderer actually strikes his blow. It is enough that he sees undeniable manifestations of a hostile purpose. So a nation is not bound to wait until its territories are actually invaded and its citizens murdered, before it appeals to arms. It is enough that there is clear evidence on the part of another nation of an intention to commence hostilities. While it is easy to lay down the principle that war is justifiable only as a means of self-defense, the practical application of this principle is beset with difficulties. The least aggression on national property, or the slightest infringement of national rights, may be regarded as the first step toward national extinction, and therefore justify the most extreme measures of redress. A nation may think that a certain enlargement of territory is necessary to its security, and, therefore, that it has the right to go to war to secure it. So a man may say that a portion of his neighbour's farm is necessary to the full enjoyment of his own property, and therefore that he has the right to appropriate it to himself. It is to be remembered that nations are as much bound by the moral law as individual men; and therefore that what a man may not do in the protection of his own rights, and on the plea of self-defense, a nation may not do. A nation therefore is bound to exercise great forbearance, and to adopt every other available means of redressing wrongs, before it plunges itself and others into all the demoralizing miseries of war.<sup>143</sup>

The crucial touchstone and weakest point in Hodge's historically sound summary of Christian theology on the subject of war is what, exactly, constitutes "clear evidence on the part of another nation of an intention to commence hostilities." (my italics)

He is writing here about non-verbal as well as verbal communication (both rife with potential for misunderstanding and confusion) in the most drastic, sensitive and emotional of all issues in the lives of men and nations.

And he is talking about the highly individualistic issue of interpretation of what constitutes "clear" evidence.

What one side may perceive as clear evidence (colored by its own culture, history, battle order, etc., etc.) of hostile intent, another may see as only ordinary military and governmental behavior.

The discernment of intentions is the plague of international relations, especially in times of war, or pre-war tension, and history proves that the intentions of one government are rarely perceived with exactitude by another. The variables which affect the outworking of intentions are endless, and there exists no system of analysis for even identifying all of them, much less assessing correctly the relative significance of their multiple interrelationships. Assessment of correct intention in the matter of possible warfare, is beyond human capabilities for all practical purposes. Obviously, the problem must be approached from a different direction.

Parenthetically, any warning about assessment of intentions must not be to foster disregard or disinterest in the vital problem of intentions. Rather, in a proper concern for ethical behavior of a government at a time of impending warfare, this warning note should stimulate careful assessment in other areas as well. Discovery of enemy battle order and evaluation of their combat hardware is vitally important for carrying out such duties responsibly.



In the late 1930's, there was intense and widespread debate about Nazi Germany's intentions. It is sobering to realize that this debate was singularly unsuccessful in preparing the European community for the reality of Hitlerite aggression. The observable fact of the rearmament of Germany was first ignored by the media and government leaders, then suppressed as long as possible, and finally admitted when it was too late to recover national strength.

A nation then, has a responsibility to honestly and soberly monitor the military capabilities of its neighbors. An increase in arms acquisition should be faced as a reality which may significantly change the balance and relationship between the countries. Pre-emptive attack is still not justified unless, of course, the arming nation states clearly that it has hostile intentions. This is sufficiently rare, however, to be non-normative. Besides, such a declaration of intent is regarded in international law as the equivalent of a declaration of war, and within the framework of that law code any nation which becomes the object of such a declaration would be justified in going to war, including preparation of the means for a pre-emptive attack.

The more usual situation is for an aggressor nation to attempt concealment of its hostile intentions, and often this has been fairly successful. But the very scope and nature of modern mechanical, technologically sophisticated warfare is such that full concealment in the final stages

of preparation for an attack becomes difficult, if not impossible. Germany's elaborate preparations for the invasion of the U.S.S.R. are a classic example of this phenomenon. That Stalin and members of his power elite could not--or refused to--read correctly these multitudinous signals is beside the point. Certainly Stalin would have been justified in pre-emptively attacking the Wermacht forces in Poland once the latter's preparations became obvious, intense, sustained and directional.

The ethical issue in focus has to do with the difficult, yet necessary, business of "reading evidence." The same Lord who warned men against judging the hearts of others<sup>144</sup> in the severest of terms also commanded all men to evaluate behavior (especially of leaders) wisely, and against Biblical standards.<sup>145</sup> We cannot judge the thoughts and intents of the heart of another as God can, but we can and must be involved in a continual process of evaluation of behavioral evidence. In other words, both personally and corporately, we must diligently strive to distinguish between unfounded judgments and necessary conclusions based upon careful observation and analysis of verbal and non-verbal evidence.

Once a decision to act is made, the accountability before God for the integrity, Biblicity and care of that decision rests with the decision maker. Properly appreciated, it can act as a powerful restraint upon premature decisions or rash judgments in a time of national

peril, while not shutting the door to intelligent response to correctly perceived threat. There is a clear analogy here to the individual who decides that his government is forcing him to do something unbiblical, thereby permitting him to resist the lawful authorities. The onus is entirely upon that individual (evidentially and Biblically) to demonstrate the reality of the governmental sin, and failure to do so will bring him God's most severe wrath. Direct accountability to God Himself--if believed--constitutes the profoundest and most effective restraint upon needlessly aggressive behavior or premature military action.

Ultimately, there is no way for national leaders to avoid the necessity of collective personal judgments and intuitions about a perceived threat. The key question is whether the perceptions, conclusions and decisions resolved have been accomplished in as Biblical an attitude and way as possible. If such a concerted effort is not made, it is virtually certain that the decision to attack will not be considered "just" in the hindsight of history.

The institutional church has not always stood firmly and Scripturally on this issue, for in the early centuries of the New Testament Church, "there was a great disinclination to engage in military service, and the (church) fathers at times justified the reluctance by calling the lawfulness of all wars into question."<sup>146</sup> But is instructive to note that once the Roman Empire became Christian, and the cross had been substituted for the eagle in the



standards of the Army, the opposition from the church died away, "till at length we hear of fighting prelates, and of military orders of monks."<sup>147</sup>

Likewise, the architects of the Reformation saw that there was a Biblical theology of warfare, and consistent with that understanding, not a single confession of the Reformation declared all war to be unlawful. The Augsburg Confession expressly stated that it was proper for Christians to act as magistrates and, among other things, to conduct war, etc.

It has been only in the last seventy-five to a hundred years that a large segment of the visible church has swung back, once again, to a pacifist position. In pagan Rome the objections of early Christians arose mostly out of the fear of serving in an army that was being used to persecute the Christian church. This reason, at least, could be argued Biblically from the principle forbidding participation in that which suppresses the preaching of the gospel. Today, the ecclesiastical justification for pacifism is nowhere so near to a Scriptural position as was that of the early church fathers, but rests entirely on humanistic presuppositions. It is surely no accident that the rise of this kind of thinking paralleled the rise of speculative and skeptical theology.

For a war to be just, then, it must be entered upon for the right reasons, and conducted in the right way. It must be countenanced only for causes legitimized in the

Bible, and it must be carried out within the ethical framework laid down there. To admit of any lesser set of standards, however appealing to the twentieth century humanistic intellect, is to attempt to remove the matter from the sacred authority of God Himself. Of all things a mortal can do, this is the most foolish and sinful, when one considers that all men shall stand before God at the end of time to account for what they have done in the flesh.

The theme of a just war is really a subset of a whole ethical theory of statecraft found in Scripture. As noted earlier, the American doctrine of the just war has rigorously sought (artificially) to separate war from the other means and instruments of national policy. The result has been an incredible system of contradictory notions attempting to both repudiate and justify war in a totally inadequate philosophical context. Not surprisingly the results have been chaotic for the United States in the seventies.

The determination then, of whether a war can be, or is, just must begin long before such a war takes place. The decision can ethically be made only if leaders hold to an intellectually honest realism concerning the nature of man, and the Biblical responsibility incumbent upon politicians to discharge their evaluative and decision making processes in submission to the ethical standards set down in God's word. Nations, and national leaders, even in their collective

role, do not cease to labor under the behavioral accountability before God that applies to individuals, insofar as the methodology of their own personal dynamics are concerned in the larger process of statecraft. Only with this kind of ethical stature, will they be in a position to exercise the responsible and sensitive discernment necessary in attempting collectively and responsibly to determine adversary intentions and capabilities vis-a-vis the national interests of the state they serve.

Certainly, the ethical nation is at an apparent "disadvantage," compared to the ruthless dictatorship or ruling oligarchy, in the matter of starting the war. It is more difficult for a responsible military planner to prepare mainly for defensive war, and to be constrained in taking the initiative, if that is justified. It is more difficult to concern ourselves with the question of how ought men to make the political decision in the areas of foreign policy and military affairs rather than what a particular decision should be in a given situation or crisis. It is more difficult to clarify the theological and philosophical grounds upon which men should make judgments about the justness of war and preparations for a just war, than to try to fit a set of contradictory and simplistic slogans to each new test of national will on an ad hoc basis. In short, it is much more difficult to think carefully than to act--to do something, anything, once a crisis occurs. Yet, a nation which so disciplines itself



(thereby avoiding aggrandizing behavior towards its neighbors) without retreating to sentimental pacifism under the guise of "pure" defense, will be richly blessed of God in the end. As with nearly everything laid down in Scripture for the benefit of mankind, the best way is seldom the easiest. Indeed, it is usually the hardest in the short term, but over time proves to have been by far the wisest, and most blessed.

Twenty-five years ago, in a speech in Washington, D.C., Thomas E. Murray succinctly captured the very essence of this historic Christian (and Biblical) view of war--and our present day loss of that perspective:

The Christian effort at peace-making, from its origin, undertook the task of civilizing warfare. It set itself against pacifism: the notion that war is always immoral. But it set itself even more strongly against barbarism: the notion that the use of armed force is not subject to any moral restraints. Against these two extremes tradition asserts that war can be a moral action, but only if it is limited in its purposes and methods by the norms of justice.

The fact today is that the Christian tradition of civilized warfare has been ruptured. The chief cause of the rupture has been the doctrine of total war fought to total victory: the kind of victory that looks to the total ruin of the enemy nation. This doctrine of totalization of war represents a regression toward barbarism. It is contrary to the central assertion of the civilized tradition that the aims of war are limited, and the use of force in war is likewise limited, not merely by political and military counsels of expediency, but primarily by the moral principle of justice.<sup>148</sup>

In an imperfect world sin cannot be eliminated. But its worst effects can be minimized and controlled, if the means and purposes used to do so are consistent with God's

word. Hence, the assumption of perfectibility, or of the capacity to eradicate what God has declared will not disappear from the present order, is to contradict arrogantly the Almighty Himself, and set ourselves up for disaster. For God to bless our efforts in any scale of endeavor, our motives, methods and goals must be brought into conformity to His word, at least to the extent that such an effort is seriously made. Hence, to attempt to eliminate war is to undertake a utopian effort that will end in certain tragedy and frustration. To minimize and limit warfare through ethical statecraft is to accept humbly the non-negotiable parameters which God Himself has set upon human existence--and thereby to be blessed with mercy, wisdom, and providential direction for good.

# FOOTNOTES

32. Friedrich Ernst Daniel Schleiermacher (1768-1834), Ferdinand Christian Baur (1792-1860), Albrecht Ritschl (1822-1889), Julius Welhausen (1844-1918), and Adolf von Harnack (1851-1930) are the German philosophers and theologians who were the principal architects of this school of thought.
33. These typically included such declarations as, "The Bible is full of error. The Bible contradicts itself. The God of the Old Testament is a God of vengeance but the God of the New Testament is a God of love. The Bible is just a collection of myths. Everyone has his own interpretation," ad infinitum.
34. Usually translated "inspired by God" in older versions.
35. II Timothy 3:16.
36. II Peter 1:21.
37. Approximately 95%.
38. Such as the nature of heaven or hell; and the relationship of faith and works.
39. In the nature of the case, then, inspiration extends only to the original manuscripts of Scripture. Since these manuscripts were inspired they were free from error. The originals are lost and we are today in possession only of copies, copies which contain textual errors and difficulties that no serious Christian can afford to ignore. These copies, however, do give the actual Word of God. No point of doctrine has been affected. The doctrine shines before us in all its purity. Why God was not pleased to preserve the original copies of the Bible, we do not know. Perhaps, in His infinite wisdom, He did not wish us to bow down to these manuscripts as unto images. Perhaps their preservation would have reflected one's attention from their message. One thing at least is clear. In His mysterious providence, God has preserved His Word. We do not have a Bible which is unreliable and glutted with error, but one that in most wondrous fashion presents the Word of God and the text of the original.

Edward J. Young, Thy Word is Truth, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1957, p. 61.



40. Editorial Board of the Lockman Foundation, Creation House, Inc., Carol Stream, Illinois, 1960.
41. II Timothy 2:15: Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, handling accurately the word of truth.
- I Timothy 5:17: Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who work hard at preaching and teaching.
42. The Reformers believed the Bible to be the inspired Word of God. But, however strict their conception of inspiration, they conceived of it as organic rather than mechanical. In certain particulars, they even revealed a remarkable freedom in handling Scriptures. At the same time, they regarded the Bible as the highest authority, and as the final court of appeal in all theological disputes. Over against the infallibility of the Church they placed the infallibility of the Word. Their position is perfectly evident from the statement that the Church does not determine what the Scriptures teach, but the Scriptures determine what the Church ought to teach. The essential character of their exegesis resulted from two fundamental principles: (1) Scriptura Scripturae interpres, that is, Scripture is the interpreter of Scripture; and (2) omnis intellectus ac expositio Scripturae sit analogia fidei, that is, let all understanding and exposition of Scripture be in conformity with the analogy of faith. And for them the analogia fidei=the analogia Scripturae, that is, the uniform teaching of Scripture.
- L. Berkhof, B.D., Principles of Biblical Interpretation, Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1964, p. 26.
43. The first five books of the Bible (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy).
44. Genesis 1:26-28.
45. Genesis 9:5,6.
46. Exodus 21: 12-17.
47. **רָצַח** (ratsach) means to murder or pierce, as opposed to **שָׁחַט** (shachat) which means to kill, or slaughter, Young's Analytical Concordance to the Bible, W. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1975, p. 563.

48. John 18:36a.
49. Luke 20:19-26.
50. Matthew 5:17-18; John 18:33-38; 19:9-11.
51. Romans 13:1,2,6,7.
52. Matthew 22:21.
53. Deuteronomy 7:15, 17-10.
54. John Calvin, On God and Political Duty, The Liberal Arts Press, New York, 1950, p. 50.
55. Deuteronomy 1:16, 17.
56. II Chronicles 19:6,7.
57. Matthew 15:7-9.
58. Exodus 3:14: And God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM;" and He said, "Thus you shall say to the sons of Israel, I AM has sent me to you."
- John 8:58: Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, I AM."
- Psalms 46:10: Cease striving and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth.
- Isaiah 44:6: Thus says the Lord, the King of Israel and his Redeemer, the Lord of Hosts: "I am the first and I am the last, and there is no God besides Me."
59. Exodus 15:3.
60. Revelation 19:11-16.
61. Matthew 10:34.
62. Luke 2:14.
63. John 3:16-18.
64. Romans 8:7.
65. James 4:4.
66. Romans 5:10.
67. Matthew 24:6,7.

68. cf. Isaiah 48:22; 57:19-21; Jeremiah 4:10; 6:14; 8:11; Ezekiel 7:25; 13:10.
69. Jeremiah 6:13, 14, 15.
70. Ibid.
71. Hebrews 4:14, 15.
72. Both verbal and non-verbal behavior which violated God's written commandments.
73. John 4:5-18.
74. Luke 19:1-10.
75. Matthew 23:1-36.
76. Matthew 16:16-20.
77. John 18:36.
78. Luke 14:27, 31-32.
79. Proverbs 20:18.
80. Proverbs 24:6.
81. Ecclesiastes 3:8.
82. Matthew 8:5-13.
83. Luke 3:7-8a, 10, 14.
84. Acts 10.
85. To deal with his own ethnocentric biases.
86. Who is the father of all those who believe in God unto salvation (Galatians 3:6-8).
87. II Timothy 2:2-3.
88. Acts 5:29.
89. cf. II Peter 2; especially verse 10.
90. Exodus 20:2.
91. Habakkuk 1:13.
92. Luke 14:31-32.
93. Proverbs 20:18.



94. Proverbs 24:6.
95. Proverbs 11:14.
96. Proverbs 15:22.
97. Proverbs 1:25-33.
98. Deuteronomy 32:28-30.
99. Psalm 33:8-12.
100. Isaiah 19:1-4.
101. Isaiah 47:13.
102. Jeremiah 19:3-8: and say, "Hear the word of the Lord, O kings of Judah and in habitants of Jerusalem: Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, 'Behold I am about to bring a calamity upon this place, at which the ears of everyone that hears of it will tingle. Because they have foresaken Me and have made this an alien place and have burned sacrifices in it to other gods that neither they nor their forefathers nor the kings of Judah had ever know, and because they have filled this place with the blood of the innocent and have built the high places of Baal to burn their sons in the fire as burnt offerings to Baal, a thing which I never commanded or spoke of, nor did it ever enter My mind; therefore, behold, days are coming,' declares the Lord, 'when this place will no longer be called Topheth or the valley of Ben-Hinnom, but rather the valley of Slaughter.
- 'And I shall make void the counsel of Judah and Jerusalem in this place, and I shall cause them to fall by the sword before their enemies and by the hand of those who seek their life, and I shall give over their carcasses as food for the birds of the sky and the beasts of the earth. I shall also make this city a desolation and an object of hissing, everyone who passes by it will be astonished and hiss because of all its disasters.'"
103. Ezekiel 7:1-28; 11:1-12.
104. Ecclesiastes 9:18, Matthew 16:52.
105. II Samuel 10:1-7.
106. II Chronicles 25:17-20.
107. Leviticus 26:14-20, 23-25; Proverbs 16:18, 29:23; Jeremiah 48:25-30, 35.

108. Psalm 7:3-5; Jeremiah 9:7-9.
109. I Kings 20:1-21.
110. Judges 3:12-30.
111. Judges 7:1-22.
112. II Samuel 5:17-25.
113. I Kings 20:34.
114. Numbers 20:14-20.
115. Numbers 21:21-35.
116. Judges 11:12-28.
117. Exodus 23:31-33; Deuteronomy 7:1-2.
118. Psalm 2:7-12; Psalm 22:27-18; Psalm 67:2-5; Psalm 94-10.
119. Joshua 9:3-10:20.
120. Romans 13:1-4.
121. Romans 13:5-7.
122. II Timothy 2:3-4.
123. Psalm 68:28b; 30d.
124. Proverbs 17:5b.
125. Matthew 26:52.
126. I Chronicles 19:10-13; Colossians 3:23-24.
127. Psalm 60:9-12, Psalm 108:10-13.
128. Joshua 1:1-9.
129. Joshua 1:18c.
130. Psalm 60:9-12, Psalm 108:10-13.
131. Proverbs 16:18.
132. Deuteronomy 20:10-18.
133. I Kings 20:28-43.
134. Luke 3:14.

- 135. Deuteronomy 20:19-20.
- 136. Exodus 1:15-21.
- 137. cf. Numbers 13:1-33.
- 138. cf Numbers 14:1-45.
- 139. II Chronicles 32:2-8.
- 140. Revelation 22:18-19.
- 141. I Samuel 15:1-29.
- 142. John 18:36.
- 143. Charles Hodge, D.D., Systematic Theology, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1952, (First published 1872), pp. 365-366.
- 144. Matthew 7:1-5.
- 145. Matthew 7:15-20.
- 146. Hodge, p. 867.
- 147. Hodge, p. 869.
- 148. Thomas E. Murray, "Morality and Security: The Forgotten Equation," Morality and Modern Warfare, Baltimore, Helican Press, 1960, p. 58.



## V. CONCLUSION

There is a growing crisis in the U.S. national domestic and foreign policy at the highest levels of government. The most immediate and dangerous aspect of this crisis is the strategic nuclear situation, wherein the American defense posture has eroded so badly that we are decidedly inferior to the Russians with respect to conventional, as well as strategic weapons. Furthermore, we appear to be less and less able or willing to act decisively in the international arena, and lack a workable philosophy for charting and implementing a recovery of U.S. national purpose and foreign policy initiative. In 1978 a spectrum of ominous signals has been received from a number of allied and non-aligned countries indicating that they view America as having fallen from its position of leadership of the free world, and as unable to recover its former momentum. One highly placed U.S. governmental official is reported to have stated recently, "nothing works anymore."

The central hypothesis of this study is that our current serious and complex dilemma is not the fault of inexorable fate, or international circumstances beyond our control. Rather, the vexatious foreign policy and defense problems with which we struggle are the predictable (certainly not surprising) and inevitable consequences of profoundly significant choices made seventy-five to a

hundred years ago. Furthermore these choices had a demonstrably common heritage, which was the substitution of western, secularized humanism for a Biblical-theological cosmology. These choices, with increasingly awesome effects since World War II, were made in every important area of American life. Theology was dethroned as the Queen of the Sciences, and replaced by the god of presumed chance in the new religion of scientism. No longer were men required to undertake their technological discoveries and applications in the service of their Creator, and accountable to Him. Rather, man became accountable only to mankind in the abstract, and he discovered that mankind has created not only a monster out of control, but also that he made a miserably ineffective god as well, especially in controlling and using that technology for lasting good.

In public education the purpose changed radically from building character and imparting wisdom, as the two most vital aspects of knowledge, to that of simply acquiring facts. Thanks in large measure to the archetypal false prophet John Dewey, all the horrendous problems of mankind (poverty, war, disease, social unrest, etc.) came to be regarded as appurtenant consequences of ignorance. If only enough people could be given sufficient education, man's social problems would largely disappear, and mankind would realize the new millenium. With the cavalier discard of the Biblical doctrine of sin, man lost his ability to understand himself, and public education became

a mighty instrument for ideological utopianism, social degeneracy, and individual corruption. We forgot that an educated scoundrel was far more dangerous to society than an ignorant one, and that knowledge without character, integrity, self-discipline and a clear sense of accountability to a higher authority becomes fatal to the society which holds it to its bosom.

Perhaps the greatest betrayal of all took place in the institutional churches as ministers and theologians began, first, to question the historical trustworthiness, authority and supernatural origin of the Bible, and ended by discarding it entirely, while still retaining the outward form of the church of the Lord Jesus Christ. The consequences for America were severe. The social gospel of the here-and-now raised false expectations of the perfectibility of man (indeed becoming the philosophical seedbed of the vast social welfare legislation in the 1950-60's), and diverted men's attention from a God to Whom they would someday have to give account for their deeds in the flesh. With the denial of afterlife, of judgment, of heaven and hell, all the spiritual constraints which for centuries seemed to limit the iniquity of men were basically lost, and America entered a period of moral looseness and self-indulgence unprecedented in history. In addition, the institutional church lost its credibility as the standard of ethical discernment, often being in the very forefront of each new scandalous degeneracy, with the result that it



became simply irrelevant to the American people, and frequently an object of contempt.

In politics, ethical conduct gave way to morality by assumed consensus, and since then has proved to be an elusive commodity to pin down. The primary determinant of political decision making has come to be whatever each legislator and politician "feels," at that moment, will best serve to get him re-elected. As politicians are seen by the public to be less and less ethical, and more willingly corrupted, they are increasingly despised by the electorate, while they pander to the public that scorns them in order to gain votes at election time. In return they scorn those they are elected to serve. The public has become cynical about the government, and is willing, as never before, to "use" the government (which in turn is taxing it into financial ruin) to provide for its every need. There has been developed a vicious cycle of mutual negative reinforcement, with each segment contributing to the degeneracy of the other.

In the field of foreign policy, we have long since set aside any pretense of mature statecraft, for that demands a mature and realistic assessment of man's nature. Our founding fathers believed the Biblical truth of sin, and accordingly designed a marvellously wise system of balanced government, based directly on the New Testament structure of (republican) church government. But we have declared ourselves wiser than they and, having set aside a more

humble picture of man, have put in its place the new self-made man whose heart, as well as his feet, is made of clay. Perfectible, evolved and evolving man must continually reassure himself that he is getting better all the time. Our particularly superficial and self-centered interpretation of history demands the rigid maintenance of a view of ourselves that is both messianic and self-righteous, and we feel not only a deep compulsion to force our (bankrupt) philosophy down the throats of our international neighbors, but at the same time lust after every crumb of approval from them, real or imagined. Because we no longer believe in the gracious acceptance of a forgiving God who mercifully adopts those who trust in Him, we are frantic in our efforts to find, and force, evidence that we are loved, for if we are not loved, we cannot sustain the fiction that we are "good" and hence worthy of being loved. If ever the tail could be said to be wagging the dog, it is surely to be seen in the spectacle of a great nation prostituting its awesome potential and opportunity for intelligent and wise leadership in a chaotic world for the pathetic crumbs of the imagined (but short term and self-destructive) advantage of being "liked." The irony is redoubled when we realize that we struggle most for signals of approval from our enemies (for if we get them, then we can know we are successful in our search for the unholy grail of messianic populism) while at the same time doing everything short of outright hostility to

alienate our best allies. In all probability the genesis of our discomfort and contempt of countries like Rhodesia, Korea, and South Africa is that they possess a sense of national purpose--however misguided according to our lights--which we no longer possess. And the implied rebuke in that is too much to bear. After all, denying the truth about ourselves is what this is all about.

In the broadest of terms, the seat of our problems is not in public policy, not in technology, not in defense, not in education, It is in the realm of the spiritual and philosophical. Furthermore, it is going to be difficult beyond description to correct, for the collective runoff of untruth over a century has built a flash flood momentum that only the power and grace of Almighty God Himself can reverse. It will be difficult to correct, because the changes needed must take place in men's souls as well as in men's minds--and it is hard to convince men of the importance of this when many deny that man even has a soul! We have, in almost every way, rejected God and His Word, and with that the national and personal blessing which came to those who love Him. Scripture indicates that when a people persistently reject him, in time God will reject them. Since any nation is saved from destruction, in the last analysis, only by His grace and forbearance, when that grace is removed destruction is inevitable, unless that nation repents.



Lest we retreat into despair, it is well to remember that there have been several occasions in history when God was pleased to halt the process of social and moral decay in a nation, and restore it to a condition of grace. England, in the days of John Wesley and George Whitfield had sunk into such deep moral depravity and social decay that the historical accounts by English writers of that day read like present day descriptions of gangster life in New York City. Yet, within a few short years, primarily through the instrumentality of the thoroughly Biblical preaching of these two men, England underwent a breathtaking transformation. In a few short years there was a recovery of national purpose, a sharp drop in crime, the churches were filled and preaching became Biblical, family life was strengthened and profound improvements in social manners took place. And England went on to the greatest period of all in her history. Her decay in the twentieth century came only with her turning away once again from those spiritual principles which had made her great.

On one occasion Queen Victoria was asked by a high ranking foreign diplomat to what she attributed England's greatness. She turned, pointed to a copy of the Bible, and said, "that book."

Since the huge problems faced by our country are not, in the last analysis, technical they cannot be solved by technical means. For a people who have made technological materialism a substitute gospel, that is a bitter pill to swallow, but it must be swallowed if we are to survive.

The problem it might be said, is a "people problem" and its solution will escape us if we try to use the methods of a shallow system that has totally and demonstrably failed to give to America a philosophy that will work in the latter half of the twentieth century.

The only solution to this cancer in the body politic is radical surgery. Piecemeal solutions have failed and will fail. Trying to perfect new methodologies will not work, nor will better studies of the myriad aspects of the problem. Neither will appeasement, or trying to be "nice," domestically or in our foreign affairs. Increased education is not the answer, nor is more money or programs. Historically, there has been only one means that has ever been successful in national recovery, and that has been a return to truth, particularly the truth of God's Word. No other surgery will work, and we are a textbook example of trying every other way under the sun only to come, as now, to frustration and bitterness that our methods have not worked. Our false prophets have proclaimed, "Peace, peace" when there was no peace, and have "healed the hurts of God's people slightly." Unless we are willing to once again listen to the voice of our Creator in His Word, and turn our back on the false prophets leading us to destruction, the hope of national recovery is non-existent.

How then is this to be done? It is to this all important matter that we must now turn our attention.

## VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

"and if My people who are called by My name humble themselves and pray, and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.<sup>149</sup>

One of the most common failings in the preaching of those called to the redemptive evangelism of Jesus Christ has been to declare, often with force and repetition, what God's people should do, without telling them how to do it. As the institutional church in North America became more secularized and as the political and academic communities became more religious, the church took on some of the worse characteristics of the world, and the world took on some of the worst characteristics of the church. Today, political "preachers" tell us what we should to but not how to do it, in ways very reminiscent of their ecclesiastical counterparts. The observation was made earlier that secular methods in our government are no longer working well in a world going awry. And a tried recipe for debilitating frustration and despair is to be presented with severe problems, hand in hand with warnings that solutions are urgently needed, and yet be given no substantive solutions or, piecemeal suggestions that constitute little more than sophisticated "patching up" of crises.

What is to be done then? Certainly, problems in our strategic and foreign policy of the magnitude we face at



the end of the 1970's demand solutions that are more than mere bandaging if we are to survive this century as a nation. Furthermore, those solutions, if they come, cannot, and will not, be technological. They cannot be military, and certainly won't be academic or scholarly. They cannot be economic or even sociological. For the heart of the problem is in our souls, not in our methods, even though our methodological problems constitute symptoms that are significant and severe. The solution must address the problem where it begins.

How then can recovery from such deep and widespread social malaise be accomplished without consuming endless amounts of time?

Even as the theological approach alone provides a testable means of understanding our problems that has never failed, so only Biblical theology will provide a solution that will not betray us in the end. That Scriptural plan for recovery is straightforward and practical, and it comes in two distinct dimensions. The preeminent dimension is the theological, for theology alone provides a framework of principle for the application of methods to prevent confusion and provide guidance in battle. The other dimension concerns the submissive application of these restorative truths in the various areas of our national life according to Biblical guidelines, and not the methods of psychology, sociology, or any other humanistic system.

The cornerstone of recovery can be found in Christ's declaration to the religious leaders of Israel who were leading that nation to utter destruction even as they exulted in their intellectual sophistication, despising the simple folk they governed.<sup>150</sup>

It is so straightforward as to be potentially repugnant to a society that prides itself on its sophistication. Yet it forms the principal basis of all Christ's redemptive work.

If you abide in My Word, then you are truly disciples of Mine; and you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. . . If therefore the Son shall make you free, you shall be free indeed.<sup>151</sup>

Freedom from bondage, especially the bondage of sin we impose upon ourselves by our intellectual fantasies and philosophical dishonesties, can come only from the truths of God's Word. All else must be subordinate to that. In the case of natural recovery, which we so desperately need, we must return to God's truth as it deals with our own sinful nature, with the social consequences of sinful nature unrestrained by Biblical truths, with the basis upon which God will intervene on behalf of those who seek Him, and with the means ordained by God.

But where does one start when even the existence of God, or at least His relevance or knowability, is rejected by a majority of citizens? The start still must be with a careful, compassionate and yet honest and full declaration of the truths from Scripture.

For the person with honest doubts about the value or efficacy of such an approach, the historical record of Jonah's experience in calling the great city of Nineveh to repentance is suggested as a fit subject for prayerful meditation. Jonah did not even want to go to Nineveh, much less preach there, but after being singularly chastened by the Lord he dutifully went--albeit reluctantly. Upon reaching Nineveh he began to declare God's threatened destruction of the city; that the Lord would shortly punish it for its wicked ways unless the people repented. In one of the more remarkable "turnarounds" in all history, within a few hours of hearing Jonah's message the whole city, from the King to the least of the beggars, humbled themselves in sackcloth and ashes, repented of their sins, sought God's forgiveness, and the city was spared. Perhaps Jonah's pique at this turn of events can be explained in part by one's natural (sinful) disappointment at missing the spectacle of some great pyrotechnic disaster, and in part by his knowledge that his own countrymen, the chosen race of Israel, had not shown such tenderness of heart toward the Lord's admonitions for over a millenium.

How then is this principle to be applied in the public and private lives of twentieth century Americans who wouldn't know sackcloth or its significance if they were dressed it in? To put the matter another way, what is the Biblical strategy for recovery?



The application of Biblical teachings concerning the implications of our sinful nature, the principles of responsible statecraft and the standards for societal harmony must be focused with a compassionate eye upon the role of the recipients. A politician or Congressman has a far more immediate and urgent need for understanding the principles of statecraft than does a housewife in Kansas. But the housewife nonetheless has an equal need with the politician to understand something of human nature in order to know herself, to understand human behavior, to vote intelligently, and to communicate with her federal and state representatives in a way that can help them govern more responsibly.

The place to begin to attack the problem (not the people having the problem) is to discover those who have a "listening ear" within the decision-making elite in and out of the Federal government structure. Men and women who sincerely desire reform, and who are willing to participate in reform even if it is personally costly, are the brightest hope for intersecting the influence of Biblical truth with the American system. There is abundant evidence that a hunger exists among many, even in governmental circles, for a "better way." Consider the tremendous interest and recent involvement of the U.S. government in tolerating and supporting the propagation of transcendental meditation, which is simply ancient pagan Hinduism simplified and secularized for the twentieth century American palate.

It is a false system, and yet is received gladly by thousands looking for more meaning in life than that provided by the cold gospel of materialism. The start of recovery must be a proclamation of this new Biblical epistemology (which is really very old) to any who will listen, and no effort should be spared in patiently teaching and assisting any who indicate a genuine desire to learn and to understand.

The focus of such an effort should not be just these individuals themselves, but also upon their potential for effecting change. God always has used the instrumentality of very tiny minorities to guide and stimulate great transformations for the better, and that wonderfully encouraging truth holds true today. It has been said, "God, plus one, is a majority." The recovery effort then should be to identify and instruct those who are sufficiently committed to learning (theological) truth and who are willing to use that truth in confronting and challenging others. If some of the advisors of the President could come from such a reservoir of strength, or sip from it, it is entirely possible that President Carter could move from his role of timid appeaser and uncertain hunter of a workable public philosophy. In a sense, it is all too evident that he does not (and apparently cannot) see the Presidency in its most fundamental essence. That is that the President can and should function as a national

"teacher," and explain to Americans the domestic and foreign actions of our government in terms that teach them to participate more meaningfully in their democratic system of government.

The Biblical truth must be spoken in a spirit of mature and disciplined redemptive love.<sup>152</sup> It should contain two distinct elements. The first must speak directly to the issue of humanism's failure, to point out why sociological and psychological methods have failed. Until people are made profoundly uncomfortable with their present interpretive "system," they are seldom open to listening to the claims of another. Where there is evidence of this awareness, then the substantive alternate of Biblical theology should be offered, in both principle and application.

The office of the Presidency could effectively teach a vital Biblical truth. The simple public admission by the President, that we have been unrighteous and self-centered in our dealings with our neighbors, and that our public philosophy has blinded us to certain truths about ourselves, would be electrifying, even if not necessarily appreciated by many at first. The admission that we have turned our backs upon God would not only recapture a lost spirit of honesty, but encourage many to new reflection.

Sometimes the Lord allows men and nations to discover the emptiness of their own ways in the hard school of experience, and this may be true of us. Certainly men



have been much more receptive to hearing the healing truths of God's word when they perceive that they have come to the end of their own resources.

In England's darkest days during the Battle of Britain an event took place that is virtually forgotten and now very seldom mentioned. King George VI broadcast on the BBC to the English people. In that radio address he declared (or, if you will, confessed) the sins of his nation, asked Almighty God for forgiveness, and invited the people to join with him in petitioning God for mercy. Almost from that very hour Britain's position began to improve. It is as true today as in 1940, or as in the days of Nineveh, that God resists the proud, but is delighted in repentance, and pleased to forgive those who come before Him with humble and contrite hearts, seeking His gracious pardon.<sup>153</sup>

The honest admission of failure and repentance for the sins of pride, arrogance and intellectual independence will not be popular at first, and some of the strongest resistance to it will, in all probability, come from segments of the visible church. But it must be done, and if it is not, subsequent efforts to correct the problem will not be blessed. It is the writer's opinion that many Americans would receive such a declaration with profound relief; relief at being more honest, relief that we were turning away from the effort to be our own gods, relief from the intolerable burden of collective and individual guilt that

has continually grown as our sins and errors multiply. Because we are complex beings with mixed motives, it is even more certain that many would not initially "like" what they heard, even as they sense the relief that comes when we become honest about sin.

Once admission of our self-made misery has been made, the steps of national recovery must be taken in our churches, our school and university systems, in the business world, in our local communities, and in our personal lives as well as in the halls of the Federal government.

This process, beginning with repentance, must include a (Biblical) study of our nature, and its significance for society, a (Biblical) study of the basic behavior associated with recovery, and a study of the Biblical requirements for God's blessing on nation's and individuals.

The process of recovery, for an individual, or for individuals on behalf of their country, must include daily study of God's word, and prayer for His aid. Lest one be scornful and tempted to dismiss this as the height of unrealistic irrationality, we should remind ourselves of a common practice in the early years of our history, when our first elected officials possessed a spiritual vitality and vision of statecraft which seems almost legendary in light of today's frenetic bumbblings which sometimes pass for government leadership. Those State and Federal assemblies began their legislative sessions with Biblical

sermons by competent theologians on the duties and obligations of statesmen; to God, and to their constituents. These men were not ashamed to kneel down in those legislative halls, to pray together for God's help in carrying out their solemn responsibilities. To gain some insight into how far we have strayed from this marvellously upbuilding practice, one only needs to propose the effect, the consternation, the embarrassment, the uncertainty that would be experienced by many members of Congress if the President were to ask the legislators to get down on their knees with him, and with him pray for the forgiveness of our national sins! Many would think he had gone mad, and all kinds of special interest pressure groups and legalistic gurus would be enraged at such a violation of the current notion of separation of the church and state.

The scope of this thesis does not permit a detailed description of the steps for recovery in the many areas of our national life, should national and public repentance take place. But unless public confession and supplication does come to pass, those issues will remain irrelevant. The heart of the recommendation in this study is that the problem must be faced, confessed, and God's forgiveness sought before the day-to-day business of improving our statecraft, our balance of trade picture, our military posture, or anything else, can take place.

A final warning. Our problems are not primarily methodological. They are primarily theological. Changing



statecraft to a confident, gracious, consistent and firm undertaking from one of appeasement, vacillation and weakness is not even an issue of methods. It is an issue of attitudes, of motivation, and of our basic philosophy. Thus, gaining theological truth in place of anthropological error will in itself constitute the greatest and most powerful factor for change. Where men see the truth clearly, it is far easier to act in accordance with its precepts. When men admit that there is such a thing as absolute truth that can be known, because it comes from an Absolute God who speaks to us in history, it is far easier to act with confidence, for one does not need to endlessly agonize over each decision and choice. It is liberating to know that certain things are right because God says they are. It is certainly liberating, in a good sense of that old word, to know that it is morally justified for a nation to defend itself, and that if it defends itself in the manner and for the reasons God commands in His Word, then it does not need to fear that the justification of its actions will fail or its own moral disintegration result. It is immensely liberating to know that it is possible (by God's grace) to do right things without having achieved perfection, or the need to project such an (impossible) image.

May God, in His great mercy, grant us the eyes to see this before it is too late.

## FOOTNOTES

149. II Chronicles 7:14.

150. It is necessary to recall our general impression of Rabbinism: its conception of God, and of the highest good and ultimate object of all things, as concentrated in learned study, pursued in Academies; and then to think of the unmitigated contempt with which they were wont to speak of Galilee, and of the Galileans, whose very patois was an offence; of the utter abhorrence with which they regarded the unlettered country-people, in order to realize, how such a household as that of Joseph and Mary would be regarded by the leaders of Israel. A Messianic announcement, not the result of learned investigation, nor connected with the Academies, but in the Sanctuary, to a 'rustic' priest; an Elijah unable to untie the intellectual or ecclesiastical knots, of whose mission, indeed, this formed no part at all; and a Messiah, the offspring of a Virgin in Galilee betrothed to a humble workman--assuredly, such a picture of the fulfillment of Israel's hope could never have been conceived by contemporary Judaism. There was in such a Messiah absolutely nothing--past, present or possible, intellectually, religiously, or even nationally--to attract, but all to repel. And so we can, at the very outset of this history, understand the infinite contrast which it embodied--with all the difficulties to its reception, even to those who became disciples, as at almost every step of its progress they were, with every fresh surprise, recalled from all that they had formerly thought, to that which was so entirely new and strange.

Rev. Alfred Edersheim, The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah, Longmans, Green and Co., New York, 1906, Vol. I, pp. 144-145.

151. John 8:31b-32, 36.

152. Ephesians 4:14-16. As a result, we are no longer to be children tossed here and there by waves, and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming; but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him, who is the head, even Christ, from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by that which every joint supplies, according to the

proper working each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.

153. I John 1:9. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.



## VII. SPECULATION

"Whosoever despises the Word shall be destroyed, but he that fears the Commandment shall be rewarded.<sup>154</sup>

If we continue our present path, it is certain that in a few years our government leaders will become immobilized and unable to govern effectively in the face of growing domestic and foreign crises, and the increasing complexity of every issue. As the electorate is given visions of ever greater expectations about its (presumed) "rights," a time will come when the rage of every segment of society against the government will be such that collapse of the government and anarchy will result. Our humanistic philosophy puts the American system of government and way of life in great peril, because the leaders have transformed the image of government from that of a God-appointed servant of the people into a bountiful social and financial superman who is expected to be all things to all men. No man or government can succeed forever in such an act, and when the disillusionment reaches full maturity, it will be catastrophic. It will make us ripe for takeover by a ruthless dictator from within or a stronger opponent from without.

On the other hand, two possibilities may await us, God willing.

One of these is the possibility that the need to repent of our intellectual and spiritual evil; of our arrogant

effort to be free from God and His word; will be recognized by a significant segment of our intellectual and governmental elite. If there are a few men of real courage, willing to swim against the flood tide of popular opinion, in order to declare publicly the truth, there is a real hope of recovery for the United States. Time and again in history urgently needed reform has come through the instrumentality of one, or a very few men, who were utterly committed to a cause.

The second possibility would be concrete evidence that the Lord had responded to the prayers of those who have long been beseeching Him to bring our land to its knees in repentance and faith. From Scripture we can discern that this could happen in one of two ways. He could be pleased to move the Spirit mightily upon our nation, in conjunction with the proclamation of His Word, bringing multitudes under conviction, and a returning to Godly fear (reverence). This, of all things, should be the most fervently desired, for it means restoration and healing can take place without catastrophic losses.

Or God could be pleased to use the instrumentality of either natural disaster or the attack of a stronger enemy to chasten us sorely. He has declared again and again in Scripture that without exception, He chastens those whom He loves,<sup>155</sup> and if we have not turned so completely away from Him so as to become like Sodom And Gomorrah, then we will either repent because He calls us to do so, or we

will repent when He sends some scourging that will bring us to our knees in spite of ourselves.

Given our present inability to see the obvious (e.g. our sinful condition), reinforced by our own self-propagandizing, the latter of these two is more likely. God does deal even with people who are hard of heart and stubborn of will. Still, this is tragic, because even though "a word of reproof will enter into a wise man more than a hundred lashes into a fool,"<sup>156</sup> the majority of us seemingly fall into the latter category. Surely our most fervent prayers should be for our leaders,<sup>157</sup> and for all of us that God will give each a teachable will and a humble heart. That is the way of life and there is no other, and if we refuse all the chastening God sends, we shall be destroyed in our pride like Israel of old, or more recently like the haughty Captain of the Titanic, along with his crew and passengers.



### FOOTNOTES

154. Proverbs 13:13.
155. Hebrews 12:4-11. You have not yet resisted to the point of shedding blood, in your striving against sin; and you have forgotten the exhortation which is addressed to you as sons, "My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor faint when you are reproved by Him; For those whom the Lord loves He disciplines, and he scourges every son whom He receives." It is for discipline that you endure; God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom his father does not discipline? But if you are without discipline, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate children and not sons. Furthermore, we had earthly fathers to discipline us, and we respected them; shall we not much rather be subject to the Father of spirits, and live? For they disciplined us for a short time as seemed best to them, but He disciplines us for our good, that we may share His holiness. All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness.
156. Proverbs 17:10. Also, Proverbs 15:10: "Stern discipline is for him who forsakes the way; He who hates reproof will die."
157. I Timothy 2:1-3. "First of all, then, I urge that entreaties and prayers, petitions and thanksgivings, be made on behalf of all men, for kings and all who are in authority, in order that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity. This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior."

APPENDIX A

AN ASSESSMENT OF OFFICER  
RESPONSE TO THE POSSIBLE DISCUSSION OF  
ETHICAL AND MORAL PROBLEMS  
ASSOCIATED WITH NUCLEAR WEAPONS

Submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the course requirements for  
MN 3123, Prof. McGonigal.

R. Needham

## I. INTRODUCTION

Do Naval Officers, trained to serve in nuclear weapons-equipped commands, ever entertain "second thoughts" about the "rightness" of what they are doing? Are nuclear trained Officers ever troubled by the complex ethical and moral issues which grow out of the deployment and potential "use" of thermonuclear weapons? If they do entertain such thoughts, do these Officers ever discuss them with others, especially their peers? During the years of schooling and training which prepare them for these very responsible assignments, are the awesome ethical and moral ramifications of nuclear weapons and nuclear weapons policy ever formally discussed in a systematic fashion for their psychological, spiritual and intellectual benefit, such as in a classroom environment?

And what about Military Chaplains who are supposed to minister to these men - presumably in all areas of their lives? Do these Chaplains ever deal with the substantive moral and ethical problems linked to nuclear weapons, or even seek to structure an opportunity climate wherein such issues may be honestly and profitably discussed?

Considering the unmeasurable influence the existence of advanced thermonuclear weapons systems has had upon the international world order, and upon our society in particular, is it not logical to suppose that such ethical



questions would occur with some frequency, to nuclear weapons trained military personnel, especially when one considers the enormous number of people who, directly or peripherally, are involved in the development, support and deployment of such weapons systems?

What is surprising, however, is the virtual silence on this whole subject within the military establishment. Is this possibly due to a vast, collective administrative oversight on the part of those thousands of individuals occupying leadership positions within this huge military-civilian system? Or is it possible that most nuclear weapons trained military Officers simply do not think about such issues? Could it be that such a preponderant majority of these Officers have so adequately grasped and worked out all the complex ethical problems inherent in the existence and potential employment of nuclear weapons that no further discussion or examination is deemed necessary? Or could it be that the higher governmental authorities have so well laid to rest any doubts about the ethical issues involved in the nuclear weapons policies of the United States that even a concerned and thoughtful Officer need not trouble himself with such matters?

At present writing it appears that all four of these suppositions are patently absurd, and that the answer(s) to this problem of silence must lie elsewhere.

It was the perception of this troublesome phenomena which led to the development of an hypothesis attempting

to explain it. Could it be reasonably supposed that nuclear weapons trained Officers in the three major services do think about - and even agonize over - some of the ethical and moral problems inherent in the deployment of nuclear weapons? And could it be reasonably supposed, in addition, that for one or more reasons this whole matter is simply not discussed and/or admitted?

Shortly after I was assigned as a student to the National Security Affairs Department of the Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey a providential opportunity arose for exploring the validity of this two-fold hypothesis. This opportunity took the form of a course in Military Sociological Analysis, in which one part of the course requirements was some kind of original research effort directed toward military personnel. A legitimate occasion for circulating a research questionnaire amongst a carefully selected group of Officer students attending the Postgraduate School could thus be submitted for approval to the School's administration. Once this permission to circulate the questionnaires was given, the task of respondent selection and survey distribution and collection was facilitated by the gracious assistance of the curriculum Officers of the several participating Academic Departments.

## II. DESIGN OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE

By virtue of the very limited span of applicability and interest addressed in the survey, it was NOT conducted on a random basis, rather being designed to solicit attitudes from a very specific group of military officers, namely, one's who had already served in nuclear equipped commands and who, in some way or other, had been personally responsible for one or more aspects of the tactical planning, maintenance, security readiness associated with deployed nuclear weapons. These included officers from the submarine, surface, ASW and air attack communities. In other words, the intent was to survey Officers who had had some degree of actual 'hands on' experience with nuclear weapons, rather than simply a theoretical exposure.

Inasmuch as the subject of nuclear weapons is sensitive in nearly all respects and, furthermore, is fraught with security considerations, the survey instrument was designed to gather information concerning past and present attitudes toward thinking about this matter; to discover possible interest in further discussion; and to avoid at all costs any suggestion of seeking classified information, as such. Apparently this intent was fundamentally successful, for only two respondents commented to the effect that answering one or more of the questions in their opinion would be improper for them on the basis of security considerations.



It was also a primary concern that no specific ethical position be solicited, or a given ethical bias be suggested, in the way the questions themselves were worded. Rather, the primary purpose was to discover if any significant discussion or consideration of ethical and/or moral issues related to nuclear weapons had taken place at all in the officer's experience and, if so, under what conditions regardless of what that particular position might have been. The only conscious bias purposely reflected in the wording of the questions was the presupposition that there are indeed 'problems' (but in no way specifically identified) associated with the deployment and theoretical use of nuclear weapons.

From (this writer's) readings in various areas of the strategic debate, there is apparently a remarkable degree of agreement among many authors that there are, indeed, ethical and moral problems associated with the existence of nuclear weapons, irrespective of their position on the spectrum of opinion in the debate. Just what those ethical problems are is quite a different matter, and there is a great deal of disagreement about this in the aforementioned literature.

Four demographic questions were included at the end, and all but two of those returning the questionnaire included this information as well. It was distributed to approximately 175 officer students attending courses at this institution.

The survey instrument, with its cover letter, is included in this report as appendix I and II.

### III. SUMMARY OF THE RESULTS

At the suggestion of the National Security Affairs Department Curricular Officer, the assistance of the Curricular Officers in several other Departments was sought in order to identify officers who had been assigned to at least one nuclear equipped command prior to reporting to the Postgraduate School as well as distributing the questionnaires themselves. This undoubtedly contributed significantly to the high percentage of survey answer sheets returned - 71% (124 out of 175 distributed).

A number of interesting comments were added by many of the respondents and, with few exceptions, these will be included in this assessment, though only in a generalized or summary form.

Most questionnaires were returned anonymously. Of those replying to question #1, 73% indicated that they had not been exposed to any discussion or examination of ethical or moral problems related to nuclear weapons in all their college years. Of those who said "yes" (27%), nearly all qualified this with comments indicating that such discussions had taken place in civilian colleges and/or in conjunction with philosophy, political science or related courses. A few mentioned that they had participated in informal discussions of the subject.

In responding to question #2, 81% indicated that they had not been exposed to any consideration of the ethical/



moral dimensions of nuclear weapons in any part of their subsequent military training! Of those who said "yes" about half added the explanation that such discussion had taken place on an informal basis, not in a classroom.

Many of the remarks indicated that the ethical issues addressed in these talks primarily concentrated on the ethics of killing, and war in general, vice just nuclear warfare. Several dismissed any implication of uniqueness by saying that the nuclear weapons issue was just a case of a "bigger weapon."

Question #3 provided the biggest surprise of the whole survey, with an amazing 97% indicating they had no ethical problems whatsoever with the possible use of nuclear weapons! This question produced the fewest comments of any of the six questions, with only 14 adding any remarks beyond a "yes" or "no" answer.

Several raised the question as to whether they were being asked about a first or second strike, which is very significant from an ethical standpoint, since high level perceptions of the American cultural values system has profoundly affected strategic planning with respect to the first or second strike problem.

Undoubtedly, the most significant insight to emerge from this questionnaire was that, in spite of the fact that nearly all the respondents claimed to have "no" problem with the use of nuclear weapons, many subsequently called this "no" into question, either by their answers

to this or the other questions, or by additional summary comments that obviously contradicted that negative declaration! For example, one "no" on #3 respondent added this final comment. "This questionnaire deals with questions that really should not be decided at these low levels. It also assumes nuclear weapons are immoral which is a relative question." And from another, "no" on #3, in his answer to #6, "yes I would. As a matter of fact, it would be nice to have some guidance on the moral and ethical problems of any form of armed conflict." Another, answering "no" then immediately continues, "but for the weapons I was associated with our only target would have been submarines. I have never been associated with nor considered the question of strategic nuclear weapons and their use. I have always felt that the tactical weapon I was associated with would save many more lives than it took."(!)

In brief, what emerged here was indirect evidence, sometimes quite clear, that the "no" answer for #3 simply was not accurate or encompassing all aspects of the issue.

There was almost an even split on question #4. Those who said they had never perceived this subject to be a problem for any other personnel comprised 52% of all replying. Of those who said they did perceive a problem as described, nearly fifty out of the 60 "yes" answered that it was enlisted personnel that had a problem(s), often adding explanations to the effect that it was not

really an objection to nuclear weapons, per se, but to war in general; the possibility of killing somebody (especially a shipmate) while on guard duty; or simply using this broad issue as a means of manipulation to get out of extra work. A very few did mention conscientious objectors in this connection.

When asked if they had ever been sought out for guidance or help in this matter, 72% said "no," and some of those responding affirmatively commented that it had been in the context of an informal discussion (such as in a wardroom).

Finally, out of 124 replying to question 6, only two (1.6%) indicated by "yes" that they had ever been approached or counselled about this subject by a Chaplain! Only two comments were received on this first part of #6, of the 120 who replied to the second half of the question, 74% indicated no desire to have any guidance on this matter from a Chaplain. Of the 26% who made a positive response over half included a caveat - that is, they would like to discuss the subject, on their initiative, but did not want to be "guided." A few said that Chaplains possessed insufficient information on this subject to be of any use in such counselling, and two individuals perceived such an eventuality as a real threat to security. Several raised the question whether it was even proper to consider such matters at this level at all.



Nearly all of those who returned the survey forms indicated that they were Navy Officers, with two Army and two Air Force Officers bringing the total to 124. The average years in service worked out to 10.1, indicating that the majority were approximately in mid-career.

Once the questionnaires were returned, I engaged in extended conversations with most of those who identified themselves and indicated a desire for such a dialogue. Without exception, these discussions supported the conclusions arrived at previously by studying the results.

#### IV. DISCUSSION

Some of the conclusions of this preliminary analysis are admittedly tentative, and an exhaustive computerized correlation of data has not been undertaken. No apology is made for summarizing implications or references contained in the comments since these are very difficult to quantify.

What trends or patterns are sufficiently clear in this data to identify without the benefit of a full scale statistical analysis?

First of all it is clearly apparent that there is virtually a total absence of any in-depth, guided discussion of these grave issues at the Service Academy or Officer training levels. With few exceptions among those who chose to comment, most indicated that they dealt with the (unspecified and therefore assumed) ethical problems involved in nuclear weapons by the presumption that those in authority over them - the leaders who someday might give the order to fire the weapons - would have already made the correct ethical and moral decisions relative to such an eventuality. Their job was seen as simply remaining totally reliable with respect to obeying orders, even if the "ultimate one" was given. Possibly this outlook is an institutionalized example of our national tendency to perpetuate long observed trends and traditions, even when the reason for them is unclear or forgotten.

Apparently the subject of ethics as related to nuclear weapons policy is taboo, not only at the Academy level, but in operational commands as well. The degree of emotional sensitivity to this issue is perhaps hinted at by those who commented that the questionnaire was implying (assuming?) that the use of nuclear weapons was immoral, period. Another possible indicator of sensitivity was the hostile and/or defensive remarks of some respondents. Statements of this sort, including one which explicitly asserted that this writer needed immediate counselling to correct his basic failure to understand the subject, inferred that there is an underlying, and seldom admitted, uneasiness about the whole subject which seems to belie the nearly unanimous denial of any problems at all in this area.

Apparently the most common means of dealing with the problem is to assume that the leaders of the country have already thought the problem through adequately, and if an order comes to launch, it will therefore be "right." Some reflected this underlying assumption rather succinctly, if not delicately, with "better them than us."

Remembering that these answers come entirely from a group of mature and presumably above average in intelligence and performance Line Officers, entering the most productive and significant years of their career, it is more than interesting to note that the vast majority claimed no ethical problems whatsoever with the possible use of nuclear weapons, and only 16% of those contacted by means



of the questionnaire were willing to discuss the matter. What appears to be the most significant area suggested for further study by the data is the apparent paradox which emerged from the fact pattern of many of the "no" answers to question #3 essentially contradicted by additional remarks there or elsewhere.

Finally, it is obvious that the Chaplain Corps, almost without exception, is simply not seen by these individuals as having any real significance for them when it comes to matters this complex and deep theologically and philosophically; as related to nuclear warfare.

## V. CONCLUSIONS

Our present military education and training not only prepares Officers for highly technical responsibilities, but for exceedingly demanding leadership challenges. However, any really substantive effort to expose these Officers (who, presumably, are thinking men) to the admittedly difficult and complex subject of the ethical overtones inherent in the strategic nuclear posture of our country is almost entirely avoided either by intent or default. For the most part this appears to be a minimally satisfactory state of affairs as long as things continue as they are, in that initiating extensive reflection on this matter while an Officer is functioning in an operational, nuclear equipped command could be argued as possibly impairing his psychological and emotional readiness and reliability. Not doing so during Academy years may be due to nothing more than bureaucratic inertia or simple default in failing to come to grips with the critical importance of this whole matter for Officer candidates. What I have here called the unspoken "taboo" against in-depth consideration may possibly reflect a vitally important emotional defense mechanism for those who must live with the daily strain of the awful possibility of having to someday launch these awesome weapons of destruction hand in hand with an insufficient or non-existent philosophical-theological framework for making major decisions and moral choices.

One glaringly weak link in this chain of seemingly reasonable suppositions is the assumption that in all conflict circumstances there would be sufficiently clear political decisions so that the only "value" question a commanding officer would ever have to decide was whether a message to launch was genuine or not. This in turn rests on another assumption, namely, that adequate communication would continue to exist in the terrible eventuality of the failure of deterrence. It is difficult indeed to believe that such assumptions are altogether reasonable given present uncertainties about our ability to maintain command control and communications if a counterforce preemptive first strike was sustained by this country.

Military Chaplains did not fare well in this matter at the hands of their Line Officer brethren, and it is most unlikely that the fault rests entirely with either group. On the part of the Chaplains, there has been an unmistakable trend in recent years to concentrate ministry in the role of the activist, healer, reconciler and "caring person" - one who is deeply involved with his people in a "ministry of presence." This emphasis on involvement, and programs, while much of it was both needed and commendable, has nevertheless developed at the expense of theological substance, and a clear perception of the activity of a pastor in attempting to provide answers to eternal issues based on something other than personal experience and feeling. Indeed, there is currently a



sizable segment of the American Clergy which denies, either actively or by implication, that there are any substantive, eternally valid answers at all to transcendent and abstract issues. In such a context it is scarcely surprising that the supremely difficult ethical task of relating eternal and spiritual issues to the hydra-headed problem of defining the issues of the national interest, and the nuclear policy debate in particular, should be avoided almost universally, whether consciously or unconsciously. In modern America in the 1970's it is simply not normative to see a pastor's primary responsibility as the proclamation of objective truth based on testable documentary evidence - to theologize, in other words. Philosophy has shown us the utter fruitlessness of trying to construct an ethical system without any absolute presuppositions upon which it can rest, and as a result, ethical discussions not only seldom occur in our culture (at the time of the Watergate scandal there was not a single law school left in the United States which had retained a course in the ethics of jurisprudence in its curriculum), but most Americans no longer have any abstract, conceptual base for moral decisions other than personal 'feelings'. Coupling this cultural phenomenon with the significant technological and political issues (nearly all complex) attendant on the whole subject of nuclear weapons, it is scarcely surprising that the dialogue almost never occurs in the Navy, even with the Chaplains around! That is

just too much to expect unless there are radical changes in commitment and grounding on the part of pastors serving in uniform.

On the part of Line Officers, there are understandable apprehensions about opening up this subject for discussion at all. Much of the data relating to the destructive potential of thermonuclear weapons is classified, and if a Chaplain were to discuss such matters, should he be surprised if some would question whether he was sufficiently knowledgeable to be credible? This seems, however, to beg the question, for the real ethical and moral problems associated in most writings with the deployment and possible use of these weapons is not linked to fine tuning technical data nearly so much as to cultural values and perceptions about political and foreign policy choices which affect this issue. Here it is well to note that many respondents commented that a Chaplain, to counsel effectively in this area, would have to have some grasp of the relevant technical and policy issues.

In addition, many of these Line Officers indicated that they didn't need any counseling, but a Chaplain was certainly fine for the (needy) enlisted man. That such elitist attitudes should manifest extreme defensiveness in an area that is traditionally their exclusive 'preserve' was scarcely surprising, either, when it has consistently been the experience of this writer that many commissioned Officers, in all kinds of circumstances, have opined that

the Chaplain was a wonderful asset to have around - for the enlisted folk!

One fascinating and profitable benefit that evolved out of this survey, and which is only barely reflected in the raw data, was the extensive conversations with several interested respondents who, unsolicited, asked to discuss the subject further. In every instance these individuals manifested an atypical willingness to face the hard questions, including ones that could be construed as threatening to their career, demonstrating that they had done considerable thinking about ethical questions even though, in most cases, they had not engaged in much discussion about them. Out of these verbal exchanges, as well as the questionnaires, per se, there emerged a tentative conclusion about the way in which this whole issue should be taken up.

All of those who wanted to discuss the survey afterwards agreed that an honest and competent discussion was highly desirable, but not in the environment of an operational command. Several written comments support this position wherein such discussion raised the fear of eroding reliability in personnel, and possibly jeopardizing a career (at least in the case of officers). These same individuals also tended to exert a greater degree of concern about the subject than was indicated in the survey. Generally, there was agreement that the subject could probably be addressed in a non-threatening manner if it were undertaken at all, as, for example, in a classroom environment.



In conclusion, there appears to be compelling evidence in this survey that the majority of nuclear weapons trained Naval Officers (Army and Air Force too?) do not see themselves as struggling with any ethical problems in their area of expertise - or at least not demonstrating the willingness to admit such concern if they are partly or fully conscious of it! Additionally there emerged compelling evidence of the existence of a taboo within the Navy that even Chaplains are party to, namely that these awkward and difficult moral and ethical questions are, with few exceptions, simply not discussed. If this is indeed a correct hypothesis, it could account, in part, for the Vietnam war phenomenon of the almost total silence of Navy Chaplains on the ethical problems in that conflict, whilst their civilian brethren held a virtual monopoly on such discussions "back home."

Finally, notwithstanding the problem of the "taboo," and our cultural tendency to suppress difficult and painful matters that seem to preclude any easy answers, there appeared to be significant indications in the data of concern about the ethical problems of nuclear weapons and nuclear weapons policy, even if obliquely expressed. Indeed, it might not be too strong to call it a "hunger" for a greater degree of certainty about what is truly the right thing to think and to do, relative to thermonuclear weapons.

If even one of these conclusions is demonstratably true and therefore valid, and if one reflects, even casually, on the shattering repercussions and international consequences of the wrong use - or non use - of nuclear weapons, then the failure to honestly and maturely face, consider, discuss and wrestle with these issues, somewhere, in the military experience of these officers becomes an indefensible sin of omission, both with respect to these men themselves, and to the larger society they serve.

If nothing else, the escalating complexity of our own technology, increasingly complicating these issues, may force us to take a more responsible look at deductive and transcendent principles as the only hope for a mature and responsible nuclear policy and for a credible conceptual framework from which to assist our military men to think carefully and responsibly about these "unthinkable" problems. An absolute minimal expression of appropriate responsibility should include a significant long term commitment on the part of the Navy - but not in another "programme" (God forbid!) - to provide a structural, non career threatening, opportunity for nuclear trained Officers, to systematically address, discuss and think about these issues somewhere within the context of already existing training or schooling commands. Can we, in good conscience, even consider doing less?

## VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

Three recommendations appear appropriate for consideration at this time, in light of the above.

First - there should be a class, at the Naval Academy which specifically addresses these problems before an Officer candidate has finalized his career choice or has been attached to an operational command.

Secondly - there should be a subsequent more intense course centering on the ethical issues of nuclear weapons policy, available to Officers in their mid-career years, in an environment such as the Naval War College or Post-graduate School. Nearly all those who requested further discussion strongly indicated they would very much like to take such a course if the opportunity were made available to them, but not in an operational command. The emotional and intellectual drain would be too great hand-in-hand with the multitudinous responsibilities common to Officers at this level of responsibility. Some suggested that such an introductory course at the Academy level could significantly diminish the emotional shock an individual sometimes experiences when the awesome consequences of any use of nuclear weapons does dawn upon him - something that sometimes occurs several years after the Academy experience.

Thirdly - such a course must have at least one individual who has enough of a grasp of the technical



realities to understand some of the questions a Line Officer would have from that perspective as well as the philosophical qualifications. Possibly such a course could be 'team taught' by several individuals whose collective qualifications would cover the spectrum of related areas, including metaphysics, theology, philosophy, ethics and the physics of atomic weapons effects. Nor should such a course be taught primarily by an individual whose own moral position is at one or the other (simplistic) ends of the nuclear debate spectrum (viz. a unilateral disarmament pacifist or a preemptive 'first strike hawk' who would like to "nuke 'em back into the stone age").

As our Navy grows ever more sophisticated, and operational Line Officers are given ever more command accountability, and the unknown possibilities in a possible nuclear exchange are increasingly complex - and therefore unclear - it is absurd to assume that men of this level of intelligence will simply not think about the problems related to the use of the weapons they carry. The Russians have no qualms about indoctrination of their Officers, including the most ultimate strategic possibilities, and this in spite of their historical paranoia about revealing too much information even to their own people. At the very least we should provide a reasonable opportunity for those officers who are interested in thinking further and more responsibly about these matters which go to the

very heart of the reason for their military role. When and if we take such a step as a Navy, it will indicate a significant advance in institutional maturity and spiritual responsibility.

APPENDIX I

National Security Affairs  
Department  
Naval Postgraduate School  
Monterey, California

Dear Fellow Student:

A few moments of your time, and the giving of careful thought to the attached questions, is earnestly requested.

Please allow me first to explain. The Chaplain's Corps of the Navy has tasked me with studying the ethical and moral aspects of nuclear weapons and strategy. One of the purposes of such a study includes the commitment to improve the ministry of Chaplains to Navy men and women in nuclear related fields. Your willingness to carefully answer as completely as you can will be deeply appreciated.

Should you be interested in the final results of this survey, I shall be pleased to share this information with you if you leave a 3 x 5 card for me, with your name on it, in the National Security Affairs Curricular Office.

Cordially, and with sincere thanks,

Robert B. Needham  
LCDR, CHC, USN



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## APPENDIX II

1. In your college, academy and/or technical training, were the moral and ethical problems of (possible) nuclear war ever discussed or examined?

If so, in what way?

2. In your general military training, were you in any way exposed to a consideration of the ethical and/or moral aspects of nuclear weapons?

If so, in what way?

3. Was the issue of the ethics involved in the possible use of nuclear weapons ever a problem for you since coming into the military service?

If so, in what way?

4. Did you ever perceive this to be a problem for other personnel with whom you were associated (e.g. young enlisted personnel in the 'Reliability Programme')?

5. Has any member of the military ever come to you for discussion, guidance or help in this matter?

If so, what did you do or say?

6. Did any Chaplain ever discuss any significant part of this subject with you?

If not, would you have desired any such guidance from a Chaplain in this area:

### Optional demographic questions:

1. Are you a member of the Army\_\_\_Navy\_\_\_Air Force\_\_\_?
2. How long have you been in the Service?\_\_\_\_\_years.
3. Religious preference, if any\_\_\_\_\_.
4. Service specialty (or designation)\_\_\_\_\_.

Thanks again for your time.



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