

Good Morning, thank you for coming and thank you for inviting me to share some ideas with you today.

My name is Roger Doebke and I am from Carlsbad, California, home of the that wonderful Christmas time plant, the poinsettia and home of the best winter strawberries produced in the World, from fields that have been zoned for their production in a permanent reserve.

I am happy to see so many friends here, for those of you that are expecting to be paid for your attendance today as promised, please be advised that I have reached my debt ceiling and payments, at best, will be delayed.

My story is a Chautauqua story.

Six years ago my wife Judy and I came to Chautauqua for one week.

Every year since, we have been here for the season.

The Chautauqua theme of “life long learning” resonated with us.

Every lecture, every class is an adventure in learning.

I found that the Department of Religion 2:00 lectures were particularly stimulating and speakers like Rabbi Irwin Kula and C. Weldon Gaddy, who is here this week, provided new insights for me.

I got to know the Department of Religion staff, particularly Maureen Revengo who has become a source of encouragement for my work, as well as religious leaders on the grounds like the Rev. Paul Womack and Rabbi Sam Stahl who have served as models of religious service to imitate.

These events coupled with my association with the UU Fellowship here at Chautauqua, its ministers and its members and friends have been significant influences.

It was Lee Barker, President of Meadville Lombard Theological School who gave a sermon here and participated in a talk back session that led to me enter Meadville Lombard Theological School, where I now am studying for my Master of Arts in Religion Degree.

It was listening to Eboo Patel of the Interfaith Youth Core, when he spoke here at the amp, that I saw the real possibilities in interfaith work.

It was in conversations with Karen Armstrong and Imam Feisal Rauf and Daisy Kahn that I connected with the power of compassion and purpose.

All of this because I came to Chautauqua.

My topic ~ the unpleasant and complex issue of War ~ is a subject most of us find deeply troubling.

I've developed a particular interest in it for a variety of reasons; foremost of which happens to have come out of the conversations I've had with my daughter, Kathy, a Director of Nursing for the Veterans Administration in Portland, Oregon. Kathy and her colleagues are the first line of health care providers on the Home Front for returning veterans. They see the devastating effects of our military agendas. Her stories are profoundly disturbing and my admiration for her and the returning veterans she and her staff hope to help heal is tremendous.

Another source of my interest came from reading a book on last year's CLSC reading list: A.C. Grayling's Cities of the Dead ~` which then

prompted study for a paper I wrote last year for a Meadville Lombard class on Peace Keeping and Human Security taught by Dr. Sharon Welch, whom David Wiessbard quoted so nicely at Sunday's UU Service. The information that I uncovered for that paper was, for me, an emotional revelation and I would like to share some of my findings with you this hour.

A. C. Grayling prefaces his work, Cities of the Dead, by stating that, and I quote, that he “doesn't want to impugn the courage and sacrifice of the men who fought for their countries.” I want to go further and say that these men and women of the armed forces are heroes in every sense of the word. ~ They fought, sacrificed and died for causes that you and I only talk about; and too many of them return to us with unimaginable physical and psychological damage that often defines the rest of their lives. The burning question here is how do we approach our future military actions? And, moreover, how do we morally defend those actions to future generations and ourselves? To begin we must examine our motives and decide if our actions will result in Just or Unjust Wars?

Grayling's book, Cities of the Dead, provides an examination of who we are and how we appear to the world. It is introspection for the purpose of looking at ourselves in the cold light of day, examining what we believe to be right and what we abhor that has been done in our name.

Last week I was in Chicago for a weeklong seminar and I met a man from India who has been engaged in incredible conflict resolution work. He said to me how so many people in his country distinguish between the people of America and its government's policies. I opined, that might not be healthy, since we are a government of the people, by the people and for

the people and we should be held responsible for the actions our government takes in our name.

My objective today can best be expressed by paraphrasing the 19<sup>th</sup> Century philosopher, Josiah Royce, who believed emphatically that war and loyalty are two very closely associated ideas. Part of my objective today, insofar as I can, is to break up in your mind this disastrous association and show how this notion of “loyalty”, more commonly referred to as patriotism, is corrupted by actions taken in our name. Because of the connection of war and loyalty, that takes so many forms, including that of supporting our troops who act in our name, we have been misled to think we are doing only good when in fact we are also doing evil.

Let me start by giving you the textbook definition of Just War:

The Just War Theory is a doctrine of military ethics of Roman philosophical and Catholic origin, which holds that a conflict can meet the criteria of philosophical, religious or political justice, provided it follows certain conditions.

The concept of justification for war under certain conditions goes back at least to Cicero and is then connected to Christian medieval theory beginning with Augustine of Hippo and Thomas Aquinas.

The Just War theory is an authoritative Catholic Church teaching confirmed by the United States Catholic Bishops in their pastoral letter, *The Challenge of Peace: God's Promise and Our Response*, issued in 1983. More recently, the Catechism of the Catholic Church affirms the Just War theory.

Just War theorists combine both a moral abhorrence towards war with a readiness to accept that war may sometimes be necessary. The criteria of the just war tradition acts as an aid to determining whether resorting to arms is morally permissible.

Just War theories are attempts to distinguish between justifiable and unjustifiable uses of organized armed forces; they attempt to conceive of how the use of arms might be restrained, made more humane, and ultimately directed towards the aim of establishing lasting peace and justice.

The Just War tradition addresses the morality of the use of force in two parts:

When is it right to resort to armed force and

What is acceptable in using such force?

We will focus here primarily on the concern of what exactly is acceptable force, not the question of the justification for entering a conflict or war.

### ***Jus in bello***

Once war has begun, just war theory directs how combatants should act:

According to it's definition the first criteria is Distinction.

Just war conduct should be governed by the principle of distinction. The acts of war should be directed towards enemy combatants, and not towards non-combatants caught in circumstances they did not create.

The prohibited acts include bombing civilian residential areas that include no military target and committing acts of terrorism or reprisal against civilians.

Secondly, the definition includes the principle of Proportionality:

Just war conduct should be governed by the principle of proportionality.

An attack cannot be launched on a military objective with the knowledge that the incidental civilian injuries would be clearly excessive in relation to the anticipated military advantage.

The third part of the definition is that of Military Necessity:

Just war conduct should be governed by the principle of minimum force.

An attack or action must be intended to help in the military defeat of the enemy, it must be an attack on a military objective, and the harm caused to civilians or civilian property must be proportional and not excessive in relation to the concrete and direct military advantage anticipated. This principle is meant to limit excessive and unnecessary death and destruction.

Based on this definition I have to take the position that certain actions during the American Civil War and all subsequent conflicts or wars that we've engaged in, fail to meet any of these tests for "Just War", thus the fallacy of Just War.

On the night of August 9, 1941 symbols of two great world powers, the HMS Prince of Wales carrying British Prime Minister Winston Churchill and the USS Augusta carrying American President Franklin Roosevelt, anchored in Placentia Bay off the coast of Newfoundland. The two men met face to face, for the first time, to plan America's entry into the war in Europe. The Japanese had not yet attacked Pearl Harbor and the American people were still reluctant to enter another war, but the next day Churchill and Roosevelt defined their cause in a document entitled

“The Atlantic Charter”. The common aim was that “all men in all the lands may live out their lives in freedom from fear and want.”<sup>1</sup> Roosevelt went even further to define the cause on January 6, 1942; speaking before the U.S. Congress he said, “God created man in his own image. We on our side are striving to be true to that divine heritage.”<sup>2</sup> Unfortunately, these statements fail to bridge the moral distance between the area bombing of German civilian populations by the British and the American bombing of Japanese civilian populations, culminating in the attacks on Hiroshima and Nagasaki with these high ideals.

World War II was by all accounts the war to end all wars. Never before had the nations of the world amassed so many men, so much equipment and, in the end, such an unimaginable weapon as the atom bomb. By all accounts never had so many perished in a war:

60 million civilian and military personnel dead:

The Russians lost over 26 million;

China, between 10 and 20 million;

Germany, between 6 and 8 million and

Japan, almost 3 million.

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<sup>1</sup> *The United States Social Security Administration*. Web. 28 Dec. 2010.  
<<http://www.ssa.gov/history/acharter2.html>>.

<sup>2</sup> *Miller Center of Public Affairs*. Proc. of State of the Union (Four Freedoms) (January 6, 1941). Web. 28 Dec. 2010.  
<<http://millercenter.org/scripps/archive/speeches/detail/3320>>.

The United Kingdom lost 449,800, 60,000 of which were civilian;

United States casualties totaled 418,500 ALL of which were military personal.

To America this represented about 0.32% of the population, but to the Russians it represented 14.18% of their population.

This massive loss of life, incredible property destruction and the personal misery that wiped out an entire generation became prophetic for 20<sup>th</sup> century warfare.

As Britain built up it's air power and began to launch offensive strikes across the channel, Sir Charles Portal, chief of Bomber Command, articulated a new military strategy; just one month after the Churchill – Roosevelt meeting in Placentia Bay. “In September 1941 Portal sent Churchill a plan for ‘Coventry-style’ attacks on Germany’s forty-five largest cities, claiming that if a force of 4000 bombers could be built up and unleashed in this fashion, the war would come to an end in six months.”<sup>3</sup>

Area bombing, ~ as it was referred to ~ was the indiscriminate bombing of cities and its’ population with no regard to their military significance and it received official sanction by the British “when the War cabinet switched its primary attention from oil and naval targets to “destroying the morale of the civil population as a whole.”

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3 Grayling, A. C. *Among the Dead Cities: the History and Moral Legacy of the WWII Bombing of Civilians in Germany and Japan*. New York: Walker &, 2006. 46. Print

In February 1942 Sir Arthur Harris joined Sir Charles Portal at Bomber Command and a new air directive was issued stating, “The primary object of your operations should now be focused on the morale of the enemy civil population.”<sup>4</sup> Harris executed this directive with personal zeal. Large-scale attacks on cities with incendiary bombs were launched. This type of ordnance was specifically chosen because it was designed to burn the cities to the ground. Explosive bombs, designed to destroy buildings by explosion could have been used, but the incendiary bombs were chosen because bomber command knew that fire storms would be much more frightening to the population and such massive fires would be almost impossible for civil defense resources to extinguish. At first, the large cities of Berlin, Hamburg and Cologne were the targets, but as the war progressed the targets became smaller and smaller cities. No distinction was made between cities; those with military targets of interest were equal to those without military targets.

Imagine the city of Hamburg on a night of intense incendiary bombing known as “the night the air caught fire”. A night that resulted in the death of seventy thousand people, mostly women, children, and the elderly, since those of soldiering age were serving at the front. They died horrible deaths, burning and suffocating, as the fires sucked up the oxygen. Can you imagine?

Some people say that we can never imagine what happens to someone else – But I imagined this scene over again so many times working on this

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4 Grayling, A. C. *Among the Dead Cities: the History and Moral Legacy of the WWII Bombing of Civilians in Germany and Japan*. New York: Walker &, 2006. 50. Print

project – I think I can imagine ~ And I find it too disturbing for words. What happened to the Principles of Just War? Why were those principles ignored? What aspects of war must have changed so dramatically that could possibly account for this moral lapse?

All of this destruction and killing was unseen by the bomber crews. Dave Grossman in his book On Killing: the Psychological Cost of Learning to Kill in War and Society observes, “when it is done from thousands of feet in the air, where the screams cannot be heard and the burning bodies cannot be seen, it is easy.”<sup>5</sup>

There's documented evidence that these acts of aerial bombing caused few psychological problems for either the bomber crews or their commanders in London. Britain had come a long way from World War I. Just 17 years earlier they were party to The Hague Convention demonizing the idea that anyone would drop anything from an airplane onto troops below and thereby drafted rules prohibiting aerial bombing. Britain's support for this convention was in reaction to the actions of Germany during WW I. While the Germans had the capability to bomb Britain using Zeppelins from the start of the World War I, the Kaiser banned the practice because he considered Britain as another "Christian nation" and viewed the bombing of civilians as less than gentlemanly. But later, under constant pressure from his military staff, he finally gave in and permitted a raid on the docks of the lower Thames, outside of

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<sup>5</sup> Grossman, Dave. *On Killing: the Psychological Cost of Learning to Kill in War and Society*. Boston: Little, Brown, 1995. 100,101. Print.

London. This act was the true beginning of aerial warfare and the rules of war changed forever.

Raphael Lemkin, a Polish lawyer and a Jew, coined the phrase Genocide in 1943. His idea of genocide as an offense against international law was so widely accepted by the International Community that it became one of the legal bases of the Nuremberg Trials. Lemkin's influence was so significant that in 1945 he became an advisor to U.S. Supreme Court Justice and Nuremberg Trial Chief Counsel, Robert H Jackson ~ His personal definition of Genocide was first stated in his book, "Axis Rule in Occupied Europe" and included a definition that encompassed both physical and psychological aspects of Genocide: "Generally speaking, genocide does not necessarily mean the immediate destruction of a nation, except when accomplished by mass killings of all members of a nation." It is intended rather to "signify a coordinated plan of different actions aiming at destruction of essential foundations of the life of national groups, with the aim of annihilating the groups themselves."

As a important aspect of Lemkin's lifetime work on international agreement to criminalize acts defined as genocide is the nineteen years Senator William Proxmire spent everyday bringing the question of ratification by the United States of the UN convention to the floor of the US Senate before it was finally approved and the United States became a signatory to the convention.

Under these conventions the British would have violated international law and be subject to prosecution as war criminals. Bombing of the German Civilian population falls as a violation under Article 2 of the 1948 United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of

Genocide which defines genocide as "any of the following acts committed with **intent** to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnic, racial or religious group, as such: killing members of the group; causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group; deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life, calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part. Under these definitions the British would be declared to have violated International law and be subject to prosecution as war criminals for acts of genocide.

America did not enter the war in Europe until well after it was a full engagement. The USAAF did not participate in the all out effort to bomb the German civilian population. "They differed both officially and in practice from that of British Bomber Command."<sup>6</sup> Although American commanders "generally agreed with Portal and Harris about the war-winning potential of bombing, they differed greatly from their British counterparts in their view of how that was to be done. For them the right way was the destruction of key aspects of the enemy's industrial capacity.

For the British it was by attacking enemy morale, meaning the killing of the civilian population.<sup>7</sup> American forces were mostly used for daytime bombing requiring high accuracy to take out military targets, although in

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6 Grayling, A. C. *Among the Dead Cities: the History and Moral Legacy of the WWII Bombing of Civilians in Germany and Japan*. New York: Walker &, 2006. 74.

7 Grayling, A. C. *Among the Dead Cities: the History and Moral Legacy of the WWII Bombing of Civilians in Germany and Japan*. New York: Walker &, 2006. 74.

an effort by the British to involve Americans in their area-bombing plan some joint efforts did result in such actions by US forces.

Virtually everyone knew the War was over by late 1944. German forces were relatively ineffective and American and British forces were far from being exhausted. The war by air had become more tactical by concentrating on rail and communication lines, mostly by the USAAF, but things changed in 1945 during the last seven months of the War.

“It was in this period that the British Bomber Command dropped more than a third of the total tonnage of bombs it unleashed on Germany in the entire war; and it was in this period that it turned its attention to towns and cities, until then unscathed, in search of targets where enough was still standing to make it worth while to knock them down.”<sup>8</sup> “In all, the Allied bombing campaign over Germany killed between 300,000 and 600,000 civilians and the number who suffered from burns and other injuries has never been determined.

In retrospect what was said about the British actions? Defenders said they did what they thought was “necessary”, but critics said they were guilty of murder. In other words, the “Just” and the “Unjust” War.

The head of Bomber Command, Sir Arthur Harris was not honored after the War and Churchill successfully distanced himself from the whole issue. There is no evidence the British people have every considered this wrongdoing as evil.

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<sup>8</sup> Grayling, A. C. *Among the Dead Cities: the History and Moral Legacy of the WWII Bombing of Civilians in Germany and Japan*. New York: Walker &, 2006. 69.

Thomas Nagel wrote in War and Massacre, “we know there are some outcomes that must be avoided at all costs, and we know that there are some costs that can never be paid.” Perhaps the British were the subject of Nagel’s observation that “these two forms of moral intuition are not capable of being brought together into a single, coherent moral system, and that the world can present us with situations in which there is no honorable or moral course for a man to take, no course free of guilt and responsibility for evil.”<sup>9</sup>

You may think that the area bombing of cities and the killing of the German civilian population helped win the war in Europe, but most experts suggest that it had little to do with the outcome of World War II and they attribute Germany's defeat to their commitment to the Russian front. Many people still believe, that Germany deserved to be devastated; especially when in 1945, as concentration camps were liberated inside Germany, the world saw photographs and newsreels of Belsen and Buchenwald and whatever punishment had been inflicted on Germany seemed inconsequential by comparison.

Most of us today still hold a great passion for what we feel was a justifiable cause for our entry into WWII, especially as it was first nobly articulated by Churchill and Roosevelt at Placentia Bay. Patriotism and loyalty to our country and its heroes, our devotion to those who sacrificed their lives in the name of liberty and freedom are part of who we are as Americans. These powerful emotions make it difficult for us to

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<sup>9</sup> Walzer, Michael. *Just and Unjust Wars: a Moral Argument with Historical Illustrations*. New York: Basic, 1977. 325. Print.

consider that anything we might have done could be considered as wrongdoing or morally or ethically corrupt.

But our motives, tactics and military strategies were also changed during that era and the line between Just and Unjust was blurred again.

Although American military commanders did not initially endorse the British area bombing they did ultimately wage their own war on the civilian population of Japan. “Even before the war in Europe was over, US authorities instituted a survey of the effects of strategic bombing on Nazi Germany. One of its principal aims was to provide information for use by the high command in the Pacific Theatre as it pondered the application of air power to the war against Japan.”<sup>10</sup>

Defenders of the nuclear attacks on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945 said they were “necessary” in order to prevent unacceptable American troop losses during an invasion of Japan. Critics say the attacks were unnecessary because Japan was already defeated and it was only a demand for unconditional surrender that stood in the way of ending the war. Some commentators believe that the bombing was done to show the Russians that the U.S. had superior firepower, “The other was - to use blunt terms - racism towards and anger against the Japanese”.<sup>11</sup>

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10 Grayling, A. C. *Among the Dead Cities: the History and Moral Legacy of the WWII Bombing of Civilians in Germany and Japan*. New York: Walker &, 2006. 91.

11 Grayling, A. C. *Among the Dead Cities: the History and Moral Legacy of the WWII Bombing of Civilians in Germany and Japan*. New York: Walker &, 2006. 169.

Whatever the rationale, 200,000 died in Hiroshima and 140,000 died in Nagasaki including those who died from radiation poisoning and other related issues after the bombing.

It can also be argued that the use of the atomic bomb was just a matter of the type of ordnance used for a mission.

There are great similarities between the British approach to Germany and the subsequent American approach to Japan. First, the incendiary bombing of sixty-six major Japanese cities, in the first seven months of 1945 probably killed between 200,000 and 300,000 civilians (though some estimates range as high as 900,000)."<sup>12</sup>

The United States used the same type bomb the British used, designed to burn the cities to the ground and destroy the civilian population. The Americans clearly adopted the British idea of destroying a civilization and regardless of the rationale used, must be judged immoral as well.

It is unsettling to look at the similarities between the British and the American actions during the closing days of the War.

In both cases the intensity of the bombing entirely targeted at civilian populations reached its height at the end of the War when it was generally conceded that the War had been won.

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12 Bess, Michael. *Choices under Fire: Moral Dimensions of World War II*. New York: A.A. Knopf, 2006. 202. Print.

Using the atomic bomb was different in only one way; it took raids of as many as 1000 planes to destroy German cities, but it took only one plane to destroy Hiroshima and a single plane to destroy Nagasaki. American technology was successful in risking the least number of its citizen warriors while killing the largest number of civilians with just one device.

We only have to look back at our own Civil War history to see our moral dilemmas as it only takes one name to invoke the Fear and Terror of war into any of us. Sherman!

Sherman's definition of winning, made war a realm where anything was conceivable – seizing property, deporting the enemy, exterminating a resisting populace. “Many, many peoples with less pertinacity” he warned Southerners, “have been wiped out of national existence.” He further claimed that he was required to “destroy both the rebel army and whatever wealth or property it has founded its boasted strength upon”.

And, just as Churchill and Roosevelt had invoked God in their first meeting to plan America's entry into World War II, Reverend Joseph P. Thompson's sermon on Thanksgiving Day, 1864 entitled “The Bible Doctrine Concerning War”, declared, “We are upon biblical ground, therefore, when we invoke God in doing battle for a just cause, as we are, following Biblical precedent, we ascribe to Him the victory.” And the prominent Pastor Elisha Cleaveland who delivered the following sermon:

“Is this the selected moment to talk of an armistice, when Sherman is marching on from conquering to conquer, and our glorious flag is waving triumphantly in the very heart of Georgia – when Grant is drawing a tourniquet around the neck of the rebel capital that is already producing

incipient strangulation? Is it at this supreme hour of hope that we are to withdraw our forces to raise the blockade? When a little more persistence, a few more vigorous blows, would annihilate the Confederacy, is it then we would strike our flag and sue for peace? O where is our manhood, where is our patriotism, where is our common sense, where is our faith pledged to the noble men who have fought our battles, the living and the dead?"

How easy it is to lose sight of ethics and morality in the face of combat. Everything ethical we're taught and then we in turn teach our children becomes slave to the expediency of war and the power of military justification. During the Civil War a few voices were raised in outrage but not enough to stop the carnage on both sides at places like Andersonville and Atlanta.

In WWII, as during the American Civil War, there were those in both Great Britain and the US who questioned military tactics, but no voices questioned the generals deliberations or rethought criteria for Just and Unjust conduct. Clergy, intellectuals, artists, and journalists remained silent.

And as to the argument that too many American soldiers lives would have been lost in an invasion of Japan, I am reminded that the justification for Sherman's march was articulated by Grant when he complained that the war's end could be indefinitely protracted unless Sherman's "march to the sea" was authorized - which he did on November 2, 1864.

Peace didn't last for very long after World War II. Allies turned into adversaries and adversaries turned into people who needed help to rebuild

their lives and their countries. Communism and the USSR became the new “evil”, while America became the new “good” with the implementation of the Marshall Plan, designed to rebuild what had been destroyed and make Europe the buffer against communism.

With the fear of Communism looming on the horizon, the advent of Nuclear Power and the sophistication of aerial warfare directly affected our moral compass as we plunged headlong into what we believed were Just War conflicts in Southeast Asia.

In 1950 America confronted communism directly in Korea. Atomic bombs were not used in Korea, although many, including General Douglas MacArthur, thought they should be, but the Americans conducted large-scale area bombings and at least 50% of eighteen out of North Korea’s twenty-two major cities were destroyed. Bruce Cummings, a historian at the University of Chicago, cites the following statistics, “The United States dropped 635,000 tons of bombs in Korea, compared to 503,000 tons in the entire Pacific Theater in World War II.”<sup>13</sup> Many Korean civilians were also killed because troops on the ground depended on air strikes as a primary method of countering fire from the enemy ground troops. Michael Walzer, commenting on Korea, in his book Just and Unjust Wars quotes a British wartime journalist as follows; “This is the new technique

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13 "The Korean War by Bruce Cummings (book Excerpt)." *Scribd*. Web. 28 Dec. 2010. <<http://www.scribd.com/doc/34737893/THE-KOREAN-WAR-by-Bruce-Cummings-book-excerpt>>.

of warfare, born of immense productive and material might: "...the first reliance was always on bombardment."<sup>14</sup> to reduce military casualties.

This strategy became known as the principle of double effect, and was designed to save the lives of soldiers. These tactics, however, resulted in a considerable loss of Civilian Life ~ defined simply as "collateral damage".

Interestingly the principle of double effect originates from Thomas Aquinas and is a set of ethical criteria for evaluating the permissibility of acting when one's otherwise legitimate act will also cause an effect one would normally be obliged to avoid.

American military hostile action casualties were slightly more than 33,000 during the Korean War. " ... the entire civilian casualties during the war were estimated from 1,500,000 to 3,000,000..."<sup>15</sup> Those who were sent into harm's way, to take the risk, in many cases transferred the risk to the civilians instead of protecting them. In the end, no one won the war, neither the political nor the military objectives were reached and, as a result, millions died unnecessarily. Since there was no resolution we still stand in conflict today with over 50,000 American troops stationed along the border of North and South Korea.

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14 Walzer, Michael. *Just and Unjust Wars: a Moral Argument with Historical Illustrations*. New York: Basic, 1977. 155. Print.

15 *CNN.com - Breaking News, U.S., World, Weather, Entertainment & Video News*. Web. 28 Dec. 2010. <<http://archives.cnn.com/2000/US/06/04/korea.deaths/>>.

The Vietnam War was conducted from 1955 to 1975 against an insurgent force. “Against men, women, and children who were often defending their own homes and who were dressed in civilian clothing.”<sup>16</sup> Beyond frontline soldiers killing non-combatants, the large scale carpet bombing carried out under campaign names like “Rolling Thunder” and the large scale napalm bombings certainly were responsible for many civilian deaths.

The Vietnamese government in 1995 estimated that 2,000,000 Vietnamese civilians on both sides died in the conflict.<sup>17</sup> By contrast, American military casualties were about 55,000. Again, war was waged in which consideration for the civilian population was secondary to that of the soldier. Moreover, much of the loss of life was transferred to the civilian population from an altitude of 20,000 feet.

Beyond Vietnam was the American carpet-bombing of Cambodia. Taylor Owen and Ben Kiernan of Yale University provide some alarming statistics in their article “Bombs over Cambodia”: They reveal that from 1965 to 1973, the United States dropped far more ordnance on Cambodia than was previously believed: 2,756,941 tons’ worth, dropped in 230,516 sorties on 113,716 sites. With 3580 of the sites listed as having

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16 Grossman, Dave. *On Killing: the Psychological Cost of Learning to Kill in War and Society*. Boston: Little, Brown, 1995. 267. Print.

17 Branch, By Service. *Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopedia*. Web. 28 Dec. 2010. <[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vietnam\\_War\\_casualties](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vietnam_War_casualties)>.

unknown targets and another 8,238 sites having no target listed at all. There are no records of how many civilians were killed, but one must think about the comparison – 2,700,000 tons of bombs dropped on Cambodia is equal to all of the bombs dropped by all Allied forces during World War II.

Unlike World War II, where American soldiers served “for the duration”, in Vietnam they served short terms on the battlefield, twelve to thirteen months. To most, Vietnam was a form of mass confusion. “There were no real lines of demarcation, and just about any area was subject to attack...It was an endless war with invisible enemies and no ground gains...”<sup>18</sup> The lifelong effects of their short participation in this war can still be seen in its veterans who today feel neither honor in having served nor appreciation from the nation for their loss of innocence. And many of these souls are in the care of VA registered nurses like those my daughter works with in the state of Oregon.

In the Middle East, Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan, America’s current “War on Terror” mimics some of the conditions of Vietnam:

Combatants are difficult to distinguish from civilians, lines of battle are indefinite and men, women and children suffer from the collateral damage. Using unmanned drones reduces the risk to soldiers and the collateral damage is significant but uncounted.

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18 Grossman, Dave. *On Killing: the Psychological Cost of Learning to Kill in War and Society*. Boston: Little, Brown, 1995. 267. Print.

Thousands of civilians have died and more than a million people have been displaced from Iraq, fleeing to other countries like Jordan and Syria to escape the carnage. And it's not as if the world has ignored our actions for in the process of our righteous invasions, we have violated a substantial body of international law by using torture and rendition, invasion and regime change, with the result that our last President had to cancel a recent trip he planned to Europe in fear that a criminal indictment would be handed down during his trip that would result in his arrest as a war criminal.

But we, as Americans are steeped in Loyalty and Patriotism and frankly, don't want to concede the unforgivable wrongs committed in our name by the likes of Lincoln, Grant, Roosevelt, Truman, Kennedy, Johnson and Bush. Moreover, no one significant has ever been held to account for the unimaginable suffering and deaths that have taken place in the name of Just Warfare.

Over the years, beginning in 1899, the International Courts at the Hague and elsewhere have tried to address the changing nature of war and have frequently amended the Rules and Laws of War to reflect the global advancements of both technology and changing social values. New Laws and Customs of War were instituted in 1902, 1907, 1923, 1938, 1939, 1945, 1949, 1961, and with the Geneva Convention in 1968. Every official edict handed down from these courts has been designed to prevent crimes against humanity and has addressed and banned outright such inhumane innovations as Aerial Bombardments of civilian populations and Carpet Bombing, and every Convention, without fail, has addressed the issue of "Distinction" keeping in mind the primary goal of protecting

civilian populations from the vagaries of war. Unfortunately, even though our intentions are admirable in this regard we never quite manage to circumvent our ability to undermine ourselves in the name of expediency and the civilian casualties sustained with each new military action continues to be significant.

Currently there is good news and bad news.

Recently there is some evidence to show that some political and military leaders are attempting to move towards new strategies: ones acknowledging that achieving peace and resolving conflicts requires more than the indiscriminate use of military power.

US Military experts are taking bold steps to reassess our approach to conflict resolution. Evidence of this new approach by the military can be found in two sources: First, The U.S. Army and Marine Corps Counterinsurgency Field Manual revised in 2008 and second, in the recently published Mr. Y paper produced by two aides to Admiral Mullen, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

In a transformational statement that acknowledges an entirely different role for the military it states, “Soldiers and Marines are expected to be nation builders as well as warriors. They must be prepared to help reestablish institutions and local security forces and assist in rebuilding infrastructure and basic services. They must be able to facilitate establishing local governance and the rule of law.”

The new rules, as stated in the Field Manual, emphasize the importance of Distinction and clearly state that a soldier’s job is to take the risk and protect civilians; use less force and take more risk; and by employing less

violence there will be less violence. This a dramatic shift in the approach to military actions and with widespread support perhaps the unsustainable traditional values of Just War can be transformed to the values of just peace making and peace building. This is not an alternative to war but rather a back to basic belief in the respect for all human life; understanding how power and might be able to be used for the common good.

As President Dwight Eisenhower so aptly said in 1950, “We must face the fact that “advances of science have outraced our social consciences” with the development “from the mere musket and the little cannon to the hydrogen bomb in a single lifetime”. He quantified our moral dilemma when he simply said, “... how much more we have developed scientifically than we are capable of handling emotionally and intellectually.” We have the proven means to destroy entire populations, in fact, the world, but we have not demonstrated that we have the moral means to save it.

The advent of the internet and world wide web, that ushered in the information age and greatly accelerated the globalization process has taken Eisenhower's comments to another technological dimension and that has brought with it profound effects, the implications of which we are still uncertain. These effects include the near-instantaneous and anonymous exchange of ideas and ideologies; the sharing and manipulation of previously protected and sophisticated technologies; vast and transparent social networking (which many believe resulted in The Arab Spring) that has homogenized cultures, castes, and classes; the creation of complex virtual worlds; and, a universal dependence on the global grid from every sector. We are in a different world now from the

days of Thomas Aquinas – a multicultural – interdependent, technological world where political transparency is essential, military might formidable and our future uncertain.

Never before in the history of mankind have we needed our values more defined or our resolve stronger to make the tradition of the Just War Theory a reality in our lifetime.