

Criteria for a Just War

“Good evening, everyone.... Hope you had an enjoyable weekend,” I greeted the group. “I hope it was a peaceful weekend, too, which ought to have prepared us for the topic this evening; we’re going to discuss war.

“Nothing generates more emotional trauma among peoples, I think, that experiencing their nations at war. Terrorist acts, hurricanes, earthquakes, tornadoes or even race riots, as devastating as their effects can be, normally don’t last long.

“But war ... war lingers on, and on ... bringing pain and sorrow to people, the more so nowadays, when modern media communications convey to us the grief early in the morning and just before we retire for the evening.... The pain and sorrow we feel, would increase exponentially if war were to take place within the nation’s borders, something that, fortunately, this country hasn’t experienced since the Civil War.

“There were times in ancient history, when war was the predominant means of conducting state affairs among civilized peoples on earth. Nonetheless, while non-violent activities today characterize the conduct of international affairs, wars in the last seventy years have been extremely lethal, largely owing to technological innovations in *weapons of life destruction*, ranging from machine guns and tanks to long-range land and sea artillery, aerial bombardment, missiles, bio-chemical weapons and atomic bombs.

“Of course, we can’t blame these weapons for the amount of destruction and the number of deaths they create. By far, the most devastating weapon of life destruction on earth has been, and continues to be, man himself, particularly political rulers. While they are not the ones who pull on the trigger, they command and order the use of these weapons, often with popular support and at times without any.

“Altogether, I would venture to say that most people in the world find war abominable, even if and when necessary, because the taking of another human being’s life is widely regarded, both by religious and secular minds, as highly tragic....

“So ... if there's agreement that the issue of war belongs in our discussion on moral and political values, we shall proceed to discuss the three wars our country is currently involved in.... Yes, don't forget that in addition to Afghanistan and Iraq, there's a third war on terror that is being waged through other means in other parts of the world, including within our own country.



“Very well, this evening we're going to question the morality of war by focusing on what is known as the theory of *Just War*.... The concept relies on moral principles; it aims at regulating military force through moral suasion as opposed to relying on other means such as fear or alliances....

“The term itself is mind boggling. I mean ... the thought of justifying war seems akin to giving the green light to the greatest, and often, most calculated irrational behavior in our human repertoire. After all, war is one of those events that we tend to wish only upon our worst enemies, which is likely why we do so. And yet, even the side that justifies the use of force pays a heavy price for war.

“We all wish that fighting a *Just War* would shield the “good side” of all the human suffering as well as prevent having to divert the taxpayers' dollars into financing a war. Resources that instead could go into education, assisting the poor, re-training unemployed workers, improving access to public health, protecting the environment ... or simply be returned back to the taxpayers.... Sadly, these wishes always fail to come true when it comes to war, which is why many seek to prevent it from happening in the first place.

“Mind you, wars are not only regulated by moral means. Moral values may have stopped many wars, but there are other elements at work, too. Fear ... in my view, is a most important deterrent to war, and, inconceivably ironic, perhaps the most prominently instrumental cause of war in ancient history and today.... What is *national security* if not another term for fear? National security sounds more important, I'll concede that; the term inspires protection and self-assurance. Yet, deep down, national security implies a concern ... a fear, albeit a reasonable one given what lurks outside our borders.

“Although the term *national security* is terribly ambiguous and has been politically prostituted over the years, it does have its usefulness. It helps us to think about circumstances and peoples that could pose a threat to our well being. In the end, national security stands for policies and strategies that make us not feel insecure.... The term makes us forget that we are afraid of others ... or that at least we can take care of ourselves, somehow.

“And while fear makes us prudent ... as it should ... just think of the many marriages, alliances, balance of power schemes, militarization of societies, wars of conquest, and aggressive wars throughout history that have originated out of

fear: fear of being defeated by others if we were to allow them to become stronger; fear, not only of others' motivations, but of others' perceived intentions as well.

"So fearful man has been that at times rulers have had to control external situations to make their surroundings more secure. Building an impenetrable castle to defend his people at times was not enough for a ruler; sometimes he had to go out of his own castle and destroy those he thought could one day turn against him.

"How can morality deal with fear of war and with an external reality that too often threatens us with war? And, should war be understood only as a means to assuage our fears by defending ourselves against the aggressor? What about undertaking wars to save people ... to protect and keep innocent people out of harms way?

"These are some of the questions that we shall explore this evening. I've asked Mr. Wasserman to make a brief presentation of the issue, so, Mr. Wasserman, if you would ..."

"Of course ... I'll start by mentioning that the concept of *Just War*, despite its wide appeal and adoption into modern international law, does find its critics. For many pacifists, for example, there's no such thing as a *Just War*, since for them nothing justifies the taking of another human being's life.

"The pacifist would tell us that his approach is not all that futile in regulating violence. He would point to how non-violence and martyrdom, as practiced by the early Christians, helped to bring down a mighty Roman Empire by questioning its legitimacy to govern; how Mahatma Gandhi's non-violent approach triumphed over British rule in India; and how Martin Luther King's reliance on a similar approach was instrumental, albeit violence not necessarily related to his beliefs, in gaining significant institutional, political, and cultural victories for blacks in this country. Moreover, how can we forget, only years ago, how the Solidarity movement in Poland and other similar non-violent demonstrations in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union served as significant catalysts that helped to bring down authoritarian regimes in these countries.

"For the true realist, on the other hand, the idea of a *Just War* is a naïve and un-welcomed obstacle in the way nation-states interrelate with each other. Realists point to the existence of some sort of immutable "laws" that govern and/or condition the international arena, and which can only be ignored at our own peril."

"Forgive me ... laws?" asked Mr. Radusky.

"They are more or less referred to as laws, quote on quote," replied Mr. Wasserman. "It seems that this tendency toward war has been observed for so long in international affairs that many have accepted that it's an unchangeable part of human behavior."

"Do you accept this view?" insisted Mr. Radusky.

“My problem with the realist view is that often these so-called laws of human behavior, that tell us that wars are a fact of life and that we have to get used to this reality, become self-fulfilling prophecies; they evolve ... they transform themselves into normative propositions. In other words, it's not so much that this is the way things are as, since this is the way things have been for a long time, then this is the type of reality we are called to accept.”

“So, how would the realist view on war affect the concept of *Just War*?”

“Well, this concept is based on morality. And, the realist would argue that since it's in our interest to emerge victorious from war, it is best that we divest ourselves of that gushy morality that would do nothing but weaken us in the international jungle that is world affairs. That is to say, since war implies the deterioration of civilized order it indicates the absence of morality, which means that seeking to introduce moral principles in international affairs likely will not protect us from war.

“Anyhow, somewhere stashed between these two views ... one that rejects war and the other one that rejects morality to a large extent ... we find the concept of a *Just War* as a means to prevent warfare....”

“The theory of *Just War*, in its most secular form, makes the following assumptions: that human beings are free and not completely conditioned or enslaved to external reality; that we are moral beings capable of making moral choices; that goodness exists to some degree in all, or perhaps, in most people, although it might need to be extracted, sometimes with some difficulty; that war is preventable, detestable, and should be avoided, and when not, its destructive consequences can and should be held to a minimum; and finally, that nice guys ... and gals ... don't always finish last. In other words, morality appeals to the majority of people, and it does work.”

“Does it actually work?” asked a skeptical Mr. Edson.

“Hmm ... well, given how many wars we humans have had to endure throughout the course of history suggests that rulers have done a lousy job at assimilating this concept. On the other hand, given human proclivity to violence and the fact that we have failed to destroy ourselves more often and more completely indicate that maybe we have heeded our consciences from time to time.”

“You mention that the theory of *Just War* is based on secular assumptions. I was under the impression that this theory had religious origins,” argued Ms. Bynum.

“You're correct,” answered Mr. Wasserman. “However, although the theory of *Just War* is rightfully associated with Christian beliefs and values, concerns about the justness of armed conflict had been expressed since antiquity by pagans far removed from any religious influence, with the exception of pagan religion, of course. This tells us that moral preoccupation over war is not a unique religious issue.

“Let me provide you all with an example of pagan concerns with war.... Cicero, the great orator and Consul in the Roman Republic who lived a few decades before Christ was born, already had expressed reservations about war being morally permissible under all circumstances.

“He prescribed principles that apply both to the reasons for going to war and to behavior during and at the end of the conflict. Let me read to you part of what he had to say about war:

The first office of justice is to keep one man from doing harm to another, unless provoked by wrong.... The only excuse, therefore, for going to war is that we may live in peace unharmed; and when the victory is won, we should spare those who have not been blood-thirsty and barbarous in their warfare.... [T]here is a limit to retribution and to punishment; or rather, I am inclined to think, it is sufficient that the aggressor should be brought to repent of his wrong-doing, in order that he may not repeat the offence and that others may be deterred from doing wrong....

As for war ... it may be gathered that no war is just, unless it is entered upon after an official demand for satisfaction has been submitted or warning has been given and a formal declaration made.... But when a war is fought out for supremacy and when glory is the object of war, it must still not fail to start from the same motives which I said a moment ago were the only righteous grounds for going to war.¹

“Note that Cicero did not object to wars being fought for glory. He was not the only one. During the times of ancient Greece and the Roman Empire, glory was a highly regarded norm that guided the conduct of states. Wars actually thrived under those norms.... But norms change over time. Nowadays, only a fool or an insane dictator would fight a war over such superficially regarded values.

“We then jump a few centuries to St. Augustine whom history attributes being the first one to set forth the basis of what is known today as the *Theory of Just War*. Let me read a quote from St. Augustine, and notice how minds meet despite different social norms and religious beliefs:

For it is the wrongdoing of the opposing party which compels the wise man to wage just wars; and this wrong-doing, even though it gave rise to no war, would still be matter of grief to man because it is man's wrong-doing.... It is therefore with the desire for peace that wars are waged, even by those who take pleasure in exercising their warlike nature in command and battle.²

“In reality, Augustine didn't have much to say about the morality of war, although he affirmed the crude moral reality that sometimes man has no choice but to confront his enemy militarily. Nonetheless, his views allowed Thomas

Aquinas eight centuries later to expand on the theory, whereupon eminent religious legal minds like Francisco de Vitoria, Francisco Suarez, and Hugo Grotius, among others, began to codify these principles during the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries, relying primarily on Natural Law.

"These and other legal minds developed the concept until the Twentieth Century when, what once were religious views were incorporated and transformed at the Hague and the Geneva Conventions, and in the United Nations into secular principles regulating the conduct of states throughout most phases of war."

"Thank you, Mr. Wasserman," I said. "In our discussions on how you all should approach the topic, we debated whether we should elaborate a secularized version of the *Just War Doctrine* or the opposite, a religious one. Mr. Hunt, who will handle the core of the presentation, chose the religious version; could you tell us what led you to your decision?"

"Actually, my rationale was that most, if not all of our elected leaders, are said to profess Judeo-Christian beliefs and values, even those who are not too religious. It is my supposition that their moral beliefs play a significant role and may even influence their decision-making process. Thus, it stands to reason that we develop a Gospel-based *Just War* criteria to evaluate war, and do so, particularly in light of changes that have occurred since the doctrine was originally formulated."

"But ... why not use the secular version if it would have a more universal appeal," asked Mr. Edson.

"Because of the compelling nature of religious beliefs," he replied. "Religious values are efficient only if they compel through moral authority; and, what higher authority than God. So, if we are able to discern those values that stem from the Gospel itself, it will be more difficult for those who claim to accept Judeo-Christian values to reject these guidelines."

"Yes, but that means that those who are not Christians will not be bound by the theory," said Mr. Edson.

"Not necessarily!" exclaimed Ms. Lewis. "Those who don't share in the Christian faith can rely on the Gospel as a philosophical document. Remember, there are moral principles in the philosophies of Plato, Aristotle, Plutarch, Confucius, Kant, or Hobbes that while not expressed in religious terms may still have universal validity. Besides, both religious and non-religious philosophies have borrowed from each other throughout the centuries.

"We see such synergism taking place nowadays. A secularly-expressed morality, for example, is widely accepted by religious believers and humanists alike. You have the United Nations Universal Declaration on Human Rights; its origin is secular, but it has strong religious roots and support.

"So those who profess different faiths, or none altogether, may approach Jesus as a philosopher, too. What we might discover is that the religious version

we'll elaborate will have just as much legitimacy as if it were devoid of the element of faith; in other words, should they want to, it will be just as easy for a Muslim, a Jew, a Buddhist or a humanist to accept these guidelines from a secular standpoint as it was for the international community to incorporate legal principles whose foundation, although profoundly religious, extend beyond any spiritual faith."

"Well said, Ms. Lewis ... I would like for you to continue with the presentation at this time, however, let me ask you to do something totally unscripted." I said. "Sometimes, it seems incredible that adults have to be told that war is evil. So, instead of facing a large congregation of statesmen, let's imagine for a few minutes that you're addressing sort of a United Nations elementary school, and you have to explain to children why war requires moral justification. What would you tell them?"

"What would I tell them? ... Hmm, let's see. I think I would tell them that war creates a great deal of human suffering, which most people on earth ... I dare say ... regard as evil and as something to be avoided.

"I would stress the fact that if war were to be morally justified under all circumstances and conditions, societies would hardly progress, and nowadays, because of the presence of nuclear weapons, even civilization could possibly be wiped out....

"I would tell them that wars occur because some of them, as innocent-looking as they now appear, likely will grow up to become malevolent dictators, enlightened despots, naive rulers, and pseudo-religious leaders whose actions could bring nations against each other ..."

"I'm sure they will find your words most encouraging, Ms. Lewis," I said.

"Well, it might just open up their eyes! ... They need to know that strong moral principles are necessary to deter the harm that befalls the innocent civilian populations of the warring parties. They need to know that on both sides of the conflict there are innocent soldiers, including children, just like them. Soldiers who are merely following orders ... maybe even forced ... to kill, even though they might not be guilty of any evil; just that they happened to be born in countries that are involved in wars.

"Given that most of these children would prefer to die of old age than being blown to pieces while in their youth, I would ask them if this is the type of scenario they would like for their countries.... It would not surprise me, however, if some, who at their young age have probably lived through more bloodshed than whatever virtual violence we in the West will ever experience through our movies and TV programs, would tell me that they welcome the opportunity to avenge the killing of their relatives or to carry out the will of an angry and destructive God.

"In such cases, I would explain to them, that unless they make a decision to break the cycle of violence, war would continue to haunt them and their own

children. If that doesn't do it, I would refer them to intensive psychiatric care, which is likely what some of them would be requiring anyhow."

"Thank you, Ms. Lewis.... Okay, let's try setting the foundations of a *Just War* theory.... Mr. Hunt, this is where you come in."

"Yes.... I'll start by saying that this was not an easy exercise, sir," he said. "When going over Jesus' views in the Gospel, one realizes that his contradictions make our understanding of his philosophy quite challenging."

"And what might these human contradictions be, Mr. Hunt?" I asked.

"Well, let's see. He's called King of Kings, yet he was born in a manger; he said that he had supreme authority over armies, but chose not to call on anyone to rescue him; he commanded his followers to love their enemies and turn the other cheek when struck on the right one; he preached that those who make themselves first shall be last, and that the leader shall serve instead of being served; he told someone to get a sword, but immediately thereafter rebuked the one who used it.

"So, the challenge at hand, as I see it, is to try to reconcile, to balance the core-values in the Gospel, amidst these contradictions, and come up with a moral doctrine of *Just War* that makes persuasive sense.

"Initially, I thought about relying on the Beatitudes as a source of Christian values. The problem I found was that their interpretations have been privatized by the various Christian denominations and ideological currents, which means that it is difficult to find common grounds as the basis for their understanding.³ Therefore, I have chosen to stay away from this path and instead have sought to extract other common Christian values over which there might be less controversy.

"For example, focusing on Jesus' own life ... what he did, how he acted ... would tell us that his behavior revealed that when he faced his enemies he willingly chose a submissive or passive path for himself; he did not resort to violence when he was apprehended.

"The question is whether he intended or commanded his behavior to extend to all who would follow him in the years and centuries to come and under all circumstances.... My conclusion? It would seem so, but....

"Jesus' principal commandment ... next to loving God, that is ... was to love one's neighbor. Not only to love your neighbor, but to do so as you love yourself.... This concept suggests that only if you hate yourself so much you might be able to get away with not having to love your enemy.... And, there have been, as we know, rulers who have hated themselves so much, that they have taken their hatred upon their own people and upon neighboring countries. But then, we really can't say that these individuals were followers of Christ, can we?

"One thing I don't like about Jesus is that I think he enjoyed making things difficult. I mean, he could have left it at that: love your neighbor; but No, he had to add more contradictions: *love your enemies, do good to those who hate*

you.... I mean, these words seem to leave no room to wiggle. The words indicate, quite clearly, that he or she who calls himself a Christian should not bring harm to one's enemies.

"And just to make sure that we got the message, he gave us the means to love one's enemies: forgiveness.... How many times? Seventy times seven, meaning unlimited number of times....

"It now makes it doubly difficult to get away from having to love one's enemy. And it's by this time when Jesus probably looks back and sees how the masses begin to thin out; his commandments become too unbearable ... just to think that I have to give up all that gusto I derive out of seeing my enemy suffer. No wonder many think Jesus is nuts. "If only he had studied human psychology!" some would say.

"Nonetheless, I think Jesus had his own reasons for asking us to behave in such a peculiar manner. From the standpoint of faith in God, this type of behavior is in line with God's work of creating humankind.

"I'm sure we all have seen that bumper sticker that reads, *God created me, and God doesn't create trash*. Well, that's pretty much on the money, I think. For those who believe, human beings enjoy a special status by virtue of having been created by God; we enjoy a special dignity which is infinitesimally augmented when He asks His own son to shed his blood for *all* of humankind; those who were and will be good and faithful, and those who were and will be less than good and pagans.

"And, it stands to reason that you just don't take something that is extraordinarily valuable and break it and throw it away. And that's what happens when there's war; we kill each other and, since we're no longer good dead, we bury each other ... we throw each other away.

"Now, let me come back to the master of contradictions. When we talk about war, there's this Beatitude that keeps swirling on my mind: *Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God*....

"No matter how many different interpretations one gives to this statement ... whether it means to be at peace with God, with one another, with himself ... Jesus didn't say, blessed are those who are at peace; he said, blessed those who *seek* peace, those who make peace happen.

"Could it be that he only referred to those who seek peace for themselves? It sounds so selfish, so individualistic, so ... non-Jesus like.... Could it be that he was referring to those who only sought peace with their backyard neighbors or among his social circle of friends?

"Did he not seek to include the world's Caesars and their inhabitants as those who had the responsibility to seek peace as well? Could the same Jesus who commands Christians to love their neighbors and their enemies have been so remiss, so indifferent to war ... to that which destroys what his Father and he

accomplished ... Creation and Redemption ... that he would not want human beings to strive for peace, to avoid war?

"The term *peace* means something very specific. Sure, it means, among other things, the absence of disorder or civil disturbance, the lack of anger and hatred, a state of internal tranquility ... But it also means the absence of war, violence, armed hostility, whether civil or international, whether the guerrilla type, conventional or nuclear.... I mean ... is it too difficult to accept the proposition that when nations are at war they're not at peace? ... That's not rocket science!"

"Are you suggesting that Jesus was a realist in the sense that he accepted the fact that war was going to happen no matter what?" asked Mr. Dickerson.

"Something like that," replied Mr. Hunt. "If Jesus praised those who make peace, it must have been because he expected that some of those people God had created and redeemed were going to pay lip service to his commandments. It seems reasonable to conclude, as you say, that Jesus expected that war was going to afflict humankind. But, unlike natural disasters over which humans have little or no control, Jesus thought or knew that preventing war was quite possible, thus, he praised peacemakers."

Mr. Dickerson was not entirely satisfied, so he kept pressing Mr. Hunt. "Let me ask you, let's say that Christian ethics command heads of states to conduct themselves properly in their domestic and international affairs. This means that they will be sensitive to the concerns of other nations; that they will respect their own citizens; that justice and peace will be foremost goals in their foreign policy, and so on.

"But, what happens if in spite of acting properly and ethically, a nation still faces the imminence of war? Is there anything it can do to prevent war? Aren't its leaders under a moral obligation to look after the well being and the security of its people?"

"Of course they are!" replied Mr. Hunt. "The problem is that well being and security are terms that can be defined in very different ways depending on the situation at hand.

"Jesus' commandment would dictate that governments should try to do as much as possible to deter war. Human prudence would tell us that deterrence may be accomplished by entering into pacts and alliances or by developing the military means to discourage an aggressor. Sometimes, however, such alternatives might not be feasible and appeasement or surrender might become the wisest of all viable policies in order to avoid unnecessary bloodshed, and I'd like to underscore the word *unnecessary*."

"Wait a second ... *surrender*?" asked Mr. Edson.

"I realize that you raise this question from the perspective of the United States being the most powerful military nation in the world, Michael, which means that we never surrender, right?" declared Mr. Hunt.

“But think about this for a minute. If you’re five feet tall and wish to oppose a six foot bully who’s haunting or threatening you, you may want to risk your own life if you happen to be driven by self-pride, fear of being humiliated, or if you think that you have nothing to lose anyways. But if you’re the head of the family and all that your opposition to the bully would bring about is the possible death of your children and your wife ... then, depending on the circumstances, surrender might not be a dishonorable or immoral alternative. It all depends on how you define what well being and security mean to you and the circumstances surrounding you at the time.”

“If I may intervene for a minute,” said Captain Francis, “let’s not forget that as head of the nation, you’re responsible for the well being and security of all the citizens. And if you’re Kuwait, Austria, or Poland and the opposition is called Saddam Hussein, Adolph Hitler, or Stalin; or if you’re Hungary or Czechoslovakia, the opposition is Moscow, and no one comes to assist you; or if you’re the United States and the opposition is not only Hanoi, but a large sector of the American people opposes you, too, well ... avoiding unnecessary bloodshed until the tide turns may be a respectable and moral ... not to say prudent ... decision. Political leaders, I think, should never try to personify the nation and its citizens under these circumstances, precisely in order to prevent a shooting-from-the-hip approach to decision making.”

“Thank you, Captain, that was most timely,” I said. “Please, go on Mr. Hunt.”

“Thank you ... Getting back to the main issue, does that mean that under no circumstances may a nation repel an aggressor? What about helping another nation that is being attacked? Is there anything in Jesus’ words that could possibly compel us ... as Christians, or as upholders of his values ... to engage in that which goes against his own commandments ... in other words, to opt for war?”

“I believe there is.... And the answer, I think, lies in Jesus’ own apparent contradictions.... We know what it means to love one’s enemies, but, what exactly does it mean to love one’s neighbor as much as you love yourself, particularly from the perspective of the political leadership? Doesn’t it mean to protect the lives of the citizens, to ensure their well being, to do as much as possible to keep them from harms way? ...

“Again, let’s use the analogy of the head of the household. What parent would not try to protect his or her family from danger if there were means to do so? Isn’t it love and responsibility what compels the parent?”

“The money or time you all donated to help the victims of Katrina went to people you didn’t know, which means that moral responsibility to love one’s neighbor has nothing to do with geographical distance or kinship. And one would hope that in the case of political leaders, Jesus’ commandment will have nothing to do with party affiliation.”

"In the end, this commandment should not have anything to do with sentiments either. Although it's nice to have, feelings do falter at times. So, at least the way I interpret Jesus' commandment, having to love one's neighbor ultimately may require an act of will to do that which we might not feel like doing, or that which we have been commanded not to do: taking the life of one's enemy.

"You're supposed to love your enemy, even forgive him. But you're also supposed to love your neighbor. Under very specific circumstances, these two imperatives can become, indeed, a zero-sum proposition. If you opt to love your enemy, you may end up hurting those you're supposed to love, and vice-versa. So, how does one begin to reconcile a square and a circle while keeping the features of both?

"You start thinking in terms of a polygon. You do as much as possible to prevent war; which at times may entail appeasement or surrender; at other times, an alliance or military build-up. But, at other times, deterrence may no longer be possible, and the result is war."

"You're saying that you're given two directives," said Mr. Edson, "and you opt for loving one's neighbor over loving one's enemy. I have to presume that opting for the former is not arbitrary. Does that mean that both don't carry the same weight, that love of neighbor is far more important?"

"Yes," replied Mr. Hunt, "but I don't think such a decision should imply a casual disregard for loving one's enemy, unless we believe that Jesus had nothing better to do with his time. Having to love one's enemy ... I'm sure we'll agree ... goes against our human nature; it's not only a radical concept, it's a violent one!

"We have to do violence to our minds and to our emotions in order to bring ourselves to this state of sublimation of our passions. But I think this was Jesus' litmus test on war. He was giving us an indication of the extent beyond which we have to go before we could accept war.

"This view coincides with the rationale behind the modern Christian version of the *Just War Theory* in which war as the very last resort is regarded ... as we will see ... as an essential condition for justifying military action. And it may be no small coincidence as well that, procedurally, the concept of war as a last resort has become incorporated into the United Nation's secularly-expressed charter.⁴

"So, Yes, love of one's neighbor becomes more important, but for an obvious reason that all human beings likely will appreciate: the innocent and the just, particularly in God's Kingdom, have precedence over the guilty and the unjust, even though God may continue to love both."

"Thank you, Mr. Hunt," I said. "Now, let's move into the next phase of the exercise: identifying the principles that make up the *Just War Theory*. Ms.

Lewis, Mr. Wasserman, and Captain Francis, I believe you have the bulk of the presentation at this time.”

“Thank you,” said Ms. Lewis. “Mr. Hunt, Mr. Wasserman, the Captain, and I spent some hours during the week figuring out how each of us were going to proceed, so we all had the benefit of Mr. Hunt’s ideas before tonight. We will go ahead and identify the main principles of the *Just War Theory* and describe some of the challenges they present in trying to accommodate the theory to current political reality.

“The idea behind the first of these principles is that *the cause or reason for committing the nation to war must be a just one....* This principle requires that the external conditions and circumstances that guide the leadership on its decision to wage war or to support armed conflict be reviewed and considered in light of Gospel-based values.

“Particularly nowadays, the widespread availability of public information and means of communications allow the government and its citizens to gain first, second, and third-hand knowledge regarding the issues that may lead the nation into war. Although this collective knowledge may be tainted by misperceptions, flawed intelligence, predisposed attitudes, or disinformation, it still serves as the essential elements of a most critical decision.

“Because so much is at stake when it comes to war, the government bears the responsibility to carefully examine and share with the public enough information to allow citizens to express their views, particularly if support is being requested before committing the nation to war.

“At the same time, it must be realized that there may be instances in which the leadership might not have sufficient time to inform the public of its decision either because of the secretive nature of the military operation or because the immediacy of the threat would not allow it. In any case, the leadership is always morally ... and possibly legally ... responsible for failures in this regard and should be held accountable within reason.

“As knowledge of the conditions and circumstances surrounding the decision to engage in war becomes available, it needs to be carefully reviewed and discerned by the leadership and the citizens. The primary means to discern whether shedding the blood of American soldiers and that of our opponents is a just venture will always be one’s individual conscience, collectively expressed through the political leadership and the citizenry.”

“One question, if I may,” said Mr. Brandon. “One’s conscience is a pretty intangible element. How reliable is it as a means to decide upon something as crucial as going to war?”

“That is precisely the purpose of the *Just War* criteria, to help government leaders and the citizens to evaluate the information at hand. We all heard Mr. Hunt provide the Gospel-driven view of the theory as it relates to war. Those

values that Mr. Hunt identified facilitate our review and allow us to make personal judgments about the circumstances leading the nation into war.

“For example, the first limitation we face with discerning a *just cause* ... assuming the information surrounding the circumstances is accurate ... is that justice tends to be in the mind of the beholder. There are elements that may affect the political leadership’s judgment and predispose the conscience of its citizens, thereby distorting a *just cause*. Among these are ideology, political expediency, fear, self-interest, ethnocentrism, and self-righteousness, just to name a few.

“Thus, responding to an attack brought about by another nation following years of abuses by the attacked nation doesn’t indicate the presence of a *just cause*. On the contrary, it is possible that the nation initiating the attack might be justified in seeking to end years of injustice.

“Likewise, stirring covert unrest within another country and following with a military intervention to install a government in power that is more favorable to one’s interests under the rationale of stabilizing the situation, also cannot be regarded as a *just cause* to resort to war, the reason being that human lives are being used for political ends.

“Ambiguity and subjectivity while evaluating the national conscience may be considerably lessened by a review of our common national values—what traditionally we have stood for—and by disciplining oneself to remain open-minded and willing to receive and review as much information and criticism as necessary. In other words, a national dialogue is extremely important whenever war is being considered.

“Further, internationally accepted principles of justice, such as those contained in the United Nations Charter and the Geneva Convention, provide a blueprint of the *modus operandi* that we as a nation have chosen to accept and which may also serve as guidelines to decision making.

“In the end, if the political leadership and its citizens truly believe in abiding by a Christian-based theory of *Just War*, it will define a *just cause* as one the leadership decides, not on the basis of a narrow interpretation of its national interest that can be vitiated by any of the elements I just mentioned, but by reconciling the rules of the international community, our national values, the domestic needs of our citizens, the needs of others, and the values that are spelled out in the Gospel.

“This is not a matter of religious or moral piety but a rational commitment on the part of the political leadership and the citizens to be bound by that which they say they believe in. After all, isn’t this what followers of political parties or religious ideologies usually would do? The difference is that, in this case, they would substitute their own group values with Gospel values.”

“Any questions?” asked Ms. Lewis. “Yes, Mr. Dickerson.”

“What happens if the political leadership manipulates those elements you mentioned and end up rationalizing a *just cause*?”

“Good question,” she replied. “Presumably that can happen.”

Upon seeing Ms. Lewis hesitation, I intervened. “Yes, for sure that can happen. However, let’s not think that there’s an easy way out. The leadership may, indeed, arrive at a misconceived notion of a *just cause*, but it’s not this principle alone that decides whether a war is *just* or not; it’s marking “yes” on all the principles on the checklist.... It’s not whether the leadership meets three- or five-out-of-eight principles, but whether it meets all that will decide the question. So, even if the leader is able to manipulate a *just cause*, he still would have to meet the other principles as well.”

“Thank you, sir,” said Ms. Lewis.

“The second principle in the *Just War Theory*,” she continued, “was significant in the past but, in my view, has lost much of its relevance today. I’m referring to *the need for wars to be lawfully declared by a lawful authority*.”

“The reason I say that the concept has lost relevance nowadays is because there is always the possibility that oppressed groups constituting themselves in some sort of liberation fronts may wage *Just Wars* against their oppressors inside the country or across borders.

“These groups, of course, likely wouldn’t enjoy formal legal authority to declare a lawful war. Nonetheless, the United States, for example, would want to review the justness of a guerrilla war to determine whether it would be ethical or not to extend its support to the group. We must remember that Spartacus was only a slave who led a rebellion against the Roman Empire. He neither constituted a lawful authority nor could he have legally declared war. Still....

“Another problem with this principle is the need for there to be a declaration of war. As we will see, the *Just War Theory* allows for the possibility of an ethically justified preemptive attack; that is, an unannounced, undeclared, sudden assault against the opponent.

“Initially, the significance of a declaration of war in *Just War Theory* was based on denying the attacker the possibility of a surreptitious attack, because in the old days such action was not considered too honorable. However, a justifiable preemptive war not only negates a lawful declaration of war; it makes a declaration of war somewhat of an oxymoron ... Mr. Wasserman, your turn.”

“Thank you, Ms. Lewis.... Let’s see, the third principle ... *the leaders’ motives for waging war must be morally good*. This principle is as significant as it is problematic. Insofar as adequate and reliable information becomes available, it is possible for government officials and citizens to judge the justness of a cause.

“In the case of us citizens, however, how do we gain access into the conscience of those who decide to wage war in order to find out if they are well intentioned? ... This poses a real problem in a democracy because citizens find

themselves at the mercy of the political leadership's competence and honesty in revealing their intentions and disclosing information to the public."

"Well, not only that, but what may we regard as morally good intentions? Isn't that kind of subjective, too?" asked Ms. Bynum.

"In a manner of speaking, yes," replied Mr. Wasserman. "That is why we rely on what our elected leaders tell us about their intentions for going to war. These intentions refer to the ultimate ends that are being pursued ... to the outcome the leadership expects out of the war. So the leadership's intentions become public through their disclosure of the reasons why we go to war.

"Along these lines, if a pursued outcome can be reconciled with Gospel-based values, provided the leaders meet the other principles in the theory, this criterion would be found to be acceptable.... Example, if President Bush would have said that he was attacking Iraq in order to ensure the continued availability of oil supplies for the American economy, I don't think his intentions would pass the test, even if the American people were to support him ... the reason being that we would be attacking another nation in order to appropriate its resources for our own use."

"Do you believe those were the hidden reasons for which we are in Iraq?" asked Mr. Dickerson.

"No, I don't," he replied, "and so far, there's no evidence pointing in that direction; but, again, in the end, only very few individuals would truly know what the President's intentions were."

"On more question, please," said Mr. Edson. "What about if a leader deceives the nation, the people buy into his deception, and we end up fighting an unjust war?"

"That's an issue that is being heatedly debated nowadays, isn't it, Michael?" replied Ms. Lewis. "Well, if we were to find out that, indeed, there was deception, but the conflict has begun, things get very messy, both politically and morally.

"On one end, the leadership could be held legally or constitutionally accountable for its misdeeds. At the same time, the entire political leadership and the citizenry have the moral responsibility to review the situation to find out if bringing an unjustified conflict to an end would be possible without triggering elements that may result in an even worse crisis."

"Thank you," said Mr. Edson.

"Next principle ... *war must be the very last resort after other alternatives have been exhausted,*" continued Mr. Wasserman. "This is understandable; someone who claims to abide by Judeo-Christian values realizes that war is not and ought not to be an immediate response to conflict; that, instead, war should be avoided as much as possible.

"Now ... as with the concept of *just cause*, this principle is a bit complex, too. Observance of this principle requires having to incorporate significant ele-

ments into the leadership's decision-making process, among them, reliable information, timing, viable alternatives, a scope analysis of the threat posed by the enemy, and the personal discipline, courage, and willingness to make decisions on the basis of one's beliefs."

"Can you make it a bit easier for us to understand what the heck you're saying?" said Mr. Edson.

"I'll try.... under most circumstances both the government and its people receive public information allowing them to observe how conditions begin to unfold to the point when war becomes potentially imminent. This window of information actually may be quite large; the only time I can think of a situation that would not allow enough information would be that of a surprise preventive nuclear attack that is not preceded by any show of animosity or hostile actions by another government.

"Other than that, during a crisis, the principle of war as a last resort requires the leadership to focus on actions that minimize rather than exacerbate tensions. The leadership should be engaging in actions that would tend to diffuse the crisis rather than in warmongering rhetoric and/or provocative behavior.

"We must be mindful of the level of apprehension and uncertainty that usually prevails among political leaders and the population at a time when consideration is given to having to recur to war. These instances usually trigger emotional, psychological pressures that, even when hidden—or precisely because of these being hidden or repressed—could result in less than well-thought and well-planned decisions and alternatives. In other words, decision-making under high levels of stress or pressure can lead to disastrous courses of action, not only on the part of the political leadership; in a democracy, the risk becomes even greater when the citizenry is involved. While leaders are afforded the opportunity of being somewhat more rational, more detached—it's their primary business, after all—the citizenry, acting as a whole, is not typically given to these "eccentricities."

"Another potential problem is that overconfidence could lead the leadership to mischaracterize the opponent's actions without considering potential avenues to prevent war. Also, you have the opposite condition, one in which overstated fear may lead political leaders into surrendering, recklessly appeasing the enemy, or ordering a preventive attack.

"Timing is also extremely and morally significant. Once all diplomatic possibilities have been exhausted and it becomes the collective conscience of the leadership that war is imminent, it is morally incumbent upon the political leadership to wage war under most propitious military terms. We must bear in mind that rushing into war without being militarily ready and possibly losing a justified war can be morally reprehensible.

"Initiation of justified hostilities also should be delayed until the government feels capable of waging war successfully. Moreover, the government may

opt for delaying hostilities if doing so could considerably weaken the enemy and possibly avert war. On the other hand, circumstances may require a sooner rather than a delayed attack if intelligence information dictates the imminence of war.

“Another important element is the scope of the threat that the enemy presents. War as a last resort means that we don’t necessarily initiate military conflict if another government bad-mouth us, expels one of our diplomats, burns an effigy of the president or even desecrates our national flag. Why? ... Because there are corresponding ways to deal with these acts. As repulsive or unspeakable as these actions may be, war is far more destructive, and more repulsive and unspeakable.

“Not observing the principle of war as a last resort evokes the times when glory and honor were considered more significant than human lives. Today, we expect our elected officials to possess the necessary self discipline, courage, and willingness to abide by those values they claim to uphold.”

“Thank you, Mr. Wasserman.... Captain, please,” said Ms. Lewis as she signaled Captain Francis to continue with the presentation.



“Sure.... This next principle, relates to the outcome of a war,” Captain Francis began by saying. “It states *that the political leaders must see to it that any war they start is planned in such a manner that success must be reasonably assured.*

“Although it is understood that a successful outcome can never be guaranteed, this principle suggests that once the decision is made to go to war, careful attention needs to be paid to all elements that usually affect the outcome. These include not only appropriate military planning, but international and/or domestic political support, release of accurate public information, and a review of all possible negative repercussions following the attack along with plans to mitigate their effects. The most important consideration involving this principle can be stated in reverse: it is morally wrong to begin a war whose successful outcome cannot be reasonably assured, which is why the planning stages are so crucial.

“The rationale behind this principle is that *just wars* are only fought to defend oneself from an unjustified attack or to defend those who have been unjustly attacked or treated. The implication is that carelessly engaging in war in a manner that sacrifices the outcome is morally reprehensible and political leaders should be held accountable for their failures, particularly if failure to attain the war’s objectives leads to a worsening of the situation.

“At the same time, this principle requires the understanding that a successful outcome may not necessarily imply having to completely annihilate the enemy. Victory needs to be understood in terms of fully attaining the initial objectives while inflicting the least amount of destruction.

“Further, in a democracy, the leadership always has to take into account two unreliable partners during wartime: political support and the economy. When an ongoing war doesn’t go well, no matter how much support they may have promised the leadership at one time, voters may desert their leaders.

“Lately, for example, according to polls on the Iraq war, the American people, who initially were quite supportive of the war, have become the president’s Runaway Bride, having left him for the most part at the political altar, suggesting that the electorate is an unreliable partner which is why the leadership can’t take it for granted. When this happens, one concern is that, seeking to turn the tide in their favor, political leaders may opt for short sighted, expeditious solutions that instead lead to even more critical errors.

“The other unreliable partner is the economy. If the war effort brings about disruptions to the economy, the leadership will hear from voters as well.”

“You’re suggesting that public support and the economy are moral elements in the *Just War Theory*?” asked Ms. Williamson.

“No, not that these are moral elements, but that they are real constraints that political leaders need to take into account. In other words, it would be foolishly immoral to begin a war in a democracy without the support of the citizens.... A war, after all, is not only about soldiers dying; it’s about children, parents, brothers and sisters, nephews, grandchildren, and friends dying. So, shouldn’t the leadership ask permission to conduct a war to those who will risk losing a loved one?

“Moreover, while the American people understand that freedom and the material benefits and security derived from our standing in the world are not free, they very much want a sensible return on their money. And, war is economically costly; people don’t necessarily enjoy seeing their hard earned dollars going to a war that promises no end in sight or one that is poorly fought.... Sooner or later, these expectations may force a government to come to terms with itself, as we all learned from the Vietnam experience.

“Still another principle that must be met according to the *Just War Theory*,” continued the captain, “is that *prior to the leadership engaging in armed conflict, consideration must be given to plans for a just and fair peace among all the parties in the conflict*. Such consideration involves reconciling a realistic assessment of whether the initial war objectives have been attained through Gospel values regarding establishment of a just settlement. Such settlement, however, sometimes may be quite harsh and may involve bringing the opposition’s leadership’s to account before legal tribunals.

“Along these lines, it is important for our citizens to understand that, in victory, our government and our people are required to treat enemy soldiers and the civilian population with compassion and fairness.”

“Why should we do so, Captain?” asked Mr. Edson. “I mean, fighting a *just war* indicates that we’re not responsible for the conflict.”

“You’re right, that’s what it means,” answered the captain. “Nonetheless, we have to be mindful that so-called enemy soldiers and civilians are often forced to fight and/or show their support toward an unjust war. In other words, many of them might not be in agreement with the conflict; they may be innocent parties who may have little choice but to tow the leadership’s line. Such recognition is observed in principles contained in The Hague and Geneva Conventions to guide the conduct of nations during and after the cessation of hostilities.”



Captain Francis looked over his notes and continued. “I would like to briefly discuss the morality of three important types of wars at this time, because they can be vital in our understanding of the theory.... We have first, what is known as a *Preventive War*, and there are two scenarios under which such a war may take place: one, in which the government initiates military conflict under the reasonable belief that war, although not imminent, is inevitable and would involve greater risks if postponed; the other one, in which the leaders foresee eventual threats by another nation or group and, even though no conflict is imminent, decide nonetheless to take early action that would favor the odds of victory as opposed to confronting the enemy after it becomes better prepared militarily.

“Neither one of these scenarios would be morally justified by the *Just War Theory*. As a matter of fact, not even the United Nations Charter legitimizes a *Preventive War*.... Article 51 in the Charter makes it very clear that, only if attacked, may a nation engage in war as an act of self-defense.”

“May I ask what ethical rationale is there for a preventive war not being morally justifiable?” asked Mr. Brandon. “From my standpoint, it makes a lot of sense to me that if I foresee a threat in the near future I would want to deal with it before it explodes in my face.”

“It does appear to make sense,” replied Captain Francis. “It would also seem to make some sort of sense for me to shoot you if I happen to think that some day you might want to kill me, wouldn’t it? ... The question is whether what seems to make military sense makes ethical and practical sense as well; otherwise, you may end up acting unethically and committing serious errors that, at the time, appeared to make sense.”

“But wouldn’t the ethical and the political and military strategy collide,” demanded Ms. Williamson.

“Not at all!” replied the captain. “What the ethical guideline seeks to accomplish is to prevent you from implementing policies that are unethical but without sacrificing the nation’s security. The purpose behind this principle is precisely to avoid unnecessary bloodshed.... Let me explain.

“From a military standpoint, it wouldn’t be difficult to show why a *Preventive War* cannot ever be morally justified, much less by Christian-based values. The basic premises for a *Preventive War* are beliefs, assumptions, suppositions, intuitions, expectations, premonitions, even partial information, that an enemy state may attack you some time in the future.

“Driven by fear, expansionist desires, insecurity, or on account of power struggles, political leaders would then decide to act by anticipating events that *may* or *may not* materialize. In other words, they would make a calculated guess ... take a gamble, while using human lives as betting money, without any certainty that the enemy will, indeed, attack you.”

“Does that mean that in order to meet *Just War* criteria we may have to take it on the chin first?” asked Mr. Edson.

“I understand how you feel, Michael, and it’s, indeed, a tough one to accept,” replied the captain. “Nonetheless, think about it from a different angle. To begin with, Preventive wars not only do not meet the last-resort criterion, they are not even a first-resort action; we’re talking about anticipating the *possibility* of an action, which is why Preventive wars trivialize human lives, ours and the enemy’s, the innocent as well as the evil ones.

“Even one of the most prominent scholars from the Realist School has acknowledged the extent to which public opinion has changed against preventive wars:

*It is especially in the refusal to consider seriously the possibility of preventive war, regardless of the expediency in view of the national interest, that the moral condemnation of war as such has manifested itself in recent times in the Western world. When war comes, it must come as a natural catastrophe or as the evil deed of another nation, not as a foreseen and planned culmination of one’s foreign policy.*⁵

“One major problem with the concept of Preventive war is that it dilutes legal and moral institutional restraints on warfare and replaces them with a sort of *if-they-can-do-it, so-can-we* mentality; everyone would want to do the same! How can we pretend that our world, our nation, will be more secure if we proceed in this fashion? ...

“Far from contributing to world security, Preventive wars tend to heighten insecurity because they transfer the causes and origins of wars from specific evil deeds to vague elements such as perception, hearsay, and uncertainty; Preventive wars shift the responsibility of conflict from specific human actions such as

an attack, to emotional conditions such as anxiety or suspicion. In other words, distrust, which is inherent in world affairs, is not enough of a moral reason to start a war, just like one simply doesn't shoot a person he dislikes because he thinks that eventually he might be attacked."

"That's how President Bush proceeded in Afghanistan and Iraq!" yelled an irate Mr. Edson.

"Not true!" claimed Ms. Bynum. "Don't you read the newspapers? Those were preemptive actions; there's a difference, you know."

"I believe I've been unceremoniously interrupted," remarked the captain.

"Yes you have," I said. "It was most unfortunate ... and rude. Please, Captain ... proceed."

"Thank you. Actually, I was about to discuss preemptive war."

"Sorry," said Mr. Edson.

"Don't worry.... A *preemptive attack*," continued the captain, "is one in which the national leadership becomes aware that an attack by an enemy nation, or group, is about to take place, and the targeted nation beats the other to the punch; you anticipate your opponent by doing to him what he was going to do to you, had you not done it first...."

"The term *preemptive warfare* became part of the nuclear warfare strategic vocabulary once it was determined that both Moscow and Washington had the capability to deliver nuclear missiles against each other in a very short period of time. Thus, if one of the powers somehow realized that the other one was going to fire missiles against it, it would seek to prevent the attack from happening by launching its own missiles first, hoping to destroy the enemy's weapons before they could be fired.

"Setting aside the question of whether a nuclear attack can ever be justified, since it involves the massive killing of civilians, in conventional warfare, this strategy would fall under the category of a morally justified defensive attack, because all you're doing is defending yourself from an impending strike. The difference in moral terms between a *preemptive* and a *preventive* attack is that in the former there's awareness that an attack is imminent. In the case of a preventive war, there's only the probability, or possibility, that an attack may take place sometime in the future.

"Last category of warfare is one in which the government doesn't participate directly ... meaning physically ... in the conflict but encourages it or actively supports it by supplying weapons and/or any other type of logistical assistance to one of the warring parties. Many call this type of military conflict *proxy wars* because someone else does the fighting for you.... The question is whether this type of war would be justified under the *Just War Theory*."

"I would think not," replied Ms. Williamson. "If we can only exercise limited influence over the forces we support, how can we guarantee its outcome or how do we know how those we support would end up behaving themselves?"

Besides, fighting a proxy war is kind of cowardly and hypocritical; you don't want to get your hands dirty, you don't want others to know, so you let others do it on your behalf."

"Well, Ms. Williamson, let's think about what you just said," replied the captain. "Think World War II, 1939, 1940.... Germany had invaded Poland and much of Western Europe. The United States had seen its friends being attacked and had become involved in the war by sending military equipment and providing logistical support to the Allies.... Moral or immoral? ... Weren't the Allies involved in an unprovoked defensive war? ...

"Or, suppose that a low intensity conflict begins to take place in the Sudan while the United States is in the midst of fighting wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. We believe that it is just and fair that we intervene to defend innocent populations that are being slaughtered or driven from their homes. But we realize that we cannot stretch our military personnel any further, so we decide to provide logistical support or financial assistance to others to do the fighting.... Moral or immoral?"

"Very well," she replied. "Does that mean that the morality of proxy wars obeys different criteria?"

"No.... Within the framework of the *Just War Theory*, proxy wars are simply wars like any other. By this I mean that we have to apply the same criteria we apply to any other type of war. Are the causes just? ... What are the intentions underlying the parties involved? Perhaps neither party is justified, and we have to act as arbiters!

"Or those whom we support ... are they the good guys? How do we know? Are the parties involved in a war of attrition that will last for years? Does the conflict meet the 'war as a last resort' criterion? ... Only then can we pass judgment and decide whether we're morally justified in supporting one side of the war or not.

"That's it," said the captain. "Those are the categories of war according to how they begin.... Oh! I almost forgot, Ms. Lewis, I believe you had asked me to briefly deal with the conduct of the political leadership and the military throughout the war. Should I do it now?" asked the captain.

"I think so. We might as well describe these principles now and then jump to the practical portion of the exercise," she said.

"Very well, then, just briefly, let me go over these. We have spoken already about one of these principles: *civilians not considered part of the war effort cannot be targeted.*

"Right away we notice the many difficulties that begin to ensue. On the one hand, some will say that individuals working within the military-industrial complex are civilian-soldiers and may be rightfully targeted; others will correctly attest that in many instances, particularly as it relates to authoritarian

governments, civilians are forced to support the war effort by working in military-related industries.

“We also touched upon soldiers, guerrilla fighters, and other types of combatants who dwell or hide among civilians, seeking to manipulate the good guys’ war ethics to their advantage, hoping that civilian populations ... along with them ... will be spared. These are limitations, no doubt, in our ability to deal with the enemy, and frankly, there are no easy answers.

“But, we must remember who we are; as a society, we didn’t justify the killing of innocent people in Waco, Texas, while law enforcement authorities pursued those wanted by the law.... Well, from the standpoint of Christian-based values, there’s no difference when it comes to innocent people; innocent Americans are neither more innocent nor more deserving to live than innocent civilians in other countries. We’re all the same in the eyes of God....”

“Is that view supposed to offer us comfort?” asked Mr. Edson, again conflicted.

“It’s always harder on the good guys, Michael, that’s why they earn the title of “good guys,” replied Captain Francis.



“Let me go to the next one ... *Just War Theory* requires that the use of military force be proportional to the wrongfulness or injustice that led to the initiation of the conflict. Actually, this is a principle of law that we observe in the United States; the punishment should fit the crime.

“The objectives that *Just War Theory* pursues are to restore conditions to what they were before the conflict started, to ensure just reparations, and to prevent recurrence of the incident.

“Meeting these objectives may signify having to disarm or regulate the enemy’s weapon production, limiting the scope of its military activities, forcing fair reparations, or even removing the leadership from power. What this principle seeks to avoid, however, are those excesses that war tends to engender through hatred and revenge and that quite often go beyond rightful and fair punishment and justice.

“The idea is to prevent more harm through the use of force than what the use of force itself seeks to accomplish. It certainly doesn’t mean that the same amount of military power used by the enemy should be utilized to defeat him. Thus, a military strategy based on the preponderance of force, as opposed to a lengthy war of attrition, might be morally adequate if it shortens the war and reduces the killing ...

“One word of caution, proportionality also relates to the incident itself. This means that not all actions by the enemy necessarily warrant a military reply or

the indiscriminate targeting of innocent civilian populations. This last stipulation is very important, for too often our responses are rather expeditious and we end up following policies that tend to diminish the value of human life.

“For example, it has been alleged that any discussion of proportionality must embrace an overall calculation of the entire conflict in which *any civilian lives lost must be balanced against civilian lives saved*.⁶ One immediate problem we face here is that this principle follows the same rule of thumb as preventive wars: having to rely on guesses or estimates of what might happen in a future that neither political leaders nor combatants can control.

“Moreover, this principle subtly allows the targeting of innocent civilian populations in the hope that, in the end, a greater number of innocent lives on our side might be saved. But ... this view reflects two standards of human life, one that applies to the enemy’s civilian population and another that applies to our own. That is, we need to kill enough civilians on the enemy side to force them to surrender, hoping that if they do surrender it will save lives on our side.... Would this strategy work? It very well could, except that it we would be using innocent human lives as pawns in the war. Is there any moral rationale to support the view that numbers dictate morality in this case?”

“Well, there’s a practical one,” replied Mr. Edson. “Better their dead than ours; after all, we didn’t start the war. It’s the enemy’s responsibility to look after the well being of its citizens; they should bear the moral responsibility, not us.”

“In other words, punish the “bad guys” by punishing their innocent. A practical objection to this method is that the reason “bad guys” are bad is because they do not care for the well being of their citizens. We know that, yet we fall into an impractical aspect of an otherwise unethical behavior: our action makes the enemy look like the good guys. The “bad guys” will allow such punishment of their population to go on as long as possible, hoping that world reaction would become unfavorable against the “good guys.” At the end of the conflict, the supposed “good guys” end up being the “bad guys.” Case in point, Israel’s and the United States’ strategy against Hezbollah in Lebanon in 2006. If part of the reasons to go to war is justified through the perception that we are the good guys, I’m afraid that both Israel and the United States lost much of that justification in the eyes of the world.



“What else.... Oh, let me say a few words about the principle that, in my mind, makes the most and the least sense from a moral perspective: the humane *treatment of enemy forces by our military personnel*.... We know that there are international laws governing this aspect of warfare. Nonetheless, have we ever

asked ourselves if they are logical, if they make sense from a moral standpoint? ... Why should we care for those who unjustifiably try to kill us while seeking to destroy our way of life? Isn't this a sissy way of fighting a war?

"Consideration, compassion, mercy, fairness; aren't these attitudes that we need to show toward our troops? ... They're the ones risking their lives for us! Aren't they doing enough already for us to have to burden them even more with niceties that weaken their sense of honor and their morale?

"So, what if they exceed themselves at times? Can we blame them? Haven't we trained them to kill, and do so with utmost efficiency? Isn't that the object of war? Isn't that how we win wars? ... by killing more of them than they kill of us? ...

"And, if the enemy knows secrets that will help to shorten the war; if it knows where the weapons and the explosives are; if it knows where its leaders are hiding; what's wrong with employing whatever methods of interrogation we use as long as we get the information we desperately need to end the darn war so we can go on with our lives? ...

"Compassion? ... If the enemy hadn't done what it did they wouldn't be in the situation they're in."

"Captain, you're beginning to make sense," said Mr. Edson. "However, now I'm a bit confused, again, of course. I'm thinking, the *Just War Theory* is, well ... it is sentimental politics.... All this stuff about loving those who want your head ... no disrespect to Jesus, but ... to what extent is it helpful, or advantageous, or convenient? Is it stately? Are we likely to lose a *just war* over sentimental reasons?"

"I understand," replied the captain. "I said that some of these principles, particularly this last one, would appear not to make sense. So, let me argue the other side of the coin by saying first, that any ethical principle that presumably contributes to defeat in a *Just War* is impractical and unethical.... We must remember that one of the principles of the theory is that there must be reasonable assurances of a successful outcome.

"When President Bush admitted that one of the worst mistakes in the Iraq war had been the Abu Ghraib prison abuses, I can guarantee you that he wasn't talking sentimental politics; he was articulating the practical considerations of an ethical principle to which we as a nation are committed.

"Whether that makes us idiots or not is something that is up for debate, at least according to one senator from Oklahoma.... You see, terrorists don't feel ashamed when they behead, burn, and drag the bodies of our soldiers through the streets. And you can bet that that their interrogation methods do not comply with the Geneva Convention, as we witness what happens to our soldiers when they are caught by terrorists in Iraq.

“When terrorists act like terrorists, we criticize them for their barbaric behavior; we find their actions to be abominable. So, what happens to our shame, our credibility, and our honor when we start behaving similarly?”

“Ethical considerations are far from being gushy morality; they have a strong practical component. Failing to abide by a code of ethics tarnishes our credibility and our image internationally. It questions our values before the eyes of the world that can now argue that we’re no better morally than the enemy we fight....”

“For those who say, ‘so what?’ let me tell you ... there are two things that you try to seek in a modern war: you try to maintain and nurture international support for your cause because you don’t want to end up, unnecessarily, as the Lone Ranger. The Lone Ranger image is not even idealistic, it’s downright dumb. And when we rationalize the need to engage in the practice of abusing prisoners ... next thing you know, our people start demanding shortsighted, unethical solutions that may leave us even more vulnerable to international criticism....”

“The second element is that you don’t want to strengthen the enemy’s morale, much less its numbers. In an era of instant video communications, the killing of civilians or the abuse of prisoners will generate strongly motivated and hatred-filled terrorists as quickly as corn kernels burst open and become pop corn inside a microwave oven.

“Statesmen and politicians fail to realize that when the good guys fight a war they are really engaged in two conflicts: one is the physical conflict; the other one is the moral battle ... the one whereby we project and defend the principles over which the war is fought. In other words, a *Just War* inevitably involves the nation’s credibility, inevitably portrays an aura of legitimacy regarding the war.

“This principle is about not contradicting our nation’s values. It’s about loathing barbaric behavior, thus about not acting like barbarians. And we must remember, barbarians tend not to value human life the way we do.

“So, I hope you appreciate that this principle, Michael, is an extension of the nation’s values; it’s a representation of what we are and who we are in the world. Is it important that we abide by a different set of rules that makes us different from the other side in all respects? ... You better believe it!”

“I’m with you, Captain,” replied Mr. Edson. “My concern is that many politicians and war planners consider moral principles to be nothing more than platitudes that distract from the war effort. I’m afraid that if you walk into the War Room at the Pentagon or meet with the President to discuss war and you try to inject these views, they might simply look at you from the corner of their eyes and think you’re nuts.”

“You may be right,” I said. “However, wouldn’t that project us in a negative manner? ... Mr. Edson, are you aware how long it takes to plan a war? It takes years! And usually, it takes months to prepare for one.

“My question, then, shouldn't moral considerations—given their significance at a time of war—be taken into account, too? If war is inevitable, why can't we have sessions on moral strategies? Why are we humans so lax towards the innocent? Why in the process of pursuing the guilty do we sacrifice the innocent, who for all practical purposes we stand for?”

“I think it's because it's our innocent we care about, not theirs,” replied Mr. Edson.

“Again, you may be right, Mr. Edson,” I said. “But, isn't that kind of a having a double standard of morality? ... I think it's very unfortunate that many politicians and pundits analyze a war only from strategic and political angles while setting aside its ethical implications either because they don't consider these sufficiently important or mistakenly believe they are unrelated to politics.

“When the ethical is divorced from the political, that's usually when serious political mistakes tend to happen.... Captain, please, continue,” I said.

“Thank you. Having said that morality is important, we have to realize the environment in which our soldiers operate.... They are trained to kill and to do so efficiently. But have we asked ourselves who these soldiers are?

“Aren't they your regular NASCAR fans; your high school or college graduates; people who enjoy having a barbeque with their families along with a beer now and then; someone who grew up attending Sunday services, has a girl friend and expects to own a small business after the war; someone who comes from a small town or a large city?

“We're talking about men and women who normally would prefer to be watching a football game or going to the movies than being in the midst of a war; we're talking about your average Joe who, up till now, doesn't carry war scars, who has no reason to want to kill someone else.

“We're not talking about your prototype killing machine but individuals whose training takes place within a safe environment where there is no risk of being killed. Then, all of a sudden, we transfer them into real action where virtual reality and security disappear.

“Then, once in the field they not only are supposed to kill efficiently, they also are supposed to show ethical restraint when being shot at or when seeing buddies being blown into pieces.... That there haven't been more abuses in our wars would lead some to conclude that these soldiers are some sort of robot-cops, which of course, they're not.”

“Thank you, Captain,” I said. “It's now time to wrap things up for the evening.... Ms. Lewis has provided all of you with summaries of tonight's presentation. Next week, we will utilize all this information on a practical exercise.... I believe that you will find that there's certainly much less subjectivity on Gospel-based values than I anticipated which, when combined with the information we have, should provide a reliable approach to evaluate ... pass judg-

ment if you will, on the wars our country is now engaged in. So, until then, have a good evening.”

Endnotes

¹ Cicero, *On Duties*, Book I, Translation by Walter Miller, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1913), on line.

² St. Augustine, *The City of God*, Book XIX, chapters 11 & 12, translated by Rev. Marcus Dodds, American Edition, 1887, on line edition.

³ See the Gospel of St. Matthew, verses 3-10. Some interpret these norms of moral conduct in a very individualistic and passive manner; others give the Beatitudes an external or social interpretation. Yet, others spiritualize these rules of conduct to the point whereby the believer might not even need to interrelate with others and still claim their observance. Many have rejected ascribing these values to people who find themselves in circumstances similar to the Beatitudes, because they do not partake in the faith; thus, innocent Muslims who mourn the death of relatives killed in wars, or Jews who are persecuted and insulted, or humanists who may be clean of heart, are not, according to this view, part of those Jesus intended to praise. Others do the opposite; they believe that God feels a great deal of compassion for those who are materially poor, those who are humble, or those who are merciful, although this view gives God the credit for granting people the grace that enables them to bear their condition or for behaving in accordance with Jesus' words.

⁴ See Charter of the United Nations, Chapters VI and VII.

⁵ Morgenthau, Hans, *Politics Among Nations*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Fifth Edition, 1978), p. 232.

⁶ Rivkin, David B. Jr. and Casey, Less A., “Israel Is Within Its Rights”, *The Washington Post*, July 26, 2006. Note: My comment in the text does not refer to the article itself on the rights of Israel to attack Hezbollah in Lebanon.

12

Just Wars or just wars?

“Good evening, everyone,” I said. “This evening we will continue with our topic on foreign policy and the concept of *Just War*. We’re going to apply the *Just War* criteria that some of you developed last week to all three wars in which the United States is currently involved, starting with the war in Afghanistan.

“But before we begin, I would like for someone to tell me if it is useful to engage in this type of exercise? In other words, is this something purely theoretical or are there any practical considerations that we might derive from this exercise?... Anyone?... Mr. Dickerson!”

“Well, war is neither theoretical nor abstract; that’s what our discussion was all about last week. So, insofar as the *Just War* criteria providing the politicians and the electorate with principles that help guide them when facing the possibility of war, I think it would be an invaluable tool.

“Further, I think the majority of Americans, whether religious believers or not, have some sort of built-in moral compass that allows us to evaluate public policy and the behavior of our politicians.... Now, I don’t know how religious our national leaders truly are; most acknowledge their religious background in public; they say they go to church; they all say they pray.... In President Bush’s case, well, he’s an evangelical Christian, so the *Just War* criteria would be an adequate yardstick to evaluate what he and others in his team say they believe in.”

“Let’s see ... the criteria help voters to hold our elected officials accountable and might come in handy to politicians themselves when making decisions,” I said, summarizing Mr. Dickerson’s point. “Very well, anything else?”

“Yes,” replied Ms. Vanhurst. “Mr. Dickerson made a significant notation. Let’s not forget that this theory of war may apply to non-believers, too, since its values are universally recognized in their secularized form. The theory can be adopted by any political leader, Christian or not, whether Vladimir Putin and Hu Jintao, as well as by George Bush, Ehud Olmert or even Mahmoud Ahmadinejad himself, a devout Muslim.... After all, I think the value of this criteria is, primarily, to discourage and to prevent political leaders ... ours as well as others ... from engaging in unnecessary or unjust armed conflicts. The crite-

ria serve as an international moral law that, if observed, could reduce the possibilities of war.

“Then, of course, if political leaders fail to abide by these principles, it would be up to the citizens to hold their leaders accountable for their policies.... That’s how important the role of citizens can be, particularly when it comes to war.”

“Thank you, anyone else? ... Very well, let’s begin,” I said. “Afghanistan ... Mr. Radusky!”

“I think that Afghanistan presents a rather clear-cut case of a morally justified defensive war, at least in terms of its cause,” he began by saying. “I’m not suggesting that al-Qaeda may not have a bone to pick with our policy in the Middle East or with our way of life; that’s beside the point.... The question I asked myself was whether our government’s policies ... or we as a nation ... were so evil that others could feel justified in conducting a 9/11 attack ... and frankly, there’s nothing, I believe, that could possibly justify 9/11 ... nothing.”

“In my view, there seems to be no doubt that the causes or reasons for attacking the Afghan government for harboring terrorists were more than justified. The majority of all nations agreed with us and expressed their revulsion at the 9/11 attacks.... Even Pope John Paul II, who enormously disliked violence to the point of even forgiving the man who attempted to assassinate him, understood that governments had the moral right to protect its citizens from unjustified attacks.

“Moreover, the United States Government openly declared war ... not that it had to, because we already had been attacked ... but we did. As to our government’s motives or intentions, I think we are seeing them unfolding. There hasn’t been any information, to my knowledge, to suggest that our intentions were other than to remove from power those who were harboring terrorists; establish a democratic framework whereby the Afghan people would have a decent shot at electing their leaders; build the foundations of a society based on human rights and toleration; and assist the Afghans in developing their country.”

“But I don’t think that we relied on the principle of war as a last resort, Mr. Radusky, did we?” I asked.

“Well, once you’re attacked, it’s not as if you can afford to sit on your laurels and ponder what to do next. Given the magnitude of the attack and the fact that this was not the first attempt against the United States, I think it would have been morally irresponsible to respond in a more passive manner.

“Besides, I think our president acted responsibly in the sense that there were, indeed, negotiations. President Bush gave the Taliban leadership more than enough ample time to apprehend and deliver to U.S. authorities the al-Qaeda group responsible for 9/11, but it was obvious that Osama bin Laden was under the protection of the Taliban regime.”

“Why couldn’t we have limited ourselves to denouncing the attack and turn the other cheek?” I asked.

"We certainly could have; the question is whether that would have been the more responsible moral decision," replied Mr. Radusky. "This is a very different type of war in that it was not the Afghan government that fired the first shots and followed with a series of attacks. The culprits were a group of terrorists that were using the country as a safe haven. The enemy was different this time around, the targets were different, and the means to carry out the attacks were barbarically different.

"Moreover, 9/11 was not an isolated case, only the most violent one so far in a string of attacks dating back years. The pursuit of bin Laden had started some time ago, and now we knew his whereabouts. All we asked the Taliban leadership was to hand over those responsible for 9/11.

"Further, our president didn't ask the Taliban leaders to leave their country.... Only after Taliban leader Mohammed Omar insisted on protecting al-Qaeda did the United States opt to pursue the guilty ones, just like the police would chase after a criminal who had robbed a bank and killed a clerk. The attempt by the police to go after the killer is the war itself, an action that is morally justified.

"True, our government could have limited itself to diplomatic protests, but that would have been an invitation to more acts of terrorism. Overall, I think the president's military response was a measured one. Imagine if he or someone else had embodied the passions for revenge that many felt at the time and instead would have dropped nuclear weapons on Afghanistan?"

"Good point! Mr. Radusky ... Yes, Mr. Edson," I called out.

"How do we know that President Bush was motivated by Christian-like values and not by the desire to get reelected or by fear or by a sense of self-righteousness? According to several sources, 9/11 radically reshaped Bush's view of the world....

"Also, how do we know that it wasn't hatred or desire for revenge that triggered the decision? We may remember that Bush even spoke in terms of a moral crusade, good versus evil, all of which suggest a self-righteous attitude."

"May I?" asked Ms. Williamson. "Could anyone have blamed the president for not feeling the same sense of outrage and a desire for revenge that many of us felt? ... These are very normal human reactions, given the circumstances.

"We don't know much, and perhaps never will, about the president's ultimate intentions.... Also, the point about getting political mileage out of 9/11 seems less plausible to me; I don't see the president as being callous at all.... Karl Rove, maybe, but not Bush."

"Maybe I'm missing something, but I didn't realize that George W. Bush worked for Karl Rove," said Mr. Edson in a low, cryptic voice.

"Anyway!" replied Ms. Williamson who had been taken aback by the comment. "Tell me, isn't usually the case that one's response to an incident reflects one's intentions? ... The president did speak in crusading terms, but his deci-

sions were measured, as Mr. Radusky mentioned. The president didn't say that we were going to blow Afghanistan off the face of the earth, at least publicly; he indicated that while the conflict was between the Taliban regime and the U.S. Government, it did not include the Afghan people.... What's important is not how you initially feel but how you proceed in the end, once the anger has subsided.... I don't know, am I the only one who has this view?"

"I agree with you," said Ms. Vanhurst. "I perceived the president's response the way you did."

"Anyone else has a different view? ... No? Okay, Mr. Radusky, please go on," I said.

"The next criterion is whether the administration planned for the successful outcome of the war in Afghanistan.... Hmm, not easy to answer.... One would think so, but there appears to have been some hastiness on the part of the president. There's at least one credible account indicating that there were no war plans for Afghanistan in place. And yet, we went ahead with the attack because the president wanted a quick military response.¹

"Could more advanced military and political planning have improved the chances of shortening the war which, by the way, is still going on? This should have been an important consideration, but I guess that's something that only the military can answer."

"So, you would give the president high marks for the way he dealt with our response to 9/11?" I asked.

"It certainly was not an A+ job given what I just said.... Let me add a bit more, if I may ... I think that in its hastiness to respond, our government didn't take into account the reality that regime stabilization in developing countries is far more difficult to accomplish than regime change, the more so, when the initial problem ... the Taliban militias ... are far from being defeated. Such planning likely will affect the outcome of the war, which is another of the *Just War* criteria.... On the plus side, well, Afghan troops have been and continue to be trained; NATO is becoming highly involved in the military phase of the war; and an internationally recognized Afghan government is in place....

"Aside of the very little planning that seems to have taken place before we responded militarily, there are other issues that may affect the outcome of the war.... For example, the administration's decision to further cut taxes in a time of war and the invasion of Iraq, for sure, have diverted valuable resources from the global war on terror and the war in Afghanistan. It remains to be seen the consequences of these actions on the overall success of the mission."

"Could you address the issue of proportionality, Mr. Radusky?" I asked. "Was the principle adequately applied?"

"I wasn't going to discuss it because I think there's agreement that the response was adequate and justified.... There's one criterion, nevertheless, that does merit some attention: collateral damage.... Unfortunately, innocent people

will always die inadvertently in a war. But the issue becomes politically damaging when innocent civilians begin to die because the military becomes careless or when it willfully begins to disregard ethical principles.

"I'll be the first one to agree with the captain that war is not a normal environment for American soldiers, no matter how well trained they might be. Just take a close look at news reports telling us about the number of soldiers returning from the war who have been traumatized by the experience.... And, why shouldn't that be the case? Becoming traumatized by war is characteristic of a normal human being who has been exposed to quite abnormal physical, emotional, and spiritual conditions.

"So, with this proviso, I wonder the extent to which our soldiers have been adequately trained to observe certain rules of engagement, such as never shooting or bombing indiscriminately into a crowd.... I know it's supposed to be our policy, but.... As a matter of fact, police in our cities are trained in such a manner; not because shooting into a crowd makes for bad politics which may cost the mayor his re-election but because it's considered unethical, meaning that the innocent should not die simply because evil people happen to be in their midst."

"So what do you do ... accept becoming a target?" asked Mr. Edson.

"I know ... a tough situation to be into," replied Mr. Radusky, "but let me tell you what an expert in this field says about this situation.... His view relates to the binding imperative of having to fight a war that prohibits you from killing innocent civilians, including those who serve as unwilling shields, and the possibility that such limitation might provide an element of advantage to the enemy. And this is how he responds: *Humanitarian law is generally intended to protect non-participants, not ensure a fair fight....*²

"I think this statement reveals the moral and practical dilemma of this situation. I don't think I should spend more time arguing why we have to be the good guys while the other guys fight dirty; Mr. Hunt and Captain Francis already elaborated on that point.... Do our values put our soldiers in harm's way? At times, yes it will. But think of the alternative; we kill innocent civilians and we end up morally obliterating the justness of our participation in a war, not to say politically, given the negative repercussions that tend to arise among the population.

"Since we've had these incidents happening both in the Afghan and Iraqi wars, I would only add that, to the extent possible, our officers should admit the mistakes instead of alluding to the enemy's action as a justification for our unfortunate misdeeds. Justifying our actions only suggests that we're doing it on purpose or that we're not being properly trained."

"Thank you, Mr. Radusky," I said. "Let's turn now to the global war on terror...."

“Immediately after 9/11, and almost in parallel with the invasion of Afghanistan, the president announced that the United States would actively and continuously pursue terrorism throughout the world.... He called on other nations to join our country and warned that any government harboring terrorists would be targeted.... Ms. Lewis, would you like to provide us with your evaluation of how the concept of *Just War* applies to our government’s actions on the war on terror?”

“Yes,” she replied. “First, however, we have to realize.... although it won’t be too difficult to do so ... that this type of war is not like your conventional war. The military has called terrorism a form of asymmetrical warfare which simply means an unconventional or highly irregular way to fight a war that, initially, tends to provide certain advantages to the enemy.

“For example, the threatened country doesn’t deal with a geographically confined enemy, since the enemy can and does change locations, which makes terrorists more difficult to track down. Also, planning and decision-making among terrorist groups can be more decentralized and may or may not operate through a central authority, particularly when we’re talking about spontaneous groups that arise in different locations and begin to operate on their own.

“Surprise attacks make terrorism quite lethal in many ways. In addition to the physical damage they inflict on humans and structures, these attacks serve to keep the political and military leaderships, and the citizens, out of balance.

“Terrorists create a state of anxiety that may demoralize and weaken the target nation. Their actions may lead to a radicalization of government policies; as the state strives to protect itself and its citizens, terrorism certainly will affect ... as it has ... the way of life of its citizens.

“Other aspects of terrorism’s asymmetries are found in its arsenal of subjective elements it has at its disposal, whether it be its disregard of human life ... theirs and others ... its disregard for any type of accepted human ethics, as Mr. Radusky mentioned, or how it uses other elements of society ... religion, politics, terror, charitable organizations, financial and economic structures ... all to its own advantage.

“From the standpoint of national security, the view is that terrorists will exploit their created asymmetries to their advantage while placing the target nation-states at a disadvantage; in other words, terrorists do not fight fairly....

“Well, I for one consider this view inane; I would never expect my enemy to act in a chivalrous manner and place itself at a disadvantage so that we may defeat him more easily. In war, I have to expect the worst from my enemy, because it is my enemy; it means that it doesn’t like me much and wants to see me destroyed.... So, the question now is, should these recognized asymmetries affect our ethical behavior in a manner that justifies our becoming as immoral as the enemy we fight?”

“Asymmetries certainly can create military dissonance; they create confusion in the minds of war planners.... I'm sure you all remember taking your kids to amusement parks where they still have this game in which you're given a mallet to strike at gophers that come out of holes at different intervals, except you don't know when or out of which hole they're coming.... Well, that's how difficult it is to deal with terrorism.

“And among the greatest dangers that terrorism poses is that it creates mental and attitudinal imbalances within our political and military leadership that in turn can lead to political and military excesses out of sheer frustration, fear, and uncertainty.”

“Does that mean that our war on terror is justified?” I asked.

“Well, just as Mr. Radusky alluded to, in my evaluation of the causes of the war on terror ... excluding other criteria ... there are two aspects I won't dispute: first, it's proper and justified that we take action against terrorism because the risks of not doing so are potentially devastating; second, it's not easy to wage war on terrorism, a proposition that will likely condition our response.

“I think that, more so than in our war in Afghanistan, it is in the war on terror that our government needed to be ... and needs to be ... ethically aware and politically smart in order to prevent those excesses that easily arise out of frustration, fear, and uncertainty. The primary reason why we ought to be so concerned is that this is such a gray area, one in which, in some instances, the ends may end up justifying the means.

“Now, within the framework of what I just stated, I think that regarding the causes, reasons, intentions, and motivations for the war on terror, I don't need to give the president the benefit of the doubt; that is, I don't have any doubts, whatsoever, that the president ... for whom I didn't vote ... has the best intentions and reasons in the world in his fight against terrorism.... I believe, and think, that the cause of defending ourselves against terrorism is *just*....”

“What about all the excesses this administration has condoned!” shouted Mr. Edson. “Torturing prisoners, illegal domestic surveillance, not providing legal safeguards for people we don't even know if they are guilty or not....”

“Michael, please, don't yell; I can hear and understand you better if you don't,” replied Ms. Lewis. “Were you listening to what I was saying before ... or were you only paying attention to my last statement? Didn't you hear me say that the mental imbalances that terrorism creates within our leadership can lead to excesses, in which the ends can end up justifying the means? Didn't you hear me say that?”

“I'm sorry, you did say that ... I just lost track,” he replied.

“You also lost your temper, Mr. Edson,” I added. “Not cool; when that happens, you stop thinking; you begin to react, and sometimes, others will simply take their cues from you and tempers will flare up everywhere; and that's the end of the dialogue.”

“You’re right, I apologize,” replied Mr. Edson.

“Please continue, Ms. Lewis,” I signaled.

“Thank you.... In terms of an internationally legal declaration of war, we should be aware that the United Nations ... having become one of its victims ... has endorsed the war on terror, and our president has provided ample warnings to terrorists, even though, as Mr. Radusky observed, in a defensive war that is the last consideration.

“There’s no doubt in my mind as well that other alternatives to war have been explored, and that this war, at least now, is being waged as a last resort. The objectives we’re now pursuing both domestically and internationally are no different than our police hunting down criminals and seeking to destroy their methods of operation in order to safeguard our wellbeing.



“The next principle in the *Just War* theory ... that of ensuring a successful outcome to the global war on terror, is more problematic ... extremely more problematic. The principle, we have to remember, suggests that the leadership should not embark on a war that it cannot win; or on a war over which it sees no clear ending.

“Well, the first problem we have is that once we came under attack, our first reaction was ... as it should have been ... to defend ourselves by pursuing the terrorists. If a mistake was committed, it was to react politically without devoting adequate time to the military implications of our government’s actions.

“One possibility was that the administration deemed that an immediate military response was politically necessary, lest the American people and the Democrats would start denouncing the president for his lack of leadership. Also, it may have been the case that the president acted impulsively, which I think is what happened.

“Not having thought on how to respond to the entire crisis ... not only the immediate response but looking far into the future ... it appears that there has been inadequate planning for the war on terror as well, although there are mitigating circumstances, no doubt.... The process appears to be one in which we plan as we go; to some extent, we’re winging it because our government is pretty much on uncharted territory on this issue.

“Nonetheless, the question we have to ask ourselves is can we win this global war on terror? ... I have given it a lot of thought and it’s my firm thinking that we cannot ... unless we start doing things differently....

“I don’t think this war will be won militarily or through the use of sophisticated intelligence alone. The roots of the war on terror are tied to complex religious, political, cultural, and ethnic issues; these, have given way to violence,

thereby provoking a military response on our part, which by the way, was necessary and justified. Still, all this suggests that a military and law enforcement response ... which is, above all, what our policies are mostly about ... will not only be inadequate; it might be counterproductive."

"Can you tell us why you hold this view?" asked Mr. Brandon.

"The problem I see with the war on terror is that while we might not be able to win it, we might not lose it either, which means that we might easily be staring at decades of war, with the possibility, of course, that ... given the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction ... something catastrophic could very well happen before the war is over."

"Are you suggesting that we might end up in some sort of a Vietnam quagmire?" asked Mr. Edson.

"Oh! ... in many respects we already are in a quagmire, but there's a difference; in Vietnam we had the option to pull out, and we did.... In the global war on terror, however, we know very well that we don't have that option."

"Forgive me, Ms. Lewis," said Mr. Dickerson. "If you believe we're in a quagmire and, according to you, the government cannot ensure a successful outcome, does this mean that we're involved in an unjust war, according to our criteria? Also, since you believe that we can't win this war by staying the course do you have any new ideas on how we might *succeed*?"

"I realize that Dr. Planas had mentioned that a *Just War* must meet all of the theory's principles," replied Ms. Lewis; "that failing to meet one of them may render the war unjust and thus morally unethical.

"But the war on terror puts us in a dilemma; we have no choice but to defend ourselves as much as we can and hope for the best. At the same time, it's not as if the administration is purposefully botching the war. I think it's proceeding shortsightedly, but its intention ... safeguarding the American people ... is quite honorable. So, way down the road we may end up having to come to the conclusion that we cannot ensure a successful outcome to the war on terror; it's then, when we will have to decide.... I don't think we're there yet, though.

"As to whether I have any ideas to win the war, I can say that I have no magic wand and that whatever ideas I have are probably already out there but haven't become salient enough, and certainly are not amply projected on any of the two political parties' radar screens."

"Well, could you at least enlighten us?" asked Mr. Edson.

"No, I'm afraid I won't do that," she replied. "I spoke with Dr. Planas prior to this presentation and told him that I didn't see any value in airing views on foreign policy that can easily be misinterpreted or misperceived by others at home and abroad, no matter how insignificant, even if these views are mentioned only inside a classroom.... He understood."

“But I’m sure you realize,” said Mr. Edson, “that everyday we see academics and political pundits discussing strategy on TV, radio, the printed media, the internet. Aren’t you overvaluing a bit yourself?”

“I’m not even undervaluing myself,” she replied. “It’s a matter of proceeding on principle, and this is what I believe. I agree with you that a lot is said publicly in a democracy, perhaps, even more than it should be said. People say things because they can, and often regardless of the impact their words may have ... at home or abroad.

“I understand that many political, economic, social, and cultural ideas should be aired for the benefit of those who formulate policy. But if you stop to think for a second, there has been much technical or narrowly-oriented information dealing with foreign policy divulged in the media that is of incredible value to the enemy but has very little value to citizens.

“I agree that citizens ought to know and be able to discuss the major principles that guide our foreign policy since it is on such basis that they will elect their leaders. However, the formulation process itself ... the alternative ideas and scenarios, the various views, intentions or rationales being discussed prior to the policy within the walls of the White House ... or even Congress ... much of that should be left out of the public’s eye.

“Besides, let’s face it, the bulk of what academics, experts, and pundits write is primarily addressed to the political leadership. The benefit the public gathers from these ideas, I believe, is marginal because the public has a very limited role in formulating foreign policy; they do it mostly through elections and polls. Therefore, I don’t see much of a value added to the public, particularly when contrasted to the risks of others misunderstanding and misperceiving such information.”

“I think that’s a highly unorthodox position to have, Ms. Lewis,” complained Mr. Dickerson. “Suppose these ideas are being vented only for the benefit of the political leadership, are you suggesting that they be suppressed altogether? How else will the leadership learn of these ideas, then?”

“Oh, I’ll be the first one to realize that my position is unorthodox and presents a few kinks. I’m not proposing, however, suppressing them; I’m only proposing self-restraint.... Now, granted that those who make their living by publicly writing on foreign policy might see their incomes reduced somewhat, but they can probably make it up through increased writing on domestic issues....

“As to how the leadership stands to lose if these ideas are not aired, I suggest that the White House and the Congress may want to consider setting up electronic mail boxes and call them “Unsolicited Advice.” Pundits and experts would send their ideas to presidential and congressional assistants who would catalogue them according to issues and/or regions and in turn present them to the leadership for consideration.”

"You're not kidding," asserted Mr. Edson.

"No, I'm not," replied Ms. Lewis.

"Guys, it's true that Ms. Lewis spoke to me about this issue," I said, "and I told her that I would not force or cajole her in any way to act differently.... Okay? ... Ms. Lewis, I assume that you will get to evaluate the means on the war on terror as well?"

"I was just getting into it," she replied. "There's a caveat I need to make.... I said at the beginning that there might be instances in which the ends we pursue in the war on terror may justify the means we employ. Such a view may not necessarily constitute abandonment of the *Just War* theory at all.... Let me explain.

"The policies and actions involving privacy issues that the Bush administration has approved do touch upon ethics, but I offer that these actions are of secondary significance, the reason being that they can be resolved through other means. In other words, it would be up to the courts to decide if a specific activity is unconstitutional and up to Congress to limit the actions of the Executive. If the courts fail to do their job, then it's up to Congress and/or the electorate to determine how to hold the Executive accountable.

"My rationale for saying this is that the actions that the President of the United States approves at home are not aimed at innocent American citizens, although it certainly affects us. But, ultimately, it's up to the courts, and the Congress, and the American public to decide what actions they will allow the United States Government to take on their behalf in order to safeguard their security.

"The public may well decide, for example, that the tapping of their telephones is a lesser evil that might contribute to the success of the war on terror as opposed to them becoming vulnerable to terrorist attacks if they don't. The same applies to investigating personal financial data, even the mail or the internet. It's up to the public through Congress or to the courts to decide if the means are legally justifiable. If the public were to agree, then the issue would be settled."

"Does that mean that as long as the public approves, the Executive can do no wrong?" asked Ms. Vanhurst.

"What I'm saying is that, insofar as the public, the Congress or the courts approve, the Executive's actions would be legal; its moral wrongfulness would then become secondary, at least for those who agreed with the final decision.

"Right now, the complaints with some of these actions have been that the president has taken it upon himself to act outside a proper legal framework. Well, I don't think we want to deny the Executive the means to successfully fight the war on terror; but, don't we want someone to keep a close tab on how those means are used to make sure there are no abuses?"



“Okay ... now we come to those means employed in the war on terror against suspected individuals, some of whom may be American citizens, but most of whom, at least for now, have been foreigners. This area appears to be very susceptible to excesses and violations of the principles of *Just War*, namely because both the public and the leadership tend to internalize the fear, uncertainty, and insecurity that terrorism creates ... you know, all those underground gophers ... never knowing how, where, or when they’re going to surface ...

“So to be on the safe side, the administration engaged in questionable rendition tactics and ended up detaining non-combatants for years without going to trial. It also created interrogation guidelines and adopted new definitions of “what is not torture.” Well, somehow, Abu Ghraib happened. And despite world public opinion asking us to come clean, we refused to do so for a long time ... and to some extent we still refuse to do so ... while at the same time we preach to the world on human rights.

“One would think that, at the very least, we should do one or the other.... If we’re going to “not torture” because we believe that such methods are important in the war on terror, fine! But then we should omit our rhetoric on human rights so we won’t be accused of being hypocrites. This is one situation in which being the good guys doesn’t justify employing questionable means.”

“I believe, Ms. Lewis, that regarding these long periods of detention, the government is in a bind,” argued Mr. Dickerson. “If we had hard evidence to prosecute these individuals, we would have done so. I would bet and win that there are detainees who have participated or aided terrorism. But it’s also likely that some may be innocent ... or at least will remain “innocent” while they’re imprisoned.”

“What do you mean while they’re imprisoned?” asked Ms. Lewis.

“Well, I could almost guarantee you that if they were innocent going into Guantánamo, they won’t be for long, if they are found to be innocent and released, simply because all the accumulated anger and hatred toward us might turn them into terrorists.... I mean, the United States might as well just leave them in there in anticipation of what they are going to do once they’re freed.”

“And what do you call that, Andy?” asked Ms. Lewis.

“Oh, I don’t know ... we may call it terrorist prophylaxis.”

“Great! You should apply for the job of Attorney General,” replied Ms. Lewis.

“I was only kidding, Leslie! But I do hope you see my point,” replied Mr. Dickerson.



“Okay,” I said, “is there anything else, Ms. Lewis?”

“Yes ... We still have to deal with proxy wars.... As the captain pointed out, these are real wars....

“During times when those terrorist gophers start showing up on the surface, it raises the political leadership’s level of anxiety to Red, and the ethical equation tends to change. Our new behavior formula is *fear + uncertainty = expediency*,” she wrote on the whiteboard.

“We have seen this scenario being depicted in war movies as well as in real war action. In the midst of a potential encounter with the enemy, frightened soldiers come into an open area; nothing moves; the enemy is not visible but noises suggest its presence; the longer the wait, the higher the level of anxiety gets. All of a sudden, there are noises suggesting an ambush, and the soldiers begin to shoot wildly in all directions without knowing at what exactly they are shooting. They could have been shooting at nothing or at innocent civilians hiding from battle.

“Case in point, recent US policy in Somalia; it seems that a combination of intelligence miscues, given the fear and the uncertainty we feel, led the US Government to support Somali warlords against an Islamic clan.³ The result?” Ms. Lewis asked, as she made changes to the formula on the board that now read *fear + uncertainty = expediency = practical and ethical disaster....*

“And, of course, we should raise the question, when will we ever learn? ... Unfortunately, U.S. foreign policy is full of instances in which our political leadership has not even winked while assisting the Al Capones of the world, regardless how these goons would treat the population. In many of these cases, a different political formula has been applied although with the same results,” she said, as she went back to the white board and wrote: *self-interest + realism = expediency*.

“Our political leaders are slow, it seems, in learning that betting on and throwing their active financial and military support behind one faction, whether in a war or an election, is like playing Russian roulette. And, boy! Are they risky with their own brains.”

“Your point ... Ms. Lewis,” I said.

“My point is that supporting unjust wars out of expediency is highly unethical, and for those who don’t believe in ethics ... well, highly impractical and fraught with unnecessary risk. Yes, sometimes, we win, but people in those countries remember that we used them for the sake of our interests. However, at other times we have supported the goons.

“All of a sudden the war on terror comes along, and the Bush administration realizes that our people are far more important and that the Somali people are pawns that can be used in the war on terror. The current logic now is that, since these people can be wasted why not waste them on our behalf and at least get something positive out of our policy.”

“It’s so true!” exclaimed Ms. Vanhurst. “It has happened so many times before ... it’s depressing, but we keep putting up with these actions. Isn’t there something that we can do? What is it that makes our politicians forget who they are and what they stand for?”

“This is what fear makes us do, Melanie,” replied Ms. Lewis, “our political leadership will turn around and tell us that all these steps, they do it for us, for our well being and our security.... We in turn accept it.

“However, I do have an idea, something we at the grassroots can do.... Ready? Why not demand that our presidential candidates take a public oath ... just like the oath of office, in which they swear that they will abide by the principles of *Just War* and that they will not resort to expediency while formulating their policies.... How’s that? ...

“Well? ...”

“Leslie, we’re talking about politicians; they are aficionados when it comes to expediency!” said Mr. Edson.

“No!” said Ms. Vanhurst. “They may act like that, but they are moral beings. They’re not under the spell of inexorable laws that force them to do the things they do; they can make choices. They all say they’re religious! ... Let’s hold them accountable; I’m all for Leslie’s idea....”

“Very well,” I said. “Ms. Lewis, are you through?”

“Yes I am.”



“In that case, let’s go on to our next review, this one on the war on Iraq. Who’s handling that presentation?”

“Mr. Hunt is, sir,” said Ms. Lewis.

“Please, proceed, Mr. Hunt.”

“Thank you.... In my review of the war on Iraq I chose to rely on Bob Woodward’s book, *Plan of Attack*. I decided upon it for two reasons: first, it’s the most intimate account to be published on events involving the major participants prior to the war and, second, it’s full of anecdotes and personal quotations revealing intentions and reasons to go to war that haven’t been publicly disavowed. This is important because, insofar as the administration has allowed Woodward’s version of events to prevail, his narrative provides valuable insight into human causes and motives, aspects of human behavior that are quite diffi-

cult to ascertain. You may remember that while the Bush White House chose to dispel or contradict aspects of Woodward's subsequent book *State of Denial*, and did so, too, of George Tenet's memoirs, *At the Center of Power*, to my knowledge direct quotations attributed to administration insiders in *Plan of Attack* were not rebutted.

"I have read some reviews indicating that Woodward's account portrayed the president and his administration in a positive light and that he wasn't critical enough in *Plan of Attack*.... Nonetheless, I suppose it's the author's choice to either critically analyze the information he had gathered or to provide straightforward reporting and allow the reader to come to his or her conclusions.

"So, I don't see this criticism as limiting my review. Quite the contrary, since I'm about to evaluate the administration's actions, I alone shall be responsible for my conclusions without having to depend on anyone else's criticism. And if, indeed, Woodward's report presents the Bush administration in a positive light, I shall profit from it, too, for then no one can say that I was influenced by someone else's views.

"I'm not expecting Woodward's account to be complete, and I'm fully aware that any information that has been omitted may certainly affect my evaluation. Nonetheless, I have followed the war in the media, and the information I have gathered parallels Woodward's account, although it lacks the intimate quotations he was able to obtain through his interviews.

"What I would rather do now is to identify those *Just War* principles that are either less relevant or that were met by the administration, and then go on to concentrate on others that may require more discussion.

"For example, the Bush administration complied with the principle of providing the Iraqi regime with a war declaration as well as with ample warnings. This was no sneaky war. The media had reported that American troops were in the vicinity weeks before the initiation of hostilities and, days prior to the attack, I think everyone was expecting war, perhaps, with the exception of Saddam Hussein who might have thought that Bush was bluffing....

"Hmm ... actually that's it. I think that ... the other principles need to be widely analyzed.

"That's it?" asked Ms. Bynum. "You mean to tell me that no other principles were met?"

"What I said was that the other principles require more consideration. I think in the end we will have discussed all major principles unless there might not be a need to do so.

"The first principle reads that the causes or reasons for committing the nation to war must be *just*.... Ms. Lewis had indicated that this principle requires that the external circumstances guiding the leadership to its decision should be reviewed and considered in light of Gospel-based values, referring to my earlier discussion.

“This is where it all starts.... If the leadership’s reading of events is somehow distorted, it will definitely affect the outcome of the decision, and possibly the justness of the cause. We may recall that Ms. Lewis identified a series of elements that may distort one’s perceptions and discernment of the external environment, such as ideology, expediency, fear, self-interest, and others....

“It seems to be the case that the administration intended to get rid of Saddam Hussein because it thought that, after 9/11, it was sound national security policy to think along those lines. It also seems to be the case that administration officials, beginning with the president and the vice president, exaggerated or distorted available intelligence reports and misinformed the public regarding the threat that Hussein’s regime posed toward our country.”

“Wouldn’t that in itself distort the real causes for going to war with Iraq?” asked Mr. Wasserman.

“Yes, to a large extent,” replied Mr. Hunt. “However, the question we need to ask is whether the president may have proceeded with the intention in mind of protecting the American people, or whether the administration’s own insecurities or something else accounted for their purposeful distortions. In other words, it’s possible that in the administration’s frame of mind, *just ends*, conditioned by fear and by a sense of political responsibility, were serving to justify ethically dubious means; that is, misinforming the public.”

“You’re referring to mitigating circumstances that might help the president in the eyes of God,” added Mr. Wasserman, “but in the eyes of the public, would they justify the action?”

“We’re not putting ourselves in God’s position to judge someone else,” argued Mr. Hunt. “And, while these circumstances may mitigate the president’s responsibility in the eyes of God, I don’t think they would do so in the eyes of the American public.

“Let me go on to outline the president’s view on Saddam from the very beginning, and perhaps things might appear somewhat clearer.... There were no public reports in the media, for example, indicating that the president began his first term in office with an overt or a covert agenda to topple Saddam from power.⁴ In fact, if we are to take the president at his word, he had campaigned for a *humble* ... I should say neo-isolationist ... foreign policy. Further, knocking off Saddam had not been a ‘go-to’ issue during the 2000 presidential campaign. Subsequent events once he assumed the presidency, however, seem to belie the official Bush agenda.

“The president was being briefed on Iraq since before taking office, although the information he was receiving must have been somewhat inconsistent. For example, in January 2001, Vice President-elect Cheney requested then Secretary of Defense Cohen to brief the president-elect, particularly on Iraq.

“Cheney considered Iraq a critical issue, being of the view that Saddam had remained *unfinished business*.⁵ But then, days later, CIA Director George Tenet

briefed the president on major threats to the nation; al-Qaeda, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs), and China were the agency's major threats. According to Woodward's account, *Iraq was barely mentioned*.⁶ "The president's inner circle ... Cheney, Powell, Rumsfeld, Rice ... far from being detached from the Iraqi question, however, appeared all too engaged in making something happen inside Iraq. Early in February 2001, they met with CIA's deputy director John McLaughlin to review Iraq policy. At that time, the group expressed interest in data collection on Iraq's weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) arsenal. Having asked United Nations weapons inspectors to leave the country in 1998, Saddam's decision must have concerned the new administration."⁷

"By June, a deputies committee made up of inner circle's second tier officials had been set up to discuss Iraq and had recommended low level initial covert actions inside Iraq, involving mostly opponents to the regime inside the country.⁸ By late summer, the National Security Council had asked the CIA how it viewed the possibilities for covert action in Iraq. This request may have been simply the result of the new administration developing alternatives in foreign policy to deal with troublesome areas. Woodward reports that the agency, nonetheless, had concluded that Saddam would not fall through covert action alone, and that a military attack and invasion would be required."⁹

"Two interesting events take place prior to 9/11, however, which shed light on my evaluation. In August, the deputies committee issued a classified paper entitled, *A Liberation Strategy*, proposing phased action to pressure Saddam by relying on Iraqi opposition.

"Moreover, the president, it seems, must have been under considerable pressure by then to take on Saddam, for as reluctant a warrior as Colin Powell was perceived among Bush's inner circle, the secretary of state felt that the president was being bullied into attacking Iraq,¹⁰ and this was being done without publicly alluding to terrorist links to the regime or without substantial evidence on the threat that Saddam's supposed possession of WMDs could pose for the United States.

"A comment by the president nearly three years later would reveal what his intentions were prior to 9/11 with regard to Saddam Hussein: *I wasn't having much impact on changing Saddam's behavior or toppling him*,¹¹ he said then. What these incidents reveal is that while Bush had not issued a presidential directive to remove Saddam from power prior to 9/11, the foundation of a mind-set had emerged out into the open, both within him and within most of his inner circle.

"Even giving the president the benefit of the doubt, could there have been other plausible explanations for these events? Why would the president want to take early action against the regime without a direct cause? Until then, Saddam had been effectively isolated and contained, as Secretary Cohen had thought.

U.S. pilots practically owned Iraq's air space, patrolling the no-fly zone established at the end of the war, and entering Iraqi space 150,000 times in those ten years, and 10,000 times in 2000 alone.¹² In other words, Saddam posed little if any military threat to the United States or its allies in the Middle East....

"And yet, a mind-set was taking hold."

"Mr. Hunt," I said, "I don't know where you're going with this, but something tells me that the way you intend to use this term ... *mind-set* ... is relevant to your analysis. Please, could you possibly define what you mean by it at this time and how is it pertinent to your explanation?"

"Of course, I'll be glad to," he answered. "It may sound a bit confusing, but I think in the end it will make sense.... I view a mind-set as a hardened inclination to act in a certain way while subconsciously and simultaneously warding off reasons and explanations that may prevent the decision maker from acting in the desired manner."

"I see ... and what constitutes this mind-set?" I asked. "How does it get hold of the decision maker? Is this term similar to the one I introduced earlier, the so-called 'Scalia Syndrome?'"

"Similar, yes ... still different," replied Mr. Hunt. "If I understood you correctly, your term referred to a fixed view of reality based on self-arrived intellectual reasoning. It's a rather deep, yet narrowly-focused, intellectual approach to analysis."

"There's no intellectual approach in a mind-set, however; I'd even say that a mind-set is deeply anti-intellectual. It's reflexive—impulsive, if I may—and it's usually the product of several elements, although it's difficult to say which of the elements have the greatest influence."

"For example, a mind-set may be the product of acquired information, whether accurate or not; one's highly individualized perception of his current environment and how one relates to it; it includes past experiences and one's overriding set of values...."

"A mind-set, however, will color information ... even alter it ... in certain ways, and drive decisions accordingly. Moreover, while severe constraints or radical changes in the political environment could ultimately prevent execution of a mind-set-led decision, they would not prevent the mind-set from emerging and from struggling to see its preferred action carried out.... Is that understood?"

"Yes, I believe that we now understand you better, Mr. Hunt," I said. "Please proceed."

"Very well.... President Bush's desire to get rid of Saddam likely didn't develop in a vacuum; it has multiple elements, perhaps including finishing his father's unfinished war; Saddam's attempt to murder the president's father, his religious interpretation of human events; and more than likely, the influence of those who were closest to him...."

“What is known is that all of his key associates were unabashed Saddam haters who would have preferred to see him out of power. It is interesting that in his book, George Tenet identifies Cheney, Richard Perle, former Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz, and former Undersecretary of Defense for Policy Douglas Feith as the ones who were pushing the country to war¹³ ... but not the president. It would seem to me, however, that Tenet’s ‘blame-through-instigation’ explanation would be irrelevant in such cases; after all, no one other than the President of the United States has the constitutional, political, and moral responsibility to take the nation to war.

“Also, when it came to disliking Saddam, the U.S. domestic political environment sided with the president. I don’t know of any nationally elected official ... Republican or Democrat ... who didn’t think Saddam was even remotely acceptable as a human being.... Viewed from this perspective, desiring Saddam’s demise could hardly be regarded as being engaged in impure thoughts.

“What seems certain is that prior to 9/11, Bush’s mind-set at the time was a ‘would-like-to-do-it-if-I-could’ type of attitude.

“But then 9/11 happens, and listening to Woodward’s account and the president’s public acceptance of quotations attributed to him gave me the impression that Bush had suffered an emotional knockdown. The blow had dazed him and it seemed as if a different personality had taken over:

*He talked in sweeping, even grandiose terms about remaking the world. “I will seize the opportunity to achieve big goals,” he said. And each move had to fit in the overall purpose of improving the world, making it peaceful, he maintained.*¹⁴

“Michael Gerson, the president’s speechwriter and quasi-alter ego, also had noticed how 9/11 had affected Bush. Now, the president wanted to reform terrorists and their societies and started thinking in terms of promoting democracy and women’s rights in the Muslim world.¹⁵ His once humble foreign policy was giving way to Wilsonian levels of idealism. Indeed, 9/11 had not only reshaped the president’s foreign policy; it reshaped him, too:

*September the 11th obviously changed my thinking a lot about my responsibility as president ... [It] made the security of the American people ... a sacred duty for the president.*¹⁶

“While there were suspicions about the Iraqi leader’s possession of WMDs, there had been no evidence of al-Qaeda links to Saddam. Saddam’s regime had become militarily weaker and had been effectively contained.

“Nonetheless, 9/11 had cemented the president’s mind-set. While Woodward points out that 9/11 changed Bush’s attitude toward Saddam, I would say that, more than changing his attitude, Bush had extrapolated Hussein’s past

into the future. Two years after 9/11, while interviewing the president, Woodward notes:

It changed his attitude toward "Saddam Hussein's capacity to create harm," he said, adding, "all his terrible features became much more threatening."¹⁷

"In effect, Bush was candidly admitting having "discovered" the real Saddam and proceeded to disproportionately project the Iraqi leader's intentions to do harm to the United States on the basis of what he had done to others in the past.

"The president's mind-set had even narrowed down the options to deal with Saddam:

"Keeping Saddam in a box looked less and less feasible to me." Saddam was a "madman," the president said. "He had used weapons of mass destruction in the past. He has created instability in the neighborhood" by invading Iran in 1980 and Kuwait in 1990.¹⁸

"Events after 9/11 suggest that the president was hunkering into a view that was becoming progressively narrower. A mind-set, I should tell you, shares traits with a scientific paradigm, and one inherent characteristic of paradigms is that they tend to protect themselves. Others will question it, but a paradigm will not question itself. Likewise, a mind-set acts like a filter; it allows only certain elements to pass through while keeping others out.

"Beyond the president, 9/11 triggered what ultimately would become a self-reinforcing collective mind-set in the White House. Rumsfeld suggested that the opportunity had presented itself to attack Iraq, Cheney, too, but said that Afghanistan had to come first. The president agreed, saying *[we] won't do Iraq now.... Eventually we'll have to return to that question.* Andrew Card, the White House Chief of Staff, Powell, and Tenet advised against initially attacking Iraq in the midst of 9/11.¹⁹ Soon, the mind-set would take over everyone, including Powell.... Even Scooter Libby, Cheney's Chief of Staff, was convinced that Bush had made up his mind at the time about Saddam.²⁰

"From then on, the president and his inner circle had begun to incorporate unsubstantiated beliefs and overstated threats and to filter in information that would fit the mind-set. Let's look at this timeline:

- "In November 2001, the president asks Rumsfeld to review war plans for Iraq and to ask General Tommy Franks, who eventually would lead the invasion, *what it would take to protect America by removing Saddam if we have to.*²¹

Woodward makes a most acute observation regarding the president's action:

What he perhaps had not realized was that war plans and the process of war become policy by their own momentum, especially by the intimate involvement of both the secretary of defense and the president.²²

“By taking this step the president had started the mind-set’s engine and shifted it into Drive. The presence of WMDs begins to consume the president’s view of Saddam. He tells the media that if Saddam doesn’t allow United Nations inspectors back into the country there could be consequences.²³

-“On December 28, General Franks meets with Bush and members of his team via video to unveil preliminary plans for an Iraq invasion. The president asks Franks, *is this good enough to win?* To which the general answers that it is.²⁴

-“Early in January 2002, Tenet notifies the president that Saddam would not fall through covert action alone and that a military attack and invasion would be required. The president replies, *Darn!*²⁵

-“On January 29, the president delivers his State of the Union Address in which for the first time, and without substantiation, he publicly relates terrorism and WMDs to Iraq and as part of an *axis of evil* along with Iran and North Korea.²⁶ After listening to the speech, Michael Hayden, then head of the National Security Agency and now CIA Director, realized that war was going to happen.²⁷

-“In February, one year before the invasion, Bush approves a CIA strategy authorizing the agency to support military operations inside Iraq in order to bring about regime change.²⁸

-“In April ... we’re still eleven months before the invasion ... Bush tells British reporter Trevor McDonald, *I made up my mind that Saddam needs to go,*” regardless of whether U.N. weapons inspectors are allowed into the country or not.²⁹

-“On August 14, Rice issues a draft of a Presidential Directive recommending complete Regime Change in Iraq. Without evidence, Rice outlines the goal of regime change: *Free Iraq in order to eliminate WMDs, their means of delivery and associated programs.*³⁰

-“On August 27, while possessing no evidence, Cheney states publicly before the Veterans of Foreign Wars convention:

*Simply stated, there is no doubt that Saddam Hussein now has WMDs [and] there is no doubt that he is amassing them to use against our friends, against our allies and against us.*³¹

-“In September, White House lawyers tell Bush they believed he has constitutional authority as commander in chief *to act alone.*³²

-“Also in September, Bush tells congressional leaders at the White House, *[Saddam] is a serious threat to the U.S. and his neighbors and his own citizens.*³³

-“On September 11, the first anniversary of the 9/11 attacks, the president meets with several House members and tells them that, *the biggest threat ... is Saddam Hussein and his weapons of mass destruction. He can blow up Israel and that would trigger an international conflict.*³⁴ Again, there’s not corroboration to these views.

-“On September 26, Bush meets with different House members and tells them, without any evidence, that *Saddam Hussein ... is teaming up with al-Qaeda.... It is clear he has weapons of mass destruction ... anthrax, VX; he still needs plutonium and he has not been shy about trying to find it. Time frame would be six months (to Iraq having a nuke if Iraq was able to obtain sufficient plutonium or enriched uranium....)*. At another moment he said, *The Iraqi regime possesses biological and chemical weapons. The Iraqi regime is building the facilities necessary to make more. And according to the British Government, the Iraqi regime could launch a biological or chemical attack in as little as 45 minutes after the orders were given.*³⁵

-“On November 8, the U.N. Security Council passes a resolution declaring that Saddam had to make a formal declaration of any possession of WMDs as well as cooperate with the U.N. weapons inspectors. One month later, Iraq submits a lengthy report indicating it does not have WMDs, and the U.N. weapons inspectors indicate they have not been able to find any.... Cheney, however, proposes that the president declare that Saddam’s declaration constituted a breach of the United Nations resolution because he believed the declaration to be false.³⁶

-“In December, the president meets with Spanish President José María Aznar and tells him:

*At some point, we will conclude enough is enough and take him out. He’s a liar and he has no intention of disarming.... War is my last choice. Saddam Hussein is using his money to train and equip al-Qaeda with chemicals, he’s harboring terrorists.*³⁷ “Again, the president presented no confirmation of these links to terrorism.

-“On December 21, the president meets with Tenet and his deputy John McLaughlin who along with Cheney, Card, and Rice would decide how best to present the case for war to the American public. According to Woodward, it is during this meeting that Tenet utters his famous words, *It’s a slam dunk*, supposedly referring to the strength of the evidence against Saddam.³⁸

-“On January 27, 2003, a mind-set type incident takes place. During the State of the Union Address, the president included in his speech information indicating that Saddam had attempted to purchase uranium from Africa. Months later, it was revealed that the information was inaccurate. Tenet and CIA officials had asked the White House to remove the uranium incident from an October 2002 speech the president was going to deliver in Cincinnati because of its dubious credibility, but somehow the same information found its way into the draft of the State of the Union Address. This time, CIA officials reviewing the draft failed to notice it.³⁹

-“On February 5, Powell presents the American case against Saddam Hussein to the U.N., relying on what the White House had accepted as incontrovertible evidence of Saddam’s links to terrorism and his possession of WMDs.



“What do we see in this list of events? ... For sure, there are common denominators. First, the president incorporated specific beliefs into his mind-set: that Saddam had WMDs in his possession; that it was his intention to use them against the United States and/or its allies; that Saddam would pass along these weapons to al-Qaeda terrorists; and that Saddam had links to world terrorist organizations that threaten the United States.

“Second, the administration hardened its mind-set progressively, refusing arguments that go against its intentions and coloring information to fit its own. The inner circle rejected Powell’s several warnings against attacking Iraq, as well as Brent Scowcroft’s views in opposition to the war. Scowcroft had been Bush’s father’s National Security Adviser and a close friend of the former president.

“Moreover, the Iraq mind-set had now extended beyond Bush to include those less close to him, meaning that information that ran contrary to the war option was not going to be welcomed. For example, news stories indicate that three months before the U.S. invasion,

70 national security experts and Middle East scholars met for two days at the National Defense University and then issued a report concluding that occupying Iraq ‘will be the most daunting and complex task the U.S. and the international community will have undertaken since the end of World War II.

“A copy of the report was given to the office of Douglas Feith, at the time the very influential undersecretary of defense for policy, and the closest Pentagon person to the secretary of defense other than General Tommy Franks.⁴⁰

“Even more to the point, a report issued by the Department of Defense Inspector General contends that Mr. Feith selectively ignored intelligence information regarding the absence of al-Qaeda ties to Saddam’s regime, something that, had it been accepted, would have weakened the administration’s case to go to war.⁴¹ This should not be surprising; according to Tenet, Feith already had made up his mind that the U.S. didn’t need to prove a connection between 9/11 and Saddam.⁴²

“The president’s mind-set took him into the point of no return in November 2002 when Bush decides to seek a resolution against Saddam at the U.N. The president, as Cheney had done earlier, already had judged *a priori* that Saddam was not going to disarm and that Saddam would lie if he reported that he didn’t possess the weapons.

“Third, once the mind-set took over, it self-perpetuated and self-re-enforced its own intentions and desires. In September 2002, for example, the president

met with some House members and told them the last thing he wanted was to start a war, *Believe me, I don't like hugging the widows*, he said.⁴³ And, in December, he told Spanish president Aznar that war would only come as a last resort.

“Now ... remember that war as a last resort is a vital criterion of the *Just War* theory, established, precisely, to dissuade political leaders from taking military action too lightly. Given what had transpired prior to these last two instances, as reflected by my timetable, if we were to apply the psychology of human sexuality to the president's mind-set, it would have been like a high school lad engaging in foreplay in the rear seat of the car for the last hour and telling his date that sex is the last thing he has in mind....

“Possibly so ... but highly unlikely. As events indicate, the president had long made up his mind that war was the answer; that he wasn't going to wait for diplomacy; that whether or not the U.N. and other nations would follow wasn't going to be a decisive factor.

“It may also be noticed from this list that, as time progressed, the administration became more unabashed and daring in building up unsubstantiated threats: vivid descriptions of WMDs in Saddam's possession ... statements that Saddam will attack us ... he's harboring terrorists, etc.

“While according to Woodward the administration is increasing its private and public rhetoric in favor of the war, military plans are being drawn, and troops are being mobilized, CIA Director Tenet argues in his memoirs that there was never any serious debate that he knew of within the administration about the threat Saddam posed or whether he should be contained instead of being attacked. Discussions were held on how to go to war against Iraq, not whether we had to go or whether it was the right thing to do.⁴⁴ Tenet's remarks—indirectly substantiated by Woodward's account—suggest that the administration had made up its mind about attacking Iraq without much discussion of its merits and without much evidence other than strong beliefs in both the merits and the evidence.

“Given that substantial evidence was lacking, it would seem that the misinformation hype could very well have been intentional,⁴⁵ whether driven by fear or insecurity, hatred toward Saddam's regime or a rightful concern for the well being of the nation. A sort of ‘we-need-to-get-rid-of-Saddam-now-no matter how’ mind-set appears to be behind the administration's motive to mislead the American public in order for this public to pressure the Congress into supporting the war.

“In spite of their oversight powers, members of Congress overwhelmingly approved the resolutions on Iraq, including Democrats, without much criticism or questioning, suggesting that they were feeling pressure from their constituencies.

“Again, we have to understand that a mind-set is a self-driven attitude seeking, wanting, and desiring its own realization. The hype becomes an understandable—even natural, under those conditions—escalation of emotions and beliefs as it approximates the end. The hype was signaling to the world that the mind-set was not going to be denied; that Saddam had to go.

“Now, the media as well as supporters of the war have projected the assumption that if WMDs were ever found, it would have justified the attack and the invasion of Iraq, since the administration made the presence of these weapons ... along with the intentions to use them or distribute them ... practically the sole reason for going to war.

“Possession of WMDs (suggesting a threat to the security of the United States) was the primary reason to go to war because, according to Condoleezza Rice, only this type of threat had the “legs” to muster support for the war.⁴⁶

“In my view, it is a sad commentary about world public opinion, and perhaps, domestic opinion, too, that truthful reasons would not have motivated political leaders or nations enough to act.... Had the administration informed the American public that the primary reasons for the war were to deliver a tragically abused people from the hands of a ruthless dictator; or to restore democracy and respect for human rights after the world community had rejected U.S. appeals to assist the Iraqi people; or had the president provided concrete evidence that Saddam was about to strike the U.S. or that he had provided terrorists with WMDs, the Iraq invasion likely might have met a *just cause*....

“Instead, I would have to conclude that this was not only a classic example of preventive war; it was the most dangerous type of the two categories of preventive wars that Captain Francis had discussed, and as such highly unethical, at least if we go by the Gospel-based criteria I outlined earlier.

“How so!” asked an irate Ms. Bynum.

“That’s quite a stretch!” followed Mr. Brandon. “Just because Aquinas or Grotius said so? ... The president was very clear that they were embarking on a *preemptive war*, and everyone has maintained so! I’m afraid that’s a very subjective interpretation, Ted.”

“Bear with me for a moment, Ray,” replied Mr. Hunt. “I agree that almost everyone had jumped on the preemptive bandwagon; even Woodward relied on the usage of the term, most likely because he was only reporting the information.

“But, simply because the president of the United States wishes to call an automobile an airplane doesn’t mean we all have to follow suit, nor does his label transform the automobile into an airplane.... And No, my judgment about the war doesn’t rely on Aquinas, Grotius, the Bible, or any type of catechism. I’m going by those who should know, the military experts, the Department of Defense.”

“Whaaat?” exclaimed again Mr. Brandon.

“Ray, a preventive attack, which as we know constitutes an *unjust war*, is, according to the Pentagon, *a war initiated in the belief that military conflict, while not imminent, is inevitable, and that to delay would involve greater risk.*⁴⁷ As we all have come to realize, the Iraq invasion was based on a *belief* that war was inevitable, except that the inevitability of the war was one-sided; no one other than the White House seemed to have a realistic expectation that Saddam was going to attack the United States any time soon. The administration, however, did have a subjective impression that Saddam represented a threat to the United States and needed to be toppled from power.

“Now, what constitutes a preemptive attack according, not to the Bible or the *Just War* theory, but to the Pentagon itself? ... The Pentagon defines a preemptive attack as one *initiated on the basis of incontrovertible evidence that an enemy attack is imminent.*⁴⁸ ... It would take a lot of juggling to fit the Iraq threat and the invasion into this definition. And yet, the White House accomplished to project such a perception upon the Congress, the public, and the media rather easily, and without much evidence.”

“Captain! ... Is this true?” asked Mr. Brandon.

“Yes it is,” replied the captain. “I’m afraid that Mr. Hunt is correct. I only paraphrased the Department of Defense’s usage of the term, but if we go by the Pentagon’s definition, then this was not a preemptive war. The term itself means ... and I did explain that ... that I’m going to beat you to the punch into doing something that I know you’re about to do to me. Evidence, of course, is crucial, because without it, the leadership is placed in the precarious position of making a colossal mistake. That’s why Mr. Hunt stated that the presence of WMDs alone would not justify a preemptive attack, even by military standards. It would only serve to rationalize a preventive attack.... But then, almost anything can rationalize a preventive attack.”

“You mean to tell me that the White House couldn’t have checked with its own Department of Defense or that the military leaders could not have corrected the White House if only to tell the public what they were doing?” asked Ms. Williamson.

“Well, in first place, we don’t know,” replied Mr. Hunt, “if military officials attempted to correct the administration’s perception or at least the usage of the term; maybe someone did. But I must say that the administration told us numerous times that this was going to be a preventive war, not a preemptive war ... just that it assigned the wrong label to an otherwise accurate description of what was going to take place.”

“Could you possibly give us some examples of those instances, Mr. Hunt?” I asked, “and could you also explain to us what you think led us into a preventive war?”

“Yes, of course. I’m going to list these instances by dates so that we may clearly see a pattern that, short of subsiding, just kept feeding on its own set of beliefs. But first, let me make a caveat.

“According to Woodward, it’s Rumsfeld who first comes up with the term *preemptive*. This is how Rumsfeld characterizes the security of the United States:

*The key thought about this is that you cannot defend against terrorism. You can’t defend at every place at every time against every technique. You just can’t do it because they keep changing techniques, time, and you have to go after them.... And that means you have to preempt them.*⁴⁹

“In reality, what Rumsfeld meant to say was that we have to prevent terrorism from happening by pursuing the terrorists, because, according to Rumsfeld, the United States finds itself in a situation of great uncertainty and insecurity ... what Ms. Lewis described as the gophers game. And further, terrorism provides the enemy with asymmetrical advantages that are not always easy to deter militarily.

“But Rumsfeld was referring to world terrorists, not to Iraq; so, what he meant to say was that the United States needed to pursue these terrorists anywhere they were, as if they were bank robbers, in order to prevent them from robbing banks again. This, in my view, is a reasonable and justified strategy with regards to terrorists for they have struck before several times, and they are going to do it again; everyone in the world knows that.

“Preemption, however, is the result of *incontrovertible evidence*, while prevention arises mainly out of a state of uncertainty and a desire to beat the odds. Again, Ms. Lewis gave us the example of panicky soldiers who begin to shoot wildly because they think they are going to be ambushed.... Similarly, when a nation is not able to manage its uncertainty, and its security is at stake, more than likely, prevention will be the response, because ... and as much as I hate to say it ... it’s more expedient; it’s a way of solving one’s problems by cutting corners. Powell, for example, whether because of a moral sense or practical considerations, seemed to have had a better understanding of the terms. According to Woodward, *any discussion of employing the military under some theory, and not an immediate threat to U.S. National security, made Powell exceedingly nervous.*⁵⁰ Tenet, too, appears to have such an understanding. He claims that while there may have been political or military discussions about the invasion, there was no debate about the *imminence* of the Iraqi threat.⁵¹

“Prevention means attributing possibilities of a threat without waiting to see if an attack is imminent. And this is how the White House expressed itself for over a year. Here’s another timeline to look at:

-“In his State of the Union Address on Jan 29, 2002, Bush states,

*By seeking weapons of mass destruction, these regimes (Iraq, Iran, and North Korea) pose a grave and growing danger ... I will not wait on events while dangers gather.*⁵²

-“In March, Cheney speaks to armed forces personnel aboard the USS John C. Stennis stationed in the Arabian Sea, *the U.S. will not permit the forces of terror to gain the tools of genocide.*⁵³

-“In April, Bush tells British reporter Trevor McDonald,

*the worst thing that could happen would be to allow a nation like Iraq, run by Saddam Hussein, to develop weapons of mass destruction, and then team up with terrorist organizations so they can blackmail the world. I'm not going to let that happen.*⁵⁴

-“In August, Cheney tells the Veterans of Foreign Wars that,

*there is no doubt that Saddam Hussein now has WMDs [and] there is no doubt that he is amassing them to use against our friends, against our allies and against us ... The risks of inaction are far greater than the risk of action.*⁵⁵

-“In September, on the first anniversary of 9/11, the president delivers a speech before the U.N. General Assembly, and said,

*Saddam Hussein's regime is a grave and gathering danger. To suggest otherwise is to hope against the evidence. To assume this regime's good faith is to bet the lives of millions and the peace of the world in a reckless gamble. And this is a risk we must not take.... The first time we may be completely certain he has nuclear weapons is when, God forbid, he uses one. We owe it to all our citizens to do everything in our power to prevent that day from coming.*⁵⁶

-“Echoing Condolezza Rice's words weeks before, on October 7, 2002, the president says in a speech in Cincinnati,

*Facing clear evidence of peril, we cannot wait for the final proof, the smoking gun, that could come in the form of a mushroom cloud.*⁵⁷

-“And in February 2003, one month before the start of the war, Powell, who by now had yielded to the White House mind-set, was giving his own rendition

of a preventive war at the U.N. before millions of people in the U.S. and around the world:

*We know that Saddam Hussein is determined to keep his weapons of mass destruction; he's determined to make more ... Should we take the risk that he will not someday use these weapons at a time and a place and in a manner of his choosing, at a time when the world is in a much weaker position to respond? The United States will not and cannot run that risk to the American people.*⁵⁸

“There you have it; the entire administration was on board to prevent something that may very well have not taken place.”



“Let me ask you a quick question Mr. Hunt,” said Mr. Radusky, “can ... should the United States run the risk of being attacked again if we fail to act preventively?”

“Mr. Radusky, the president told the U.N. that it would have been a reckless gamble to assume that Saddam Hussein would never strike the United States with WMD's or provide terrorists with these weapons. So, he embarked on a war ... just in case ... to prevent that day from coming.... Tell me, wasn't that a gamble as well? ...

“You're now asking me if we can afford another gamble on the supposition of a perceived threat.... Well, the whole purpose of Just War criteria is precisely to prevent accidental wars from happening; to avoid nations from becoming involved in trivial wars or in pursuing wars as ends in themselves or as means to glory and fame; to avoid what Gary Trudeau satirically referred to in his *Doonesbury* cartoon a *blooper of a war*.

“Is the purpose of the *Just War* ethics to sanitize the international environment in an absolute manner ... to prevent war from happening, ever? No ... not even preventive wars will accomplish that; on the contrary, if everyone starts thinking alike, then we would really go back to the times in which, as Dr. Planas observed, a feudal lord would leave his castle and attack others to prevent them from eventually attacking him.”

“What do we stand to lose?” asked Mr. Edson.

“Quite a lot, Michael! ... Deaths, lots of it, on both sides ... and maybe for nothing. We also stand to lose our credibility and our leadership role in the world.... Do you know what that signifies? ... That others won't trust you, that others will perceive you as the reckless one.... We stand to waste lives, resources, and the support from others that one day we might truly need to really defend ourselves or to defend other people's lives and human rights....

“We would squander lots of good will that we will need for real conflicts such as another 9/11 or the global war on terror.... Do you realize that a spring 2006 opinion poll taken in fifteen nations showed that our global image had significantly deteriorated, even among our allies and friends, largely because of the Iraq war? On account of our presence in Iraq, many people now think that the United States is a threat to world peace!⁵⁹ What kind of example are we providing to the world? In fact, we have altered the rules of the game in international politics. Remember what Captain Francis had said: *if we do it, others will feel justified in doing it, too.*

“Having publicly referred to them as evil, and witnessing what happened to one of the members of this axis, shouldn’t North Korea or Iran feel justified in moving forth with their nuclear ambitions, regardless of any treaty, alleging that they feel threatened by us? . . . Once we have decided to change the rules of international relations we must realize that the new rules apply to all, and that means that we can’t complain when others apply these rules to us.”

“May I ask another question?” asked Mr. Edson. “Had the WMDs been found ... had the war lasted only 3 months with few casualties, could we have said that the war was justified?”

“Again, Michael, this is not about WMDs,” replied Mr. Hunt. “The Soviets had them for decades; the Chinese still have them.... And suppose Saddam had these weapons in his possession since after the Gulf War.... If you’re a madman who has suffered a humiliating defeat at the hands of an internationally-led American coalition a few years back, wouldn’t you have desired to make those weapons available to terrorists anytime during the last decade so they would have used them against us? ...

“Well, these weapons that Hussein supposedly had didn’t seem to alarm the Bush administration that much ... that is, until after 9/11!

“Today, many governments possess WMDs.... What makes the administration feel so sure that any of these governments would not surreptitiously transfer these weapons to terrorists?”

“Addressing national security issues is not easy, but to what extent do we want to inoculate ourselves against all the dangers the world brings on to us? There are numerous threats in the world today. Some of them may end up being only threats; others could be adequately dealt with through diplomatic means; some may reach the status of an imminent attack and would require preemptive action; others we might not be able to deter on time and will result in a defensive attack.

“Somehow, we have to realize that there’s only so much we can do to bring about security to the nation ... right now, for example, neither our ports, our borders, nor our chemical storage plants and transportation system are secured ... and yet we are seeking to sterilize the outside world so that we could feel safe.

"If we choose to go down the path of eliminating potential threats ... as preventive wars call for ... simply because we perceive them as such, we might create enormous instability in world affairs; we might want to add incredible numbers to our enemy list, Muslims, Arabs, North Koreans, Latin Americans, Chinese; where do we stop?

"Are we going to have to neutralize a sizable portion of the Earth's inhabitants in order to ensure security for the American people? ... Such is the irrationality and immorality of a preventive war."

At that moment I decided to intervene. "Suppose we compare war to a gun. Do we use a gun for preventive or for defensive purposes? Do we use a gun when someone is about to hurt us, or do we go and shoot someone we believe will eventually hurt us?

"I think that what Mr. Hunt is alluding to is that a preventive war is a narrow and shortsighted solution to one's security; it's a mirage of a solution caused by fear and uncertainty. And what do these conditions bring about? ... As Mr. Hunt said, they create a sense of expediency, a need to cut corners, in order to make ourselves feel secure."

Mr. Hunt followed. "*We need to fight this war abroad so we won't have to fight it at home*, President Bush would repeat candidly, seemingly oblivious to the highly callous nature of his remarks. Who wouldn't prefer that other people's homes be destroyed rather than their own? Who wouldn't opt for other lands to be bombed instead of their own? Who wouldn't prefer transferring acts of terror abroad instead of having to occur at home?

"Who wouldn't prefer to substitute our dead for theirs? ... Yes, some of our soldiers will die, but think of how many more of their people will die! Who wouldn't prefer seeing others die instead of us? Now, tell me, who wouldn't like such a great deal? ...

"Well, the administration did a good job selling this product to us, and we bought it.... We bought it because we became afraid and the administration, too, sensed that we had become afraid.... Wouldn't it have been better if the president had reassured us by reminding us that among our worst enemies was fear itself?"

"Why do you say this was a callous attitude on the part of the president?" asked Ms. Williamson.

"Ms. Williamson, tell me," Mr. Hunt replied, "who's responsible for preventing terrorists to come into the country, whether legally or illegally? Who's responsible for protecting our land borders, our coastland, and our air space?

"Protecting ourselves against terrorism is our responsibility, not others! And we certainly have the resources to do so. But we must also have the will ... the will to have our taxes raised to pay for the war; the will to sacrifice some of our civil liberties.... Yet, our government decided that it was more expedient to export the war to Iraq, not on the basis of compelling evidence, or even immi-

nent threats, but on the possibility that there could be threats in the future. This was a case in which the feudal lord had decided to leave his castle to attack his enemy in order to prevent his enemy from *possibly* attacking him in the future.

“It’s possible that the administration was well-intentioned in seeking to protect our people ... callously well-intentioned, and naïve, if I may add.... But it panicked, generating a sense of fear in all of us that may have created far more uncertainty in the long run than the uncertainty we meant to eradicate by going to war.

“In the final analysis, and without the certainty of an imminent attack, there might be more of these preventive wars if future presidents do not have the self-confidence they will require to face the brink.

“Ken Adelman, a former Reagan administration official and a close friend of Cheney, may have inadvertently contributed to the theory on the causes of war when he wrote a piece in the Wall Street Journal urging the president not to waste more time in going to war:

*Every day Mr. Bush holds off liberating Iraq, he said, is another day endangering America. Posing as a ‘patient man,’ he risks a catastrophic attack. Should that attack occur and be traced back to an Iraqi WMD facility, this president would be relegated to the ash heap of history.*⁶⁰

“So, let us now add “historical legacy” to fear and insecurity as among determining elements that can prompt a president to go to war. The question is whether these elements should justify a president into taking such action.

“Going forward, the American people will have to be the real decision makers; do we accept a preventive strategy in our foreign policy? Do we go on to disregard our religious and moral values in an attempt to enhance the security of the American people on the basis of circumstantial, inferential, probabilistic, and suspicious intelligence about a potential threat emerging some time in the future? ...”



“I have a question,” said Ms. Bynum. “All of a sudden everybody started blaming the president because no WMD’s have been found. Is it truly his fault that he was given lousy intelligence?”

“Ms. Bynum,” replied Mr. Hunt, “think about what this war has meant so far: hundreds of billions of dollars spent; incredible destruction inside Iraq; we’ll likely approach close to five thousand dead soldiers, assuming the war lasts two or three more years; over a hundred thousand Iraqis will have died. The war has generated and attracted countless terrorists who were not terrorists before the conflict had started; it has activated al-Qaeda cells and created newly inde-

pendent ones that have led to acts of terrorism in Europe and in Africa, as well as other attempts against Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, Afghanistan and the U.S.

“Tell me, do you really believe ... does anyone here believe that so much destruction could have been the responsibility of only one person, George Tenet? ... Could it?”

“I realize that the administration has sought to convey the image that the president acted responsibly and on the basis of reassurances he received from his intelligence man. I think, however, that we need to examine this aspect. Bear in mind what I have said though, that a mind-set can betray your best intentions.

“Let’s look at the record.... On December 21, 2002, three months before the invasion, and months after war preparations and mobilizations had been carried out, Tenet and Deputy Director John McLaughlin met with Bush, Rice, Cheney and Card to make the agency’s case on WMDs. Relying on Woodward’s account, my timeline indicates that, for practical purposes, the administration already had arrived at its decision to attack Iraq. Tenet, too, indicates that such was the case.⁶¹ The only issue left was how the administration would showcase its decision to the American public and to the world.

“According to Woodward’s account, the evidence that these two intelligence officers presented was so inadequate that even the president, as inexperienced as he was in military and foreign policy, and someone who is not known for his analytical skills, showed immediate disappointment. *Nice try, I don’t think this is quite—it’s not something that Joe Public would understand or would gain a lot of confidence from.* Finding the presentation disappointing, Bush asks Tenet, *how confident are you?* to which Tenet replies, *Don’t worry, it’s a slam dunk case.*⁶²

“According to Tenet’s memoirs, the by-now infamous phrase that the administration had relied on to publicly justify the invasion of Iraq was not meant to provide the president with any degree of certainty regarding the presence of WMDs in Iraq. Tenet has indicated that his phrase referred to how easily it could be for the administration to make its case on the basis of whatever information was available that could be made public. If all in the Oval Office that day understood the context of Tenet’s words, it is clear that by leaking the information and refusing to clarify the circumstances for nearly three years, the administration was not only blaming the CIA director for providing lousy intelligence; it was absolving itself of any wrongdoing. Against the backdrop of Tenet’s praising words about the president stands the great disdain he shows toward the simplistic ‘he made us do it’ explanation encapsulated in the *slam dunk* remark that Woodward quotes in his book. Tenet calls the action *the most despicable thing I have ever seen in my life.*⁶³

“Is it possible that it was all a misunderstanding, that Tenet meant to say something and Bush, Cheney, and Rice understood something entirely different? ... We can give the administration the benefit of the doubt and argue that a

well established mind-set could have misunderstood remarks that were in line with its prevailing intentions; if we're going to war and Tenet is indicating that the case for WMDs is so simple to put together it must be because he can support it with sound intelligence.

"And yet, what's incredible is that Bush was not convinced. He tells the group, *Needs a lot more work.... Let's get some people who've actually put together a case for a jury.* And, playing his own devil's advocate, Bush tells Tenet, *Make sure no one stretches to make our case.*⁶⁴ That was Bush.

"Meanwhile, Cheney, who is known for being an extremely politically cunning, even suspicious individual, does the opposite of the president! He accepted what the president had just questioned. He went along with Tenet's presentation. 'Why not,' he would say; 'why question the man who knows it all!'⁶⁵

"And Rice, who according to numerous public estimations is the most skilled analyst in the administration, whether buying into Tenet's presentation or not, encourages the president to move onward with the invasion to get rid of Saddam once and for all before he can present another threat to the world community in the future.⁶⁶

"In the end, the one who showed the most doubt was the president himself, and yet, as an example that a mind-set is not much of an asset in politics, he managed to set aside those doubts. Woodward reports that Bush had said later that McLaughlin's presentation *would not have stood the test of time*, but that Tenet's reassurances were important.⁶⁷ Whether this remark by the president is true or not, one thing is certain; the president never contradicted Woodward's quotation.

"But, were there really any reassurances? Tenet indicates that during the meeting, Bob Walpole, his intelligence officer, had informed the group that the intelligence community's available evidence *was nowhere near that categorical.*⁶⁸ In the end, they all believed what they wanted to believe. The president and his team uncritically accepted evidence that he himself suspected would not have persuaded "Joe Public?" ... Here lies the irresponsibility—even if the motive had been to protect the nation—that a morally insufficient mind-set would be so willing to march into war relying on inadequate information.

"We should take into account, too, that under stress, a mind-set becomes even more treacherous, particularly when this attitude is held by those who oversee issues of justice, war, peace, or law and order. An open mind searches for alternatives; it questions beliefs and assumptions, it seeks to combine morality, common sense, and policy into forceful action; it rejects generalizations, unrealistic idealism, and shallow judgments.

"Under stress, however, a mind-set's tendency is not to question itself, for that would cause even more stress. The tendency is to give in, to seek closure by adapting to that which is already established. The president, unfortunately, had

been under quite a bit of stress ... who wouldn't, prior to taking the nation into war? As Bush told Woodward,

*Yeah, I felt stressed.... My jaw muscles got so tight. And it was not just because I was smiling and shaking so many hands. There was a lot of tension during the last holiday.*⁶⁹

“Frankly, Ms. Bynum, what the record tells me is that, towards the end, the decision-making process had been very shallow; what the mind-set wanted was not last minute questioning, but soothing reassurances, whether they were well grounded or not was beside the point.”

“Mr. Hunt, tell us then,” I began to ask, “is it your conclusion that the war on Iraq is an unjust war?”

“Well, as we know by now, there were both right and wrong actions involved in the decision.... The duty the president says he felt to invade Iraq in order to protect the American people may have been noble as were part of the administration's war planning concerns about minimizing or avoiding collateral damage.

“Also, the president had become a born-again politician after 9/11 and now wanted to improve the moral quality of the world and reform terrorist nations; he became concerned about the plight of the Iraqi people under a sadistic regime; he wanted to expand freedom and women's right throughout the region; he was even concerned that early oil revenues should go to the Iraqi people, *repayment of debt ought to be the last in line*, he argued.⁷⁰ None of these intentions are ethically wrong.

“On the other hand, initiating a war to prevent possible or potential real threats that may or may not materialize is a very dangerous affair in international politics, which is what makes this war highly unethical. The intentions and reasons to go to war also were not entirely noble, given that fear and insecurity within the leadership were major determinants.

“Moreover, as you may recall, one of the *Just War* criteria is that the leaders have to plan for a successful outcome to the war. Well, we now know that plans for the reconstruction of the country following regime change were simplistic and naïve, as were assumptions about easy victories ... being welcomed as liberators ... while giving light consideration to the possibility of hostility unleashing ethnic/sectarian strife or a civil war. As a result, the administration disregarded and downgraded sound military and political advice to commit the necessary number of troops and planning to ensure the rebuilding process. This is the overall picture—one of inadequate planning—that the special inspector general for the Iraq reconstruction made public in March 2007 that,

in the days after the invasion, the Defense Department had no strategy for restoring either government institutions or infrastructure, adding that even

*Congress provided vast amounts of money with little idea of how it was being spent.*⁷¹

“So as to reaffirm this view, we do well to remember that Gen. Peter Schoomaker, the Army’s former Chief of Staff, testified before a House Committee that the United States invaded Iraq while having \$56 billion less in equipment and 500,000 fewer soldiers than at the time of the 1991 Persian Gulf War, a war we fought with numerous other allies.”⁷²

“Furthermore, we have to ask ourselves, to what extent the war in Iraq has not resulted in the growth and expansion of radical Muslim fundamentalism, thus making the overall effort of our global war on terror much more difficult... If that was the case ... and common sense and at least one National Intelligence Estimate has arrived to this conclusion⁷³ then, such decision could be said to be morally reprehensible as well as politically devastating since it likely has contributed to the lengthening of the war and to additional casualties and destruction.

“Overall, the decision to go to war, in my view, was a sadly misguided effort conditioned by emotions (animus, fear, and insecurity), implemented through unethical means (misinformation), and yet, possibly motivated by good intentions (protect the nation).

“The means themselves ... the preventive motivation inherent in the decision ... were politically and morally reprehensible because they subverted and disregarded the religious, moral, and political values this nation stands for. Further, the attack violated the principles of *just war* in almost all respects, even if it was not undertaken with a desire to do evil.

“In my view, the causes of this war are to be found on a moral confusion of ends and means and on the absence of coherent and consistent moral principles due to inexperience, the burden of the job, an almost black and white moral view of human nature and world politics, and a self-imposed mind-set that would not allow opposite views to compete.”

“So, all the blood that has been shed has been in vain?” asked Ms. Williamson.

“Despite what some may say, Ms. Williamson, wars are never *awesome*,” replied Mr. Hunt. “It’s always sad when soldiers die, and the fact that soldiers die defending their country doesn’t make it any less sad. And, it’s no less sad either, for the country that emerges victorious. Good people die on both sides of the battlefield. One would think that good soldiers and innocent people should not die in wars, much less in wars that can be avoided ... or in wars that are well-intentioned ... but they do.

“We don’t know yet if our soldiers have fought in vain, or died in vain. Wars should never be fought for the wrong reasons or because of reckless realism or idealism; the human cost is simply too high.

“Human beings, however, can correct themselves. It’s quite possible that we will redeem ourselves in the end in order to honor those who have died and those who have been permanently injured.... But to attain that, we may have to move beyond Secretary Powell’s *Pottery Barn rule ... you break it, you own it ...* that he had conveyed to the president before the attack.⁷⁴

“It’s not only a matter of accepting responsibility for the damage we have done. In our own country, a *hit and run* accident is illegal and morally wrong. Both the law and our moral values ... for those who have them ... require us to stop and find out about the condition of the victim. If the victim is hurt, we’re supposed to call for emergency assistance, and inform the police. And, if we’re truly sensitive, we see the person to the hospital and care for his or her recovery. In other words, you just don’t abandon the victim in the middle of the road.... Remember the parable of the Good Samaritan....

“We may have created a mess in Iraq ... and by “we” I mean not only the administration and the Congress, but the American people, too ... and the easiest thing to do would be to leave the scene of the accident. But, have we stopped to think about the repercussions?

“Going back to the practical considerations of ethics, what happens if we leave a weakened Iraq in the midst of ethnic/sectarian strife? Are we certain that others with less than honorable intentions wouldn’t take advantage of the situation? Would a weakened Iraq present a political temptation to outsiders? What if the crisis creates a serious political disease in the area and soon begins to infect others in the region?

“Or, once Iraq recovers, would we be able to count on the Iraqi people as allies knowing that we had left their house in shambles? “I would like to think that our nation would make its decision on the basis of responsibility instead of uncertainty. However, under the circumstances, I’ll take uncertainty as a motivator.... If you ask me, Ms. Williamson, all the blood that has been shed may not be in vain if we act responsibly and morally; that is, if we see the victim through its recovery.”

“What would recovery mean ... staying there ... perhaps forever?” asked Mr. Edson.

“Recovery means doing everything we creatively and responsibly can to stabilize the country. It could mean leaving soon if we conclude—dispassionately, and without fear or domestic political considerations—that our departure would contribute to stabilization within both the country and the region; or it could mean delaying such departure if we think that both goals could not be attained through early withdrawal.

“Beyond recovery, we have to assess what the consequences of our withdrawal may signify for our domestic security and that of our allies. In my view, it will likely mean having to increase our military strength to quell down the violence while efforts are made to reach a political solution to the internal strife.

This might imply having to delay our departure considerably, as discomfoting and agonizing as that may sound to our citizens.”

“In that case, do you share Ms. Lewis prognosis that the war cannot be won on its present course?” asked Mr. Dickerson. “You seem to be proposing the possibility that we continue to fight a war that can’t be won.”

“That would be highly unethical and quite stupid as I’m sure everyone here will agree,” Mr. Hunt answered back. “Now, in reply to your question, Ms. Lewis was referring to the global war on terror, not to Iraq... Second, the problem is that by invading Iraq, we have made it part of the war on terror. And, yes, I do share Ms. Lewis’ view that staying the course or slightly altering our strategy may not be of any help to us and may complicate things for us in the long run.

“But I’ll go a step further; unless it seeks new avenues, unless it starts to think outside the box, I don’t believe this administration will be able to do what’s necessary to win the war on terror or the war in Iraq. In my view, it’s going to take nothing less than shedding off, ripping apart, its mind-set and explore very ... and I mean, very ... innovative solutions. The only problem is that this administration doesn’t have much time to do so, and I don’t think it’s willing to radically alter its vision.”

“I just hate to think of all these kids dying,” again lamented Ms. Williamson.

“Ms. Williamson,” I called out. “I don’t know what it means to go to war. I never did ... didn’t feel that patriotic at the time to quit my studies and go to Vietnam. Others went in my place, which is why I feel a sense of reverence for those who died then and those who die now, and for those who have become disabled in war.

“From a very personal standpoint, I feel bad for not having responded to the call, regardless of how I felt about the war then, particularly because others died in my place; and particularly today, when our soldiers are dying in war. Those who responded then, and those who have responded today, carry within themselves a sense of pride and honor to which I’m not entitled. Their commitment to duty and the sense of responsibility they showed by serving has been very humbling....

“Today, our soldiers are truly involved in victim stabilization; they’re assisting an entire nation to get back on its feet.... That’s quite a daunting task we’re asking them to do. Our soldiers have done what they have been asked to do without questions; they simply have obeyed; and they are doing their best. We can only hope that they’re not doing it for nothing.”

“Are you suggesting that the politicians are responsible for the death of these kids?” asked Ms. Williamson. “If that’s so, how do we hold them accountable?”

“How do we hold ourselves accountable, Ms. Williamson?” I asked. “Not the politicians, but us? A democracy only has mechanisms to hold public officials accountable; it doesn’t tell us what to do when we mess up, other than to learn

from our mistakes, I suppose ... and hope ... that we may show greater consideration to these soldiers and their families than what we showed to those who went to Vietnam.”

“We didn’t even show much consideration to the family of Pat Tillman!” remarked Mr. Edson. “Now, that’s a hero for our times!”

“I strongly beg to differ, Mr. Edson, and I mean it most emphatically,” I said.

“You don’t think Pat Tillman was a hero?” retorted an angrier Mr. Edson.

“Everything he gave up in order to volunteer for combat duty, that’s not much?”

“And you don’t believe that others who have died didn’t give up everything they had, too?” I asked rhetorically. “Hadn’t they, too, volunteered to go into the armed forces, or do you think they were conscripted? Even the compensation they received is nothing to brag about, particularly given what they were asked to do in return.

“It’s another unfortunate commentary about our society that we value ourselves by our celebrity status and the wealth we possess. Pat Tillman is not a hero because of how much he gave up but because he gave up everything he had, which happened to have been quite a lot!

“But what about the others ... didn’t they also give up everything they had? Their families, their friends, their smaller incomes, their ambitions ... getting married and having kids, watching their children grow? They gave up as much as Pat Tillman did! ... You measure heroism by how much you’re willing to give, and every single one that has gone, has been willing to give up everything.... Don’t ever forget that.”



“Okay, what else?” I asked. “Mr. Hunt, are you through with your presentation?”

“I don’t believe that I can say much more than what I have said, so I’ll just answer any questions anyone may have.”

“I do have a comment and a question,” said Mr. Edson. “Ted, you have indicated that the American people bear responsibility for the war in Iraq. Are you making some sort of rhetorical statement?”

“Rhetorical statement ... hmm,” replied Mr. Hunt. “Michael, the Senate voted overwhelmingly, 77 to 23; the House did, too, 296 to 133, in favor of granting the president the authorization to use military force *as he determines to be necessary and appropriate* against *the continued threat posed by Iraq*.⁷⁵ And while this was a Republican-led preventive war ... only one Republican senator and six Republican House members voted against the resolution ... the majority

of Democrats in the Senate and a sizable number in the House voted in favor of the war.

“Now, I’m sure you’re well aware that, on vital issues such as war, members of Congress know how to take as good a pulse as any physician or nurse, if only because nothing less than their own re-elections are at stake, and most of them are as afraid as any General Motors employee is of becoming unemployed....

“My statement, Michael, indicated three things: first, that the majority of the American public, as determined by the vote in Congress and public opinion polls, supported the war in Iraq; second, that while it’s each individual’s prerogative to take any position he or she wants to take on the war ... and while it may have not been clear then, it is clear now ... those who supported the war were in fact supporting a preventive war, not a preemptive war; and third, I believe that the American public was not served well by the Executive, the Congress, and most of the media in evaluating the reasons and causes of this war.”

“Very well,” replied Mr. Edson, “and what about the churches, the religious institutions; didn’t they have a responsibility to educate their followers?”

“You’re right.... I failed to mention that point,” replied Mr. Hunt. “I don’t know the extent to which these institutions relied on the *Just War* criteria to defend or criticize the attack. I’m aware that the more conservative mainstream churches and religiously-oriented lobbying groups supported the war, while moderate and somewhat more liberal mainstream denominations did not.

“Moreover, it’s interesting that, while Pope John Paul II supported a nation’s efforts to defend itself against attacks, he vehemently opposed the war on Iraq, and said so publicly, and to the president. And, what’s even more surprising was that Benedict XVI ... supposedly, a conservative pope ... issued statements at the time he was a cardinal indicating that the war in Iraq was not *just*....

“Also, while I personally heard a great deal about the position of religious lobbying groups about the war, somehow we didn’t hear much from the various churches’ leaderships.”

“Thank you, Mr. Hunt, for your analysis,” I said. “Anything else before we wrap it up?”

“Actually, yes,” said Ms. Vanhurst. “Mr. Hunt has concluded that the war in Iraq is unjust; it’s misguided, irresponsible, and morally wrong. Well ... hypothetically speaking, to what extent do you think the war in Iraq constitutes an impeachable offense?”

“Interesting question, Ms. Vanhurst,” I replied. “I’ve had some thoughts on the matter.... Mind you, I’m not a constitutional law expert, but I do know that impeachment procedures sometimes can be fifty-percent constitutional and sixty-percent political.... So, let’s see ... in first place, I don’t think that we can impeach the president for leading the nation into this war without impeaching the Vice President and those in the Congress who supported the war, too.

“Another point is that while the president may be morally accountable for driving our nation into war, it doesn't follow that he may have committed impeachable offenses; this is something that the experts would have to study rather carefully.”

“But didn't Mr. Hunt indicate that the administration was making unsubstantiated charges about the threat that Hussein posed?” demanded Mr. Edson. You mean to tell me that these actions do not constitute impeachable offenses?”

“Again, Mr. Edson,” I said, “your question requires a constitutional answer not an ethical one. It's possible that they may coincide, but the president's behavior needs to be constitutionally scrutinized; it's the Congress's responsibility to deal with this issue.

“I would defer to the experts in this area.... Whether the intent to deceive the American people to attain what he perceived was a higher good ... to safeguard the people ... merits impeachment, regardless of what motivated him in first place, is the question that constitutional experts would have to answer.

“Mr. Hunt has concluded that the decision to go to war in Iraq reflects serious mistakes of judgments, irresponsible stately behavior, and failure to discern and critically evaluate the intelligence at hand; these could be the reasons to consider impeachment procedures. The question is not whether these reasons are serious or not; taking a nation into an unnecessary or misguided war is very serious in my mind. The question is whether they constitute impeachable offenses.

“One thing I do know is that if the Congress ever follows the impeachment route, it would be an incredible mistake if it were to do it on a partisan basis.... I realize that Republicans in Congress are less objective nowadays than they were at the time of President Nixon's trials and tribulations and that frustrated Democrats seem eager today to engage in payback tactics.

“But, having now attained a majority in both houses, I think that it would be politically unwise for Democrats to seek to impeach a Republican president unless a majority of Republicans agree to consider it as well.... Proceeding on a partisan basis would be a tragic political mistake....

“Far more important, starting impeachment procedures while three wars are going on would imply having to shift our entire national focus from these wars to a totally internal problem. How will our soldiers feel? Instead of focusing on doing everything we can to support them we would be turning the nation's efforts inward. At the same time, if we impeach the president, what comes after that?.... Will it alter the course of the war? Will it solve the Iraq problem or the regional problem?.... I think we need to proceed very carefully when we talk impeachment ... Anything else?

“Very well, ... Then, have a good evening, and I will see you next week.”

Endnotes

- ¹ Woodward, Bob, *Plan of Attack*, (New York: Simon & Schuster, First Edition, 2004), p. 5.
- ² Schmitt, Michael N., "Ethics and Military Force: The Jus in Bello," Carnegie Council Workshop on European and North American Perspectives on Ethics and the Use of Force, January 2002, online.
- ³ Mistaken Entry Into Clan Dispute Led to U.S. Black Eye in Somalia, *The Washington Post*, July 2, 2006.
- ⁴ CIA Director George Tenet reminds us in his memoirs that several Bush officials had long held views about ousting Saddam Hussein. Tenet, George, *At the Center of the Storm*, (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2007), p. 302
- ⁵ Woodward, p. 9.
- ⁶ Ibid., p.12.
- ⁷ Ibid., p. 13.
- ⁸ Ibid., p. 20.
- ⁹ Ibid., pp. 71-72.
- ¹⁰ Ibid., pp. 21-22.
- ¹¹ Ibid., p. 12.
- ¹² Ibid., p. 10.
- ¹³ Tenet, p. 302, 305
- ¹⁴ Woodward, p. 162.
- ¹⁵ Ibid., p. 89.
- ¹⁶ Ibid., p. 27.
- ¹⁷ Ibid.
- ¹⁸ Ibid.
- ¹⁹ Ibid., pp. 25-26.
- ²⁰ Ibid., p.51.
- ²¹ Ibid., pp. 1-2, emphasis mine.
- ²² Ibid., p. 3.
- ²³ Ibid., p. 36.
- ²⁴ Ibid., pp. 53-66.
- ²⁵ Ibid., pp. 71-73.
- ²⁶ Ibid., p. 87.
- ²⁷ Ibid., p. 218.
- ²⁸ Ibid., p. 108.
- ²⁹ Ibid., p. 119.
- ³⁰ Ibid., pp. 154-155.
- ³¹ Ibid., p. 164.
- ³² Ibid., p.167.
- ³³ Ibid., p. 169.
- ³⁴ Ibid., p. 186.

³⁵ Ibid., pp. 188-190.

³⁶ Ibid., p. 234.

³⁷ Ibid., pp. 240-241.

³⁸ Ibid., p. 249.

³⁹ Tenet, see Chapter 24.

⁴⁰ Cheney Stands by His 'Last Throes' Remark, *The Washington Post*, June 20, 2006.

⁴¹ Hussein's Prewar Ties To Al-Qaeda Discounted, *The Washington Post*, April 6, 2007.

⁴² Tenet, p. 310-311.

⁴³ Woodward, p. 188.

⁴⁴ Tenet, p. 305, 308-309.

⁴⁵ Iraq's Alleged al-Qaeda Ties Were Disputed Before War, *The Washington Post*, September 9, 2006.

⁴⁶ Woodward, p. 220.

⁴⁷ Department of Defense, *Dictionary of Military Terms*, <http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/jel/doddict/>

⁴⁸ Ibid, emphasis added.

⁴⁹ Woodward, p. 34, emphasis added.

⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 129.

⁵¹ Tenet, p. 305.

⁵² Woodward, p. 92, emphasis mine.

⁵³ Ibid., p. 112, emphasis mine.

⁵⁴ Ibid., p. 120, emphasis mine.

⁵⁵ Ibid. p. 164, emphasis mine.

⁵⁶ "President's Remarks at the United Nations General Assembly," September 12, 2002, emphasis mine.

⁵⁷ Woodward, p. 202, emphasis mine.

⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 310, emphasis mine.

⁵⁹ Global Image of the U.S. Is Worsening, Survey Finds, *The New York Times*, June 14, 2006.

⁶⁰ Woodward, p. 165.

⁶¹ Tenet, pp. 360-361.

⁶² Woodward, p. 249.

⁶³ Tenet, p. 481.

⁶⁴ Woodward, p. 250.

⁶⁵ Ibid., pp. 249-250.

⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 251.

⁶⁷ Ibid., p. 250.

⁶⁸ Tenet, p. 360.

⁶⁹ Woodward, p. 251.

⁷⁰ Ibid., p. 323.

⁷¹ Inspector General Details Failures of Iraq Reconstruction, *The Washington Post*, March 22, 2007.

⁷² General Says Army Will Need To Grow, *The Washington Post*, December 15, 2006.

⁷³ Part of Iraq Intelligence Report is Released, *The Washington Post*, September 27, 2006.

⁷⁴ Woodward, p. 150.

⁷⁵ "Authorization for Use of Military Force Against Iraq Resolution of 2002," Public Law 107-243, 107th Congress.