

A Deeper Look at Just Wars

The Just War Theory

- Traditionally, there are six conditions that must be met for a war to be considered 'just':
 - The war must be for a good reason (liberation, defence, against genocide etc.).
 - The war must be declared by a lawful authority (a legally recognised government/ruler).
 - The ultimate intention of the war must cause the least harm (peace deals?).
 - All other ways of resolving the problem must have been tried already (diplomacy?).
 - The war must not be a suicide mission, there must be a reasonable chance of success.
 - The methods used must be proportional to the aims of the war (no nuclear attacks?).
 - The Just War Theory is a specifically Christian theory, but other religions have formed similar theories and beliefs over time, many eastern religions focus on peace and reconciliation.
 - Another problem with war is that often in the past, holy wars have been fought openly by big empires during the Middle Ages. They were called crusades. These are supposed to be 'just' according to Catholics because they were almost always called by the Pope.
 - Today though, the Pope doesn't hold as much sway (although, if he wanted to, he could probably attempt to call a war, with limited success!) and the Catholic church now stands on neutrality and pacifism policies. Wars are now fought between individual countries rather than religions.
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The Iraq War

- Many wars are mislabelled as 'just' because for many there are problems on the ground that aren't seen politically. An example of this could be Saddam Hussein in the Iraq War who was obviously politically bad, but what happened to the Middle East we went to war?
- The fact that the Middle East is now so messy in terms of conflict could mean that there was no clear or just aim to prevent harm after the war, and that we actually worsened the conditions for many people living in these areas by intervening in the conflicts there.
- The greatest cause of death in middle-eastern wars is not the actual bombs or bullets, but the after effects of such attacks. Most people died from shrapnel that was pushed and broken by bombs.
- While the situation is somewhat better today, there has been criticism for the situation after the Iraq War, some of which remains today. This is because it pushed people back to basics, communication and society broke down and having no organised government meant anarchy.

- The Iraq War is the greatest example here, many people think that allied forces stayed in Iraq for far too long after the initial attack allowing extremism and theocracies to form which were corrupt.
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Soldiers and Government

- One of the other problems associated with ground action is the idea of what a soldier should do in an active battle-zone, one of the British solutions to this is to allow soldiers complete freedom and a lack of responsibility if they kill someone they weren't supposed to in the heat of battle.
 - This could include killing a civilian with a mostly invisible disability such as blindness or deafness, which prevented them from co-operating with the army.
 - One issue in Christianity is that they are meant to follow their leaders, but if the leaders are the UN and the UN refuses to intervene in a situation then how can you carry out God's will in war?
 - The Christian gospels strongly encourage a radical message of non-violence, so this is a problem for many Christians hoping to serve in the armed forces.
 - When in war situations, it is not just generals and operators running missions, but lawyers who represent the government telling soldiers whether or not they can be protected by government.
 - A difficulty many governments have is telling soldiers that they shouldn't fire, because this lowers their morale and can make them question their own moral compass, which makes 'weakness'.
 - Knowing your enemy is a big issue, because there are so many insurgent groups within the middle east it is hard to know who is good and who is bad. You could be shooting an ally with a gun, and not even know it. Rules for soldiers stationed in the middle east state that you cannot shoot a person who is not holding a gun or has put their gun down, but anyone with a gun is risking their life.
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Types of War

- Guerrilla wars are hard cases to call when discussing whether or not they are just, because many people would say that rising up against an oppressive regime is good, but others would say this causes inevitable conflict, and other ways should be sought out to get rid of the oppressors.
- It also raises the question about pacifism, is it always the fault of the instigator in the war? If a civilian force rises up against a government one, then surely it is just, provided that the majority of the people in that nation prefer the civilian force.
- An initial successful attack in war may be justified, but the problem comes when people stay in that country to expand against a problem but end up ruining the situation again.
- A 'just' war could also be one that includes intervening in other nation's affairs, such as liberating an oppressed population or preventing horrors like Genocide or mass killings by governments.
- Some people think that intervention should happen pre-emptively, rather than waiting for atrocities to be carried out, or else a country is thrown into havoc anyway ruining the situation more.

- Many people also think that distant countries shouldn't intervene, but that regional powers and governments must intervene instead to help reform a country's government.
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Drones and AI: Futuristic Warfare

- The use of drones and 'smart weapons' is a specific issue and a very new one that hasn't been explored very much, which is dangerous because western powers use them openly. Americans are the biggest users of drone weapons, because they reduce human loss of life on the attacker's side and allows 'precision' elimination of certain targets.
- Some people argue that someone sitting in a bunker and shooting specific missiles is actually better than the previous techniques used such as 'carpet bombing' which is just a sporadic attack on everything and everyone in a region, such as the bombing of Dresden in WW2.
- A problem in the future will be AI-fuelled warfare, because then it isn't humans making their own moral decisions, but AI 'programs' making our moral decisions for us. What is good and what is bad to them? True AI would decide by itself, leaving us weak and redundant to its decisions.
- Some people say that drone warfare is 'cowardly', war should be face to face according to many.
- Almost all experts would say that the future of warfare is far more bloody than it is now or it was before because of new developing technology and tactics.