

## THE REAL ALTERNATIVES TO JUST WAR<sup>1</sup>

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*If there is a great European war in the near future, it will not be a capitalist war for markets, but a war of creeds for the possession of men's minds. And each side will be firmly convinced of the justice of its cause.... The war-makers will not be capitalists and armament manufacturers but the idealists and propagandists, and principles will be as important as poison gas.... But any peace propaganda which shuts the eyes to realities is worthless and may even increase the danger which it sets out to combat. It has been the fault of both pacifism and liberalism in the past that they have ignored the immense burden of inherited evil under which society and civilization labour and have planned an imaginary world for an impossible humanity. We must recognize that we are living in an imperfect world in which human and superhuman forces of evil are at work and so long as those forces affect the political behaviour of mankind there can be no hope of abiding peace.... For war is not only the work of man. It is also willed by God as the punishment of sin and as its instrument by which the Divine Justice performs its inscrutable judgment.*

- Christopher Dawson<sup>2</sup>

*While the effects of sin abound - greed, dishonesty and corruption, broken relationships and exploitation of persons, pornography and violence - the recognition of individual sinfulness has waned. In its place a disturbing culture of blame and litigiousness has arisen which speaks more of revenge than justice and fails to acknowledge that in every man and woman there is a wound which, in the light of faith, we call original sin.*

- John Paul II<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> This article originally appeared in *Policy Review* 128 (December, 2004): 59-70.

<sup>2</sup> Christopher Dawson, "The Catholic Attitude to War," *Tablet* 169 (March 13, 1937).

<sup>3</sup> John Paul II, "Address to American Bishops," #4, *L'Osservatore Romano*, May 19, 2004, p. 3.

### 1. The case for war

A calm and reasonable case can and should be made for the possession and effective use of force in today's world. It is irresponsible not to plan for the necessary use of force in the face of real turmoil and enemies actually present in the world. No talk of peace, justice, truth, or virtue is complete without a clear understanding that certain individuals, groups, and nations must be dealt with by the use of measured force, however much we would like to deal with them in a more peaceful or pleasant manner. Without the threat of force, many will not talk seriously at all, and some not even then. Moral and economic problems are greater today because of the lack of adequate military force or, more often, because of the failure to use it when necessary. This view goes against the rhetorical grain, but it is a fact that needs attention and comprehension. We do not live in a new "world-historic" age that can "by-pass" these "outmoded" instruments of power, however rhetorically attractive it is to talk that way. Human nature has not changed, either for better or worse. Human institutions, both at the national and international level, have not so improved that they cannot be threats to the human good. Who watches the watchdogs remains a fundamental, if not *the* fundamental, question of the human condition. It is an issue with philosophical, theological, and political dimensions.

This is a counter-cultural position. It goes against much articulate liberal and religious sentiment. These sentiments about abolishing war, which are often ungrounded, are themselves one of the dangers of war. For example, on the wall above General Douglas MacArthur's tomb in the old city of Norfolk Virginia there is a plaque with the memorable and eloquent words that this military commander spoke on the occasion of the Japanese Surrender in 1945. They now appear to the author to be part of the problem, not the solution, as once appeared to be the case:

It is my earnest hope and indeed the hope of all mankind that from this solemn occasion a better world shall emerge out of the blood and carnage of the past – a world founded upon faith and understanding – a world dedicated to the dignity of man and the fulfillment of his most cherished wish, for freedom, tolerance, and justice.... We have had our last chance. If we do not now devise some greater and more equitable system, Armageddon

will be at our door. The problem is basically theological, and involves a spiritual recrudescence and improvement of human character that will synchronize with our almost matchless advances in science, art, and literature, and all material and cultural developments in the past two thousand years. It must be of the spirit if we are to save the flesh.

Since MacArthur spoke these words over sixty years ago, we have had thousands of wars of varying types and degrees. We thought that we had founded a system to prevent wars, especially small ones. MacArthur assumed that such a perfect system could be established. But his view was utopian, not realistic. As a result, the means whereby many small wars could actually have been stopped were lacking and the work of converting the whole world to a better "system," resulted in little being done that was truly effective.

The inspiration for this argument is taken from Maritain's phrase that "justice, brains, and strength" can and should belong together.<sup>4</sup> We need not collapse before tyranny or terrorism, and those who sponsor either. But we must do something effective about them. "Peace and dialogue" rhetoric does not work in the absence of a force component. The more the reality of measured force is present, the more dialogue and peaceful, including religious, means of conflict resolution are possible. Intense concern about "weapons of mass destruction," including how to make them, how to use them, and also how to insure they do not fall into the hands of radical groups, is not fanciful. Every holiday since 9/11, some e-mail arrives warning of the possible use of "dirty bombs" in some American or world city. That they have not been used, however, is more likely because those who would use them have actually been prevented by force. Units who would blow up major installations, if they could, do exist. All they lack are delivery capabilities.

In light of these considerations, this analysis argues that our main problems are not concerning the use of too much force, but too little. A peaceful world is not a world without ready forces, but one with

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<sup>4</sup> See James V. Schall, "Justice, Brains, and Strength: Machiavelli and Modernity in Political Philosophy," in *Jacques Maritain: The Philosopher in Society* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 1998), Chapter I, pp. 1-20.

adequate, responsible, and superior force that is used when necessary. The failure to have or to use such forces causes terror and war to grow exponentially. Unused force, when needed at a particular time and place, ceases to be force. But force is meaningless if one does not know that he has an enemy or how this enemy works and thinks. That latter problem is spiritual and philosophical, not technical. Many an adequately armed country has been destroyed because it did not recognize its real enemy. Neither is this an argument for force "for force's sake." It is an argument for force for justice's sake. This argument does not endorse the pursuit of an "eternal peace," which is a this-worldly myth, but real peace of actual men in an actual and fallen world. Peace is not a goal, but a consequence of doing what is right and preventing what is wrong and, yes, knowing the difference between the two.

Justice and force require one another in the actual world. Too often they are placed in opposition in a way that renders both unbalanced and ineffective. It is not a virtue to praise justice as if it need not be actually enforced and worthy things defended. The greatest crimes often are grounded in a utopian vision that is blind to living persons, and that does not see how to limit and control the disruptive forces that arise continually in human life. These forces are not substitutes for the virtue of justice. Indeed, this difficult virtue relies also on the existence and proper use of force for it effectively to exist. Contrary to much rhetoric, we do not live in a world in which diplomacy, dialogue, diversity, and law, however valuable, have replaced force. We can hopefully reach an adequate public order. But failure to understand that law and dialogue at some level also need the presence of reasoned force ends up not in creating more peace but less.

## **2. War is not the answer?**

In late spring, in Baltimore, I walked to the end of Chestnut Street where it meets Joppa Road. On one corner was a large official-looking residence called "Mission Helpers Center." On both sides of its entrance gate were large blue and white signs that read, "War Is Not the Answer." These placards recall the many too simple slogans about war one often sees, including, like this one apparently, from religious sources. Here are some other examples that I recall seeing in recent years: "War is obsolete." "War is never justified." "The answer to

violence is not more violence." "War does no good." "No one wins a war." "Love, not war." "Diplomacy, not war." "Dialogue, not war." "Stop violence." "Only the U.N. can declare war." "Justice, not war." "No war is legitimate." "Everyone loses in war." "War, Never Again."

When I saw the "war-is-not-the-answer" sign, I said to myself, "but to what question is war *not* an answer?" On the other hand, is there no question to which war is the only sensible answer? Must we be pacifists and draw no lines in the sand? Does nothing ever need defending? Can we choose not to defend what needs defending and still be honorable? If war is not the "answer," what is? Without being naïve, how do we rid ourselves of tyrants or protect ourselves from ideologues or fanatics who attack us with their own principles and weapons, not ours?

Machiavelli advised that a prince should spend most of his time preparing for war. The prince was not pious except when useful to his own end of staying in power. If we are this prince's neighbors, do we take no notice of his preparations? Do we give him the answer he most wants to hear from us, namely, "war is not the answer?" Those who practice this doctrine of no war make easy targets. The prince thinks war is an answer. It can help him in his goal of acquiring and keeping power. We may have to suffer a defeat. We should not choose to bring one on ourselves.

Even though much carnage and chaos happen in war, on every side, still we cannot blithely conclude from this fact alone that "war is not the answer." It may not be the *only* answer. But, a mere ungrounded velleity consisting in the frivolous hope that nothing bad will happen no matter what we do or fail to do is not a viable alternative. Any presumed alternative to war, employing other putatively more effective methods, has to stop what war seeks to prevent by its own reasoned use of measured force. The general opinion of most sensible men throughout history has been that war certainly is one answer, even a reasonable answer, in the light of consequences that would likely ensue without it. More than a few "un-fought" wars have made things considerably worse. Many wars that have been fought have made things better. The honor classically associated with war heroes is explained by the following proclamations: "Our cause is just." "Give me liberty or give me death." "Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty." "Walk softly but carry a big stick."

We often rightly ponder the horrors of war. It is a growth industry, particularly for those who do not choose to fight. Soldiers usually know more about the horrors of war than journalists. They also know more about what it is like to live under a tyrannical system. The gulags and concentration camps ought to cause us to reflect deeply on what happens when unjust regimes acquire and remain in power. 9/11 could have been prevented with but a small use of force, had we known that our enemy would utterly surprise us by using passenger planes as weapons.

Nietzsche, since he thought Platonism and Christianity had failed because both lauded weakness, was open to the idea of a certain nobility to war and the pursuit of power for its own dramatic sake. Like many moderns, he did not think there is any order in the universe except that imposed by his own will. Most sensible people, however, can see that the primary way to prevent or remove the threat of takeover by forms of unlimited power is the legitimate use of adequate force against them. Thus, we must not reflect about war's atrocities in isolation from real situations and without balance. Peace is not simply the absence of war. "No war" can, and often does, mean the victory of tyranny and the subsequent disarming of any opposition. "No moral use of war" can, by the same logic, result in no freedom and no dignity.

We need more serious reflection on the consequences for others and ourselves when we lose wars or fail to act and, as a result, something worse happens. Those who cry "peace, peace," often have unacknowledged blood on their hands because they failed to use adequate force when needed "To the victors go the spoils" is an ancient matter of fact, not a principle of justice. Cowardice has never been considered a virtue. Similarly, "turning the other cheek" should not serve as an excuse for allowing some evil to conquer, especially one that we could prevent, except because our theories prevented us from trying. Not a few worthy things have been eradicated forever because a war was lost. Eternal vigilance remains the price of liberty, and much else that is worthy.

For this very reason we should read ancient history. We can meditate with profit on the enormous cultural consequences of the final success of Xerxes in Greece, had Sparta and Athens not successfully defended themselves. Nevertheless, good causes do not

always win wars; neither do bad causes always lose them. The “God of Battles” is often ironic. Fortune is difficult to conquer, and its consequences do not guarantee justice. St. Paul, as Dawson reminds us, even suggests that wars and the sword punish our wrongdoings. Pope John Paul II observed that we live in a world in which we want to deny that we commit any wrongdoing, and hence we fail to see the need for correcting our faults.

Still, we must think about the fact that failure to act can make things worse. Nor can we deny that there is a comparative difference between “bad” things and “terrible” things. We can be just as immoral and as inhuman by failing to act as by acting. The history of lost wars is as important as the history of victorious ones, perhaps more so. The idea of an absolutely war-less world, a world “already made safe for democracy,” is more likely, in practice, to be either a sign of utopia or a madhouse. A world in which war is “outlawed” is more likely to mean either that we are no longer in the real world or that the devils and the tyrants have finally won. They allow us only to agree with them and do as they say. We are naive if we think that formal democratic procedures, lacking any reference to the content of laws, cannot have deleterious effects. A democratic tyranny is quite conceivable, many think likely, and on a global scale. “Globalization is not neutral.” Not a few of the worst tyrants of history have been very popular and have died peacefully in bed in their old age, amidst family and friends.

### 3. National frontiers

The frontiers of most countries are where they are because of wars, won or lost. This is true even of the relatively peaceful Canadian-American border, whose drawing, even whose existence, is related to the American Revolution, the War of 1812, and to “54.40 or Fight!” The northern Mexican border does not include California, Texas, Arizona, and New Mexico, as it once did, because a war was lost. I have seen Mexican maps that still include these states within Mexican frontiers. This means that many Mexicans think the present borders are unjust; thus we are not wholly at peace. Lord Acton believed that had the South won the American Civil War, it probably would have taken over Mexico.

The so-called “evil empire” covered a quarter or more of the globe because of war and revolution. Ironically, it got its start when Lenin

precipitously pulled out of bloody World War I to eradicate his domestic enemies on the right and the enemies of his Bolshevism on the left. The demise of the Soviet Union surprised most social scientists because it was not destroyed by war or by any force subject to their analytical methods. However, as we were reminded by the Reagan funeral, a major cause of the collapse of communism, besides the spiritual one for which the Polish Pope stood, was the massive American preparations for war, including nuclear war. They were sufficient to convince the Soviets finally to recognize communism's own internal bankruptcy. Many, at the time, thought this build-up was itself "immoral." Had it not occurred, the Soviet Union might well still be in existence and its demise might not have been so peaceful, if indeed it was not victorious.

In the case of World War II, we can surely "thank" the lack of early French and English preparedness for and initial unwillingness to engage in war to be a major cause of the more lethal war that, by almost any standard, had to be fought and fortunately won, but only with the aid of others. "Peace in our time," the slogan of the British prime minister, led to World War II. "War was not an answer?" What is the "answer" to terrorism if not war at some level? Terrorists, as they often testify, think that terrorism is a legitimate, even divinely commanded duty. Is capitulation the answer? Roman history, in fact, is filled with such wars and capitulations.

In the abstract, the view that non-combatant alternatives to war are always available may well be true. But there are things worse than war. Not to know what they are is tantamount to losing any real contact with or understanding of human experience and history. Machiavelli did not study the "history of war" for merely idle reasons. Many "peaceful" alternatives to war are not happy ones. One of them consists in being conquered by a hostile power and experiencing complete civilizational destruction. We read of Muslim and Mongolian armies before whose swords we would not like to fall, knowing that if we do, our culture, religion, and way of life, not to mention many of our lives, would disappear. No one in the decade before the sudden appearance of Mohammedan armies in the seventh century could have imagined the configuration of the world map today, a configuration in many areas due precisely to the permanent conquests of these earlier and later

What is not in place today is how to deal with or even understand the "suicide bomber." Just war theory is relatively useless in this area. As I read somewhere, what after all does a fully armed GI do in confrontation with a pregnant Muslim woman who has bombs strapped inside her dress and intends to blow him, herself, her baby, and dozens of others up? All the literature and normal understanding about "innocent women and children" have become, if not irrelevant, at least maddeningly difficult to apply in such increasingly common cases. The reason for this problem is not military, but ideological or theological.

The answer to the question of why a radical Muslim man or woman will blow him or herself up is not simply political or military. Aristotle had said that if someone is willing to die in the process, no one can really prevent him from trying to kill us. Augustine had a similar problem with the Donatists. A Muslim extremist who blows himself up, along with fifteen others, can pretty much rest assured that this same utterly irresponsible type of weapon will not be used against his own people. This is a civilizational divide, not just a matter of taste, nor even of the end justifying the means. It is the consequence of a faulty theology and it must be addressed at that level.

The central issue raised by the foregoing analysis is Christopher Dawson's question from the 1930's, namely: Is the current situation we are facing a new war of civilization? Much vested interest is devoted to the proposition that it is not. Insisting that there is no such conflict is itself an ideological commitment. Our civil and religious leaders have been loathe to designate the current situation as a civilizational war. Islam is a religion of peace. To suspect that it is a threat on a much broader scale is one of those things that must be classified as "secret writing." It goes against the dominant religious mood, namely, ecumenism, and against the liberal mode, namely, tolerance, according to which all issues can be resolved without war. But neither of these viewpoints are proper to certain Muslim ways of looking at the world which, in their missionary view ought to be Muslim, even if by war, and even if by suicide bombings. War can be precisely "holy." Until we understand that, we simply will not be able to grasp the essence of the problem.

There is considerable talk, both in the West and in some sectors of the Muslim world, that Islam can be accommodated to certain

politically acceptable forms without having to change any of its basic beliefs. This radical reconstruction of Islam is said to be the main “neo-conservative” project. The proposed project of rewriting or re-founding Islam is a concomitant of identifying the current attacks as coming from a minority “terrorist” movement and not from Islam in any genuine form.

One can defend this program on prudential grounds. No one, on the other hand, including churches and religious groups, is willing to examine in a serious way the truth claims of Islam, not only its self-understanding of Allah and its view of Judaism and Christianity, but also its practiced way of life and the direct relation of its religion and its politics. Until this latter effort is undertaken in a much more serious way, the prudential approach can be justified as a holding operation. But even in the effort to provide models and forms of “democratic” and “free” political systems, what is ultimately behind this thinking is the effort to undermine those teachings and customs of Islam that cause the problem, the first of which is the claim of the truth of Islamic revelation and its understanding of the absolute will of God as arbitrary. In this sense, MacArthur was right. Political problems often have theological import as their basis.

The Italian paper *Il Giornale* recently published an interview with Caesare Mazzolari, bishop of Rumbek in the Sudan, a place in which Christian-Muslim relations are those of war, war against the Christians. His remarks perhaps serve to contextualize this issue, particularly in the light of the Dawson thesis:

Q. “Is there a clash of civilizations...?”

A. “The Church has defeated communism but is just starting to understand its next challenge - Islamism, which is much worse. The Holy Father has not been able to take up this challenge due to his old age. But the next pope will find himself having to face it....”

Q. “Some bishops in Italy have allowed chapels to be used as mosques.”

A. “It will be the Muslims who convert us, not the other way around. Wherever they settle down, sooner or later they end up becoming a leading political force...”

Q. "Does it make sense to export our democracy to agricultural and sheep-herding societies that make no distinction between religion and politics?"

A. "No. This is idiotic. Islamic people base their decisions only and exclusively on the umma. They don't even know what individual rights are."<sup>5</sup>

This is, no doubt, a blunt analysis from someone located in a country where over two million people have been killed in Muslim attacks on Christians and their own dissidents. Whether we look on it as the wave of the future or as an exceptional, isolated case will pretty much decide the kind of attitude we have to war and the necessity of the retention and use of military power.

### 5. Use of force

The topic of this analysis, however, is not Islam but war. An essential ingredient of this discussion is a current understanding of what Islam is and intends. But our relationship with Islam is not the only civilizational challenge we face, and Islam itself is not necessarily a monolithic worldview. Furthermore, Western secularist ideology is as absolutist in its own way as Islam. The thesis that the "terrorists" are merely a side-show, a tiny minority, which will naturally pass away, provides an easy but inadequate way out of considering the more fundamental challenges of the religion as a civilizational movement. According to the judgment of some of its more radical leaders, there is suddenly the possibility that the religion can continue its historic mission of expansion, in some cases spreading the religion by force or other means.

The question of how to "disarm" or to "dissuade" this expansion, which now has a demographic component through immigration into Western nations with low birth rates, is bound up with the question of a continued capacity and willingness of a nation to defend itself. It is still necessary to defeat those who hold violence to be a legitimate form of political activity, no matter how small or large we think their forces

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<sup>5</sup> Interview of Stefano Lorenzetto with Msgr. Cesare Mazzolari, May 26, 2004, [http://www.chiesawysiwyg://213.92.16.98/ESW\\_articolo/0,2393,42160,00.html](http://www.chiesawysiwyg://213.92.16.98/ESW_articolo/0,2393,42160,00.html).

might be. They remind us of Augustine's dealings with the Donatists in which, after exhausting all possible peaceful and accommodating means to deter them, he concluded that they must change their minds even by the use of force, at least to pacify them. Augustine has often been criticized for this conclusion. But, even if we assume that it does work, which is dubious, it is clear that those with whom we are dealing today are not going to be "converted." They look upon suicide bombing in service of their cause as martyrdom and as guaranteeing entrance to heaven. The fact that this position seems preposterous to many of us is one of the main reasons we cannot effectively deal with it.

A common theory about war today is that we have evolved or progressed beyond it. The claim that war may still be needed is looked upon as "anti-progressive," or a sin against "history." No "reasonable" person can hold the view that war may be necessary. The "we-have-outgrown-war" position, with its Hegelian overtones, is part of a broader evolutionary hypothesis that holds, generally speaking, the world is getting morally better. According to this view, we have learned how to "overcome" violence with dialogue or psychological counseling. The older realist hypothesis, by contrast, which is more attuned to the Fall and the natural difficulties of the practice of virtue, maintains that as the world improves in technological or political means, the potential for greater evil also increased. According to this latter view, we will never be in a situation where some use of force is completely unnecessary for the achievement of what limited goods we can and should attain.

The hypothesis that war is no longer necessary has little justification. Behind this view, we find operative an ancient controversy concerning the idea of a world state as the primary inner-worldly purpose of mankind. Indeed, after denying any other transcendent purpose, it becomes the only purpose of mankind. The framework of "world" or "global" government is now said to be already in place. Though the United Nations was not legally erected to be a "world government" or "world state," no political controversy involving war, it is now claimed, erroneously, can be "unilaterally," and hence morally, decided outside of its jurisdiction. This view is designed to take away any consideration of national self-interest or of independently coming to the aid of those under attack. This newly discovered veto on war evidently comes from custom, not law, though

even there it is difficult to know how such a momentous structural change could be legitimated in this unarticulated way.

This assumption of a benign United Nations already legally established depends upon a misguided view of the institution and the ideological currents within it. Many positions on moral and economic questions within the United Nations are extremely troubling. There are "missionary" efforts to impose these ideas on the world. Furthermore, this position implies that there are never circumstances in which either truth or good will have to be protected *against* the United Nations, and that it should logically absorb all the world's military capacity within itself. United Nations citizenship and courts should replace national citizenship and courts. The ultimate appeal, in this view, ought not to be to national courts but to international courts. International criminal and civil courts will be the primary arbitrators who decide justice within the nations. International courts will claim immediate jurisdiction over all rights cases wherever they occur. Any appeal to national "self-interest" against their decisions will be looked upon as a crime against humanity.

In his discussion of "restitution," the primary act of justice in all its forms, Josef Pieper made the following observation:

The dynamic character of man's communal life finds its image within the very structure of every act of justice. If the basic act of commutative justice is called "re-stitution," the very word implies that it is never possible for men to realize an ideal and definitive condition. What it means is, rather, that the fundamental condition of man and his world is provisory, temporary, non-definitive, tentative, as is proved by the patchwork character of all historical activity, and that, consequently, any claim to erect a definitive and unalterable order in this world must of necessity lead to something inhuman.<sup>6</sup>

This "something inhuman" is what we are concerned about when we address the question of whether war is obsolete. The grounds of this

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<sup>6</sup> Josef Pieper, *Josef Pieper: An Anthology* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1989), p. 63.

latter assumption are that we actually do have in place the means to prevent war. The historic realism that argued that war would always be with us is now said to be effectively bypassed.

In response to this assertion, we may cite the following summation of Augustine's view of war by Herbert Deane: "Wars are inevitable as long as men and their societies are moved by avarice, greed, and lust for power, the permanent drives of sinful men. It is, therefore, self-delusion and folly to expect that a time will ever come in this world when wars will cease and 'men will beat their swords into ploughshares.'" <sup>7</sup> Yet, we are asked to believe the implausible supposition that the institutions designed to replace the national state will not themselves be threats against freedom and justice. On the contrary, a vital question remains as to whether the world would be better off with national states that can maintain their own judgments and forces. This analysis argues that, whatever the logic of the international state, its practice is too dangerous both on the large scale and on the small scale ever to trust it with anything more than minimal powers that are for the most part merely advisory. When it comes to modern tyrannies, international organizations have not been successful and they are often part of the problem.

Jean Elshtain has written, "I would argue that true international justice is defined as the equal claim of all persons, whatever their political location or condition, to having coercive force deployed in their behalf if they are victims of one or the many horrors attendant upon radical political instability." <sup>8</sup> What Elshtain implies is that there is and must be room for the existence and use of force that understands and works for right order. I would maintain, therefore, that much of the thinking about how war is obsolete is itself a major contributor to war, particularly to the new kinds of war that we see in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Such a view prevents quick and effective action. Without denying that this alternative can also be abused, we can never arrive at a clear

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<sup>7</sup> Herbert Deane, *Political and Social Ideas of St. Augustine* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1956), p. 155.

<sup>8</sup> Jean Bethke Elshtain, *Just War against Terror* (New York: Basic Books, 2003), p. 168.

concept of the problem if the mechanisms designed to address it include it.

## 6. In conclusion

In conclusion, we are left with the need to see force and power, when used rightly, as actual servants of justice. C. S. Lewis wrote in his essay, "Why I Am Not a Pacifist:"

It is arguable that a criminal can always be satisfactorily dealt with without the death penalty. It is certain that a whole nation cannot be prevented from taking what it wants except by war. It is almost equally certain that the absorption of certain societies by certain other societies is a great evil. The doctrine that war is always a greater evil seems to imply a materialist ethic, a belief that death and pain are the greatest evils. But I do not think they are. I think the suppression of a higher religion by a lower, of even a higher secular culture by a lower, a much greater evil.... The question is whether war is the greatest evil in the world, so that any state of affairs, which might result from submission, is certainly preferable. And I do not see any really cogent argument for this view.<sup>9</sup>

Lewis, as usual, on the grounds of principle, had it about right. War is not the greatest evil, but at times the only means to prevent it. This is true on both a large and small scale. What we are left with is that the effective use of force is still best and most properly left in the national state. This is not the war of all against all, but the war of those who can limit terrorism and tyranny when and where it occurs. The worst modern tyranny in the 21<sup>st</sup> century will not come from armies but from their lack, or better from the lack of the capacity and courage to use them wherever needed to protect justice, freedom, and truth when it is at stake.

The real alternatives to just war cannot be viable without including the necessity and ability to deal with those who do not know or listen to reason. As a *Wall Street Journal* editorial put it, do we "treat terrorism

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<sup>9</sup> C. S. Lewis, "Why I Am Not a Pacifist," in *The Weight of Glory and Other Addresses* (New York: Macmillan, 1965), p. 43.