MORAL PERSONHOOD AND HUMAN SECURITY

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Abstract:
The concept of moral personhood is fundamental to what is supposed to be secured by the defense institutions established by human beings in order to protect themselves. All leaders wield moral rhetoric, but only some national defense policies promote human security; and policies do not reflect a *moral* perspective when they apply different moral principles to the people of different lands, for one's place of residence is manifestly irrelevant to one's moral personhood. In addition, the practices of modern military institutions are difficult to reconcile with the moral requirements widely accepted to constrain legitimate self-defense, and policies that lead to the slaughter of innocent people and their perfunctory characterization as "collateral damage" effectively negate the moral personhood of the victims. The aspersion of enemy leaders as "evil" is counterproductive to the aims of human security, effectively precluding the possibility of constructive dialogue and thereby increasing rather than decreasing the probability that a conflict will escalate to war.

The Perspective of Morality

There are many different ways of thinking about the world in which we live, each of which represents a perspective, a point of view commencing from a set of values and interests. Sometimes we adopt an aesthetic stance, evaluating things in terms of concepts such as beauty and symmetry. Sometimes we adopt an economic stance, assessing things in terms of monetary value and net efficiency. At other times we prefer to regard ourselves and others as objects of scientific study, which can be described in naturalistic terms. Within science, there are several different layers of description from which to choose. According to evolutionary biologists, we are but animals that have evolved from primordial sludge into conscious beings. According to physiologists, we are collections of organ systems, while according to biochemists we are complex agglomerations of molecules. But all of these different views represent the perspectives of conscious beings.

As conscious agents, we regard ourselves as *persons*, with perspectives, values, interests and beliefs. The moral perspective, in contrast to aesthetic, economic, and scientific views, commences from the idea of moral worth and the entities that possess it.

The fundamental premise of the moral perspective is that persons have a special sort of value or dignity that non-persons do not. To adopt a moral perspective toward other people requires that we regard them as having intrinsic value, a moral worth equivalent to our own. The moral perspective forms the basis of our societies, which are governed by laws established by moral persons precisely in order to protect moral persons from harm.

To embrace a moral perspective is to accept what is sometimes referred to as the "overriding" nature of moral considerations. Convenience, prudence, economics, aesthetics, and all other perspectives must be set to one side when morality is at stake. Because the moral perspective commences from the ascription of consciousness and sentience to other persons, national security policies which ignore this essential quality of moral persons cannot with linguistic propriety be described as genuinely *moral* policies. Such policies are often defended through the use of moral *rhetoric*. However, when the essential value of conscious and sentient personhood is flatly denied, or brushed aside as irrelevant, the policies in question have prioritized non-moral interests and values.

The overriding quality of morality forms the basis for the widely shared idea that wars may only be waged as a last resort, for nothing could justify war, which culminates in the annihilation of persons, but the direst of circumstances. An optional war, one that does not need to be waged, could only be an immoral war; for if there is a pacific option, which can avoid the slaughter of human beings, then it must, morally speaking, be pursued. Similarly, a war waged to protect economic interests could never be *moral*, for economic considerations cannot compete with the moral perspective, which asserts the absolute value of conscious human life. Wars waged for oil, to acquire new territory, or to protect the economic interests of a country, do not reflect a moral perspective.

Nonetheless, at the political level, discussions of war among diplomats often prioritize an economic perspective. The representatives of nations bargain with one another, compromising and making concessions in exchange for economic benefits. On the one hand, this is entirely understandable, for the people charged with protecting the interests of a nation are generally focusing upon quasi-prudential as opposed to moral matters. Often prudence and morality become conflated, when the economic interests of a nation are assumed by government officials to coincide with the interests of the citizenry. But when governments are bribed or extorted to support a war that they would have rejected of their own accord, a war which leads to the annihilation of human beings (albeit the citizens of another nation), then there is a sense in which those governments have been corrupted, at least according to a moral assessment of what has transpired. In some cases, such as those of poor African nations faced with the specter of allowing even more of their own citizens to perish due to the withdrawal of aid from a wealthy nation courting their favor, morality may be sacrificed for prudence, though the leaders of nations who succumb to bribery and/or extortion undoubtedly reason along quasi-utilitarian lines and under the assumption that their first priority must be to the people of their own nation, rather than the prospective victims of a war waged abroad.

The tendency of government officials to substitute economic for moral considerations, as though the productivity of a nation directly reflected the well-being of its citizens, is symptomatic of a more general trend among intellectuals. Throughout the twentieth century, the ascendancy of science has directed many intellectuals involved in normative areas of human endeavor toward the goal of a quasi-scientific paradigm. In science, the perspective of individual subjects is an irrelevant "hurdle" to be cleared in order to arrive at objective knowledge about the state of the world. However, to disregard the subjective experience of individual centers of consciousness, assimilating them with insentient, non-moral things, is to invalidate the very basis for morality, for the peculiar value of moral persons inheres precisely in their unique status as conscious agents, susceptible of pleasure and pain, and embodying a moral worth which transcends the purely physical sum of their parts.

The pervasive error of prioritizing the third-person perspective in theories of value, while disregarding the first-person perspective, leads directly to problems in distinguishing amoral policies defended through the use of moral rhetoric, which every leader wields, from policies that genuinely support and promote morality (Calhoun, 2001). Leaders and policy-makers often speak in terms of good and evil or right and wrong, as though everything came down to an objective truth to which they have privileged access. But they rarely, if ever, mention the intrinsic value of conscious life, though this forms the very basis for the idea that moral persons should be protected from harm. So, for example, if the first person perspective is of paramount importance, morally speaking, then it is false and misleading to talk of so-called "collateral damage" as any less deplorable than intentional murder. For what matters above all is not the *aggressor's* but the *victim's* perspective of what is being done to him or her, and the horrific consequences of the use of deadly force do not differ from an innocent victim's perspective whether it be brandished by governments, individuals, or factions. Similarly, from the perspective of an innocent civilian victim, terrorism is terrorism, whether its vehicles wear uniforms or not. When the populace accepts the military's own anodyne characterization of the consequences of its violent attacks as morally permissible without reflecting upon what was actually done to the victims, they thereby acquiesce in the dismissal of the perspectives of "collateral damage" victims as irrelevant. The concept of "collateral damage," assumed by military spokesmen to be morally innocuous, presupposes that victims can be accounted for in objective terms, in numerical reports. By supposing that the plight of civilians can be summed up in "collateral damage" statistics alone, the reigning military paradigm effectively denies the moral worth of those people. Moral persons have plans and projects, relationships and histories, all of which are erased from the face of the earth with the dropping of a bomb.

But the innocent civilians slaughtered are not the only people whose perspective is denied by those who wage and support war. Tragically, the common failure to think about conflict from the enemy's perspective, as centers of consciousness and loci of interpretation, sometimes leads directly to the recourse to deadly force, even where it

might have been avoided. For example, in the build-up to the 2003 invasion of Iraq, the U.S. administration publicly proclaimed that war could be averted if Saddam Hussein were to relinquish his power through voluntary exile. However, on December 14, 2002 the Bush administration had issued a "lethal force list" of suspected terrorists whom the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) had been granted permission by the commander-in-chief to assassinate with impunity. It was indicated at the time that the list was not exhaustive, that other, unnamed, terrorist suspects would be subject to assassination as well. This statement came after the November 4, 2002 use by the CIA of an unmanned air vehicle (UAV), the RQ-1 "Predator Drone," to assassinate six alleged terrorist suspects in Yemen (Calhoun, 2003b). Because the suspects in Yemen were executed without trial, and in view of the vague terms of the U.S. administration's "lethal force list," Saddam Hussein had every reason in the world to avoid seeking asylum abroad. By making this the single acceptable condition for the avoidance of war, the Bush administration effectively precluded the possibility of stopping the invasion, and then blamed it upon Hussein for refusing to do what would have been patently irrational for him to do.

That "moral persons" are not features of a military paradigm explains the reification of the enemy during wartime, for the very idea of "military science" excludes the first-person perspective and thus promotes an amoral agenda, often through the misleading use of euphemism. The general neglect of the perspectives of persons as conscious agents has moreover led to a situation in which defense and state security experts direct their energies primarily toward the development of swifter and more efficient means to destroy property and kill human beings. Soldiers kill other soldiers not as fellow human beings, but as the weapons of their leaders; because the third-person view of international commerce promulgated by national security experts is uncritically accepted by the populace (since they naturally accept the testimony of "the experts" in other realms), rarely does anyone pause to ask profoundly important questions such as whether the slaughter of thousands of men in the prime of their life can be *morally* justified, if in fact those men were economically or physically coerced to act in their capacity as soldiers, and/or if they have been systematically deceived by their leaders (Calhoun, 2003a).

Enemy soldiers are reified and slaughtered during wartime, but throughout history innocent civilians have been the primary victims of decisions on the part of leaders to embroil their nations and groups in warfare, in spite of the oft-recited rhetoric of "non-combatant immunity" (Hartigan, 1982). To regard war from a moral, as opposed to a political or an economic vista, requires that we consider the perspectives of all individuals. The moral worth of persons is *not* a function of their place of birth. The moral perspective also carries with it practical implications for the conduct of nations and their associated institutions. For example, the policies adopted by a democratic nation are done so in the name of the people, who must, in consistency, own that the same policies are equally valid for the leaders of other nations acting in the name of their own people. The most basic requirement of rationality, that of simple consistency, is expressed by the

law of non-contradiction, ~(p &~p), and serves as a fundamental constraint upon all theories, including moral theories. Consider, for example, the formal principle of justice: "treat equals equally" or "treat like cases alike." This content-free principle does not imply that any particular mode of conduct is morally required, but only that, *whatever practices and policies are decided upon by the community, they must be applied to all similarly relevant cases.*

The requirement of simple consistency is sometimes referred to by philosophers as "universalizability", and is arguably an indispensable part of any truly *moral* perspective. In the view of Immanuel Kant (1964), the requirement of universalizability takes the explicit form of the test for the Categorical Imperative, that one act only upon those maxims which one can will all others to act upon as well. In the view of John Stuart Mill (1985; 1978) and other utilitarians, the requirement of universalizability is embedded directly in the principle of utility, according to which one ought always to act so as to maximize the happiness of the greatest number.

The perspective of human rights, according to which all human beings possess an inalienable right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, also insists upon the equal worth of all people, whether they live within or outside one's own country. The reigning military paradigm conflicts with the concern of human rights advocates to protect all people from aggression; it assumes that "collateral damage" victims may be killed during war, though they are in no way responsible for the crimes that allegedly justify recourse to deadly military force. Consider, for example, the Iraqi civilians killed in the 1991 Gulf War and in the 2003 invasion and occupation of Iraq. While the U.S. Administration has long claimed that the people of Iraq would be better off after Saddam Hussein had been ousted from power, many thousands of Iraqis were summarily stripped of their lives not by Saddam Hussein, but by those who waged war against him. From the victims' perspective, their own demise, characterized by the military as "collateral damage," was a crime no less than it would have been to be killed by Saddam Hussein himself.

The Concept of Legitimate Self-defense versus the Conduct of War

Nothing could be more valuable to a person than his or her own life, the *sine qua non* of the possibility of valuing anything else. If there are any human rights whatsoever, then the most basic right must be the right to defend oneself from the possibility of annihilation. This idea finds expression within civil society, where it is illegal to harm other people, and the penalties for doing so are proportional to the degree of damage done. The worst crime that one can commit in civil society is intentionally to kill another human being, to strip someone of his or her own life. However, self-defense, the use of force to protect oneself from an aggressor, is considered an acceptable justification for harming another person, *if and only if* doing so is the only way to prevent harm to one's self. The concept of self-defense seems straightforward and relatively uncontroversial: an

innocent person directly threatened with harm may defend him- or herself from such unjust attack.

People often disagree about policies and plans, the best manners in which to organize institutions and, most fundamentally, the best sort of life to live. But in order to have these sorts of disagreements, we must first be alive. Given this basis for self-defense, it is impermissible to kill an aggressor when a lesser form of violence would achieve the same aim of defusing the danger at hand. This moral perspective regarding the inviolability of conscious human life is reflected in the laws and practices of civil society, according to which criminal suspects are innocent until proven guilty, and vigilante killings of allegedly "just retribution" are prohibited. Furthermore, the military concept of "collateral damage" has no analogue within civil society.

War is nearly always rationalized on grounds of "self-defense", and military institutions are charged with *defending* the nation. More often than not, the moral permissibility of war is simply assumed to be obvious; many people appear to believe that war is nothing more and nothing less than a form of community self-defense. However, modern war invariably results in the deaths of people who pose no danger to others, but happen to be located in the vicinity of a perceived threat. The most obvious problem with war, when compared with legitimate self-defense, is that it involves an *excessive* use of force, extraordinarily destructive weapons that invariably kill innocent people. In fact, upon examination, acts of legitimate defense by individuals protecting themselves from harm and the activities of modern military institutions of national defense share virtually nothing beyond the word "defense".

A typical case of self-defense involves an agent who perceives himself to be in grave danger and adopts violent means to protect him- or herself from an aggressor who is armed and dangerous and clearly intends to harm the person who wields force to deter the threat. The person defending himself is surprised by the perilous situation in which he finds himself and decides in the moment, as a direct result of his own perceptions, to take action against the aggressor so as to neutralize the threat with which he has been confronted through no fault of his own. Cases of legitimate self-defense use the minimum amount of force needed to protect the threatened individual from harm, and premeditated killings are not acts of legitimate self-defense.

Nonetheless, many people appear to assume that the military is analogous to a parent-protector figure, who would naturally defend his children from attack in the very manner in which he would defend himself. Children are incapable of defending themselves from attack by aggressors, and so it is the responsibility of their parents to defend them. The analogy is supposed to be that the military similarly defends the civilian population from attack: just as helpless children have the right to be protected by their parents, so, too, do helpless civilians have the right to be protected by the military, which has been charged with this responsibility and armed to this end. While superficially plausible, the assimilation of the military to the head of a household does

not withstand scrutiny, for none of the features of legitimate self-defense are present in wars fought abroad.

First, while legitimate self-defense culminates only *sometimes* in death, war *always* does. Second, military personnel fill their roles as a matter of profession: either they are *paid* to wield deadly weapons, or they are *conscripted* by law. Those sent to fight and kill in the name of a country are not acting out of affection for their loved ones nor from a duty to protect people whom they themselves brought into existence. Third, because in modern warfare the commander-in-chief does not participate in the wars of his own waging, he is not related to the populace allegedly being defended as the father is related to the children whom he defends in his own home. But the soldiers who fight wars do not act upon their own perceptions and interpretations of the allegedly clear and present danger, as they would in protecting their family from harm in their own home. Rather, soldiers act under order by their superior officers and the commander-in-chief, who provide their own interpretations of the danger against which soldiers have been ordered to fight.

The soldier's situation is morally perplexing, for while he may be convinced of the story being told to him by his own commander-in-chief, he also knows (on some level) that the enemy leader tells similar stories to his troops, which they also believe. On reflection, it becomes clear that the situation of the enemy soldier is morally identical to that of the allied soldier, for each has been strenuously conditioned to believe that his leader's cause is just and the enemy evil. This symmetry of interpretation, whereby the soldiers of both sides of any conflict are told by their leaders that "We are good and they are evil," is not a part of the typical self-defense scenario, where the initiator of action is an individual who chooses of his own volition to threaten another person with harm.

In its manner of execution, war is nothing like self-defense, but the most striking difference between the two would seem to be the means deemed acceptable for achieving the aim of "defense". The weapons developed by modern military institutions supposedly for the purpose of protecting the populace differ significantly from those used in defending one's self and family from harm. While guns have "dual" usage for either offensive or defensive action, bombs are always and only used through *transporting them to other parts of the world and dropping them upon other people's property*. The gun wielded in self-defense by a person suddenly confronted by danger in his own home existed antecedently for a legitimate domestic purpose. In contrast, bombs have no purpose independent from that of war, for which they have been expressly developed and *premeditatedly* produced *only* for deployment *away* from one's own home.

The officials involved in planning and contracting for the production of weapons of mass destruction under the rubric of national defense maintain that the aggressor against which the military defends the populace is far more dangerous than any individual aggressor; this is why formidable weapons must be developed in order to protect the nation, weapons that can in fact destroy large numbers of people in a small period of time. But the modern weapons of war, especially nuclear warheads and

chemical and biological weapons, have the capacity to devastate entire populations, and the environments in which they and their descendants might live, without regard to the victims' roles in society. Furthermore, conventional weapons such as landmines, cluster bombs and uranium-tipped missiles effectively target civilian populations *after all bombing has ceased*. Such weapons severely compromise the human security of innocent people during peacetime. In other words, the production of such weapons does not cohere with the picture according to which war is a form of self-defense, for non-combatant civilians do not pose a clear and present threat to anyone, and legitimate cases of self-defense harm only violent aggressors.

While there can be little doubt that soldiers fighting a ground war on their own territory view themselves as engaged in self-defense when directly faced with attack by enemy soldiers, combat soldiers fighting abroad do not simply *find themselves* on the battlefield. Rather, they have been *sent* by the commander-in-chief to meet the enemy soldiers whom they fight. So another obvious distinction between wars fought abroad and legitimate self-defense is that the former involve an intention on the part of the commander-in-chief to engage his troops in battle, while legitimate self-defense always involves a person who finds him- or herself in a dangerous situation by chance and, in desperation, defends him- or herself from harm. But, to reiterate, when a country has been invaded by enemy soldiers, then the soldiers of the invaded land do find themselves in that situation by chance; and so their use of force to repel acts of aggression by the invaders is much easier to construe in terms of self-defense, for they may reasonably regard themselves along the lines of a sleeping person suddenly awakened in his own home by an armed trespasser.

International Developments

The *Charter of the United Nations* (1945) draws a clear distinction between the defensive and the offensive use of force, asserting that acts of aggression by one nation against another are not to be tolerated. For example, this is stated in Chapter 1, Article 2:

> All Members shall settle their international disputes by peaceful means in such a manner that international peace and security, and justice, are not endangered.
> All Members shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state, or in any other manner inconsistent with the Purposes of the United Nations.

And the first two stated purposes in the preamble of the *Charter of the United Nations* (1945) are the following:

> to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind [the Charter was drafted in 1945]

and to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the
human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and
small…

In 1991, military action against Iraq was condoned by the United Nations on the
grounds that Saddam Hussein had violated international law by invading and occupying
Kuwait, thereby *initiating* a war to which the international community subsequently
reacted *defensively*. Then President George H.W. Bush characterized the war in terms of
self-defense: "The state of Kuwait must be restored, or no nation will be safe, and the
promising future we anticipate will indeed be jeopardized" (Sifray and Cerf, 1991, p.
229). The international community has also approved of military interventions by outside
(foreign) troops, arguing that the people of those nations needed to be protected from the
government in power. The NATO bombing of Kosovo in 1999 (which was not, however,
promoted by the United Nations) was defended by its supporters on the grounds that the
ethnic Albanians of Kosovo needed to be defended from the regime of Slobodan
Milosevic.

When the United States undertook to wrest power from the Taliban in 2001, many
war supporters claimed that the Afghani people, especially oppressed women, would
benefit greatly. Again, among the many arguments offered for the 2003 invasion of Iraq
was that the people of Iraq needed to be liberated from their dictator. Whether or not the
justifications in these cases were sound continues to be a matter of debate. But because
resistance groups located within each of these nations opposed the bombing of their own
lands, it is unclear how these military campaigns, imposed by outsiders and in some cases
without so much as consulting the inhabitants of the countries in question, might be
viewed along the lines of legitimate "self-defense". No father would bomb the school in
which his children were attending class in order to protect them from an aggressor on the
premises. Given the radical differences between the concept of legitimate self-defense
and the modern practice of war, we need to ask which of the policies carried out by
institutions of national defense protect moral persons and which in fact undermine their
security.

The 2003 invasion of Iraq by the United States flouted basic international
conventions regarding the acceptable use of military force, and thus serves to amplify
what is a far more general albeit less obvious moral problem in the use of military force
against populations abroad. Because it provides a graphic example of how exclusive
attention to national security ultimately undermines human security by neglecting the
reality of moral persons destroyed through military aggression, let us now look more
closely at the 2003 invasion of Iraq.

The intuitive distinction between the offensive and the defensive use of force,
which is highlighted by cases of legitimate self-defense within civil society, explains why
many were dismayed by the following statement, issued by the U.S. Administration in
September 2002:

> We will disrupt and destroy terrorist organizations by:
> …defending the United States, the American people, and our interests at home and abroad by identifying and destroying the threat before it reaches our borders. While the United States will constantly strive to enlist the support of the international community, we will not hesitate to act alone, if necessary, to exercise our right of self-defense by acting preemptively against such terrorists, to prevent them from doing harm against our people and our country…
> …we recognize that our best defense is a good offense… (*The National Security Strategy of the United States of America*, 2002, p. 6).

The National Security Strategy of the United States of America (NSSUSA) asserts the right to a form of "self-defense" that is never accepted within civil society, where persons are always presumed innocent until proven guilty. The idea of "offensive defense" also violates international law as articulated in the *Charter of the United Nations* (*vide supra*) and makes a mockery of the requirement of last resort so central to the concept of legitimate self-defense.

Since the widespread devastation of World War II, much attention has been directed to the necessity of assessing alleged claims to justice on the part of nations in conflict. What constitutes a just cause for embroiling a nation in war is resolved in the *Charter* (1945) in Chapter VII, Article 3:

> The Security Council shall determine the existence of any threat to the peace, breach of the peace, or act of aggression and shall make recommendations or decide what measures shall be taken…

In other words, "threats to peace" and "acts of aggression" are the only causes for which wars may be waged, according to the United Nations, a group of disparate nations whose various perspectives in principle prevent a completely one-sided account of any situation alleged to warrant recourse to deadly force. However, even according to the letter of the *Charter* (1945), the decisive interpretation of what constitutes a "threat to the peace, breach of the peace, or act of aggression" derives from *either* the U. N. Security Council *or* the leader of a nation. In Article 51 (Chapter VII) the following is stated:

> Nothing in the present Charter shall impair the inherent right of individual or collective self-defense if an armed attack occurs against a member of the United Nations, until the Security Council has taken the measures necessary to maintain international peace and security.

One difficulty with Article 51 is that the notion of "self-defense" is left undefined, and, as we have seen, wars fought abroad are not acts of literal self-defense. Should national "self-defense" be interpreted as encompassing only citizens' lives and territorial integrity,

or should it also include ideology, values and "way of life"? If oil is an important part of a nation's economic interest and hence its people's livelihood, is war sometimes justified for the purpose of having continued access to affordable oil?

Those who drafted the *Charter* evidently anticipated these sorts of questions, for although they used the undefined notion of "self-defense," they qualified it as follows: "*If an armed attack occurs* against a member of the United Nations" (my emphasis). This qualification would seem to preclude preemptive attacks such as the 2003 invasion of Iraq, for at the time Saddam Hussein had not instigated an armed attack against any member of the United Nations and had not done so since the 1990 invasion of Kuwait, which was of course the ostensible reason given for the 1991 Gulf War. It seems dubious to read Article 51 as permitting an attack against Iraq in 2003 for Saddam Hussein's having invaded Kuwait in 1990 (which, to reiterate, it had been the purpose of the 1991 Gulf War to redress); though some supporters of the 2003 invasion did apparently regard it as an extension of the 1991 war.

In any event, it is arguably impossible to interpret a war waged to thwart hypothetical dangers lying in the unknown realm of the future as a *last resort*. Just as in the case of individual self-defense, when there is time to plan and execute a war, there is also time to take cover. If all nations were to embrace a reading of "defense" as permitting offensive military action, we would find ourselves in the proverbial Hobbesian state of nature. Of course, it is also true that of all nations in existence today, only the United States can violate international law without risk of reprisal; for it has withdrawn from the International Criminal Court (ICC) and possesses an army and arsenal orders of magnitude larger than those of any other nation, indeed, of the next fifteen nations combined.

The U.S. policy of "preemptive" or offensive defense gained a fair amount of support among members of the U.S. security community in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks of 9/11 (Ikenberry, 2002). The defensive use of containment, multilateral institution-building, and the rule of international law gave way during this period to what may be called a "rugged individualist" approach summed up by George W. Bush (2004) in his 2004 *State of the Union Address* as follows: "America will never seek a permission slip to defend the security of our country." In this view, when the United States violates international law and flouts the conventions governing even those multilateral institutions established by the United States itself, this is supposed to constitute not an affront to the rule of law, but a refusal to submit sheepishly to the will of other nations.

Although the U.S. persistently offered "international security" as one of its many rationalizations for the 2003 invasion of Iraq, in its aftermath, violent attacks upon ordinary citizens increased not only within, but also outside of Iraq (for example, in Turkey and in Spain). The very fact that the focus of the war on terrorism switched to Iraq *upon* the U.S. invasion and occupation, itself revealed that the actions of terrorists are responsive to perceived injustice.

War Viewed from the First-person Perspective

Experts from all over the world predicted that the invasion and occupation of a sovereign nation would lead to an increase in terrorist activity. Waging an offensive war against a sovereign nation would be interpreted as an act of military aggression by the United States, and those who instigated the attacks upon the Pentagon and the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001, would point to such an invasion as further evidence of the United States' hegemonic aspirations. War critics warned that some of those who viewed U.S. military action as criminal would retaliate, taking the lives of even more innocent people.

During the rhetorical build-up to the 2003 invasion, many were also dismayed by the U.S. administration's "shock and awe" plan to drop more bombs in the first 48 hours than were dropped during the entire 1991 Gulf War. A Pentagon official, whose words were publicly broadcast on CBS News, indicated the following:

> There will not be a safe place in Baghdad… The sheer size of this has never been seen before, never been contemplated before… We want them to quit, not to fight, so that you have this simultaneous effect—rather like the nuclear weapons at Hiroshima—not taking days or weeks but minutes (West, 2003).

While thousands, not millions, of innocent people were destroyed by U.S. military forces during the spring of 2003, millions were effectively terrorized by the administration's ominous threat of "shock and awe". If terrorism is the threat of the use of deadly force against innocent people in arbitrary ways, then it is quite difficult to understand how else "shock and awe" might have been understood by the Iraqis themselves, and *a fortiori* given that the existence of the alleged weapons of mass destruction (WMD) arsenals serving as the pretext for the war had not even been established, much less their location.

When people are terrorized, the phenomenological quality of their trauma is not a function of the identity of the persons threatening the use of deadly force against them. But the dominant military paradigm ignores the perspective of individual subjects victimized in war; and because most people simply assume that war is a form of legitimate self-defense, they rarely reflect upon the meaning of military proclamations (such as "There will not be a safe place in Baghdad") from the perspective of a prospective victim. Were war supporters to take into consideration the perspective of the human beings at the receiving ends of bombing campaigns, they might recognize that "collateral damage" reports leave out the very basis for morality and, there subsumed, self-defense.

Instead, one often hears military supporters praising a mission abroad for its having limited "collateral damage" to 50, 100 or 1000 civilian deaths. These numbers may seem small when compared to the entire population potentially affected. But what

has actually transpired in such cases is that the victims' lives have been prematurely terminated through the decision of a political leader to deploy deadly force beyond the boundaries of his proper political domain. In fact, the subjective experience of civilians trapped in lands undergoing bombing raids is phenomenologically indistinguishable from the threat of terrorism with which citizens of the United States became familiar on September 11, 2001. From the perspectives of those threatened with the use of deadly force in their own homeland and in retaliation to other people's actions, they are being terrorized no less than were the victims of 9/11 and its survivors, who continued to live in fear for months subsequent to the attacks.

The psychological insecurity of the inhabitants of a nation under bombing results from the fact that these people, who happen to be located through no fault of their own in countries run by criminal regimes, have no way of knowing whether they will survive. All they really know is that some, perhaps many, people are bound to die when the military of another nation begins to drop bombs from on high. Before the 2003 invasion, the Iraqis certainly knew that mistakes would be made; for, among many other cases, in February 1991 the U.S. Military had bombed a large neighborhood shelter in Baghdad's Amiriya district, which killed more than 400 people, mostly women and children. The most conservative estimates of the number of civilians killed in Iraq by the U.S. Military during the 2003 invasion and occupation range from 8-10,000. All of those people were terrorized before they died. Yet, because of the dominance of the military paradigm in contemporary society and the government's euphemistic characterization of wartime atrocities, most people manage to avoid ever having to process such harsh realities.

When on March 11, 2004 the simultaneous explosions of several trains in Madrid killed some 200 people and injured many more, the horror of the act was patent to all. Images of bodies being carried out of the wrecked trains were transmitted by all major media outlets. In contrast, no major media outlet in United States transmitted any images of the thousands of dead civilians killed by U.S. bombs in 2003. In comparing these two cases, one notes that it would have taken dozens of the coordinated train attacks in Madrid to add up to the slaughter of Iraqis by the U.S. Military in March and April of 2003. In other words, even using simple utilitarian calculation, there is a serious moral problem with the reigning paradigm.

Military solutions to conflict admit the subjective intention of the killers, provided that they are one's own allies, while dismissing the perspective of the victims as irrelevant, and defining the intentions and perspectives of the enemy as "evil". It is widely accepted that the distinction between political killing by factions and military killing by states (at least one's own state and allies) is based upon a "legitimacy" enjoyed by the latter but not by the former. However, it is unclear that this view can withstand scrutiny; the leaders of nations are conventionally appointed by conventionally assembled groups of human beings no less than are the leaders of factions. Every nation began as an informally assembled group of people.

When civilians are erroneously targeted and destroyed (as often was the case in Vietnam, during the 1999 NATO bombing of Kosovo, during the campaign against the Taliban regime in Afghanistan, and in Iraq from 1991 to the present day) a thorough diffusion of responsibility ensues. The planners who mistakenly selected the targets absolve themselves from wrongdoing by reasoning that they never physically caused the death of anyone. For their part, soldiers may absolve themselves from any moral responsibility for the innocent lives they destroy on the grounds that they were merely doing their soldierly duty. It is the role of a soldier to obey, not to call into question the orders that he receives from his commanders. Since soldiers most likely do not *intend* to harm innocent people, such "collateral damage" is an unfortunate consequence of human fallibility as it manifests itself in warfare. Philosophers of war who defend the received view have often explained the distinction between accidental killings and war crimes by appeal to the Catholic "doctrine of double effect," which assesses the moral rightness or wrongness of an action by considering the actor's intention. If a killer targets innocent life directly (either as an end in itself, or as a means to an end intentionally sought), then his act is murder. If, in contrast, a killer physically causes the deaths of innocent people as a side effect of a legitimate military action, then those killings are not murder.

While this line of reasoning may help to console the people causally responsible for the killing of innocents during wartime, one must, in consistency, allow that it applies to *all* military strategists and soldiers, including those on the enemy side. And it is entirely unclear that any soldiers, whether ally or enemy, kill people with the express aim of destroying innocent life. Rather, soldiers typically do what they are told out of a sense of duty and in obedience to authority. As misguided as the soldiers on the enemy side may be, they probably do not have evil intentions; and their actions are unquestionably informed by a story told to them by their leader. Even when factional groups wreak havoc upon civilians, they are in all likelihood interpreting their victims as complicit in the crimes of the government, through their ongoing support of what the faction takes to be the evil regime in power.

In thinking about war from the first-person perspective, it is important to remember also that not all soldiers, even of the well-respected military institutions of formal nations, succeed in assuaging their conscience for what they have done in the line of duty. The psychological casualties among soldiers who have killed innocent people during wartime are another "collateral" effect brushed aside by the establishment figures who send them to fight, kill and risk their lives. Soldiers, too, are moral persons, but during wartime they are asked to kill people about whom they know nothing, and without even so much as questioning their leaders' stated objectives (Grossman, 1995).

Some Blind Spots of the State Security Model

Governments are constructed by groups of people who band together in order to promote their own interests and protect themselves. The authority of a state is contingent upon its satisfaction of the needs of the populace, who alone can legitimate that authority. The details of those needs will differ from community to community, given variable geography, climate and other factors; but the most fundamental purpose is generally assumed to be the protection of people from violence and the threat of violence. Because the state-centered paradigm of security that gained sway during the Cold War period continues to dominate discourse regarding national security, seldom are non-military measures seriously entertained by political leaders during times of perceived global instability. Most writers in the mainstream security community simply assume that "security" is synonymous with "state security," a tendency reflected in many passages of *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America*, which goes even so far as to assert the right to deploy nuclear arms preemptively, should the U.S. deem the use of such weapons necessary in "self-defense".

One might have hoped that, with the end of the Cold War, nuclear arms would finally be abolished; but, because of the resilience of the state-centered paradigm, explicable in part by the economic dynamics of the extraordinarily lucrative arms trade, this is quite far from being the case (Higgs, 1990). The human insecurity engendered by the existence of such weapons thus continues unabated, and, ironically enough, may even have been exacerbated by the fall of the U.S.S.R, which formerly counterbalanced the U.S. (now the sole nuclear superpower on the planet). It seems clear at this point that U.S. security strategists are intent upon maintaining U.S. military supremacy, by preventing other nations from developing the weapons of mass destruction that already form an important part of U.S. arsenals. Unfortunately, the stockpiling, development and testing of WMDs, the withdrawal from international treaties and conventions, and the waging of preemptive war, all serve as overt endorsements by the United States of the use of brute force as a means of conflict resolution.

Consider the delicate situation in North Korea, which was decried, along with Iran and Iraq, as "evil" by U.S. President George W. Bush in his 2002 State of the Union Address. In 2003, Bush waged an offensive war, in violation of international law, against one of the members of his so-called "axis of evil". Consequently, other countries publicly denounced by the U.S. can harbor no further doubts as to the willingness of the self-proclaimed "good" U.S. administration to deploy deadly force in unpredictable and offensive ways. In reflecting upon the global effects of the 2003 invasion, it should not be forgotten that the U.S. had been a party to the U.N. weapons inspection process for several months before it abruptly decided to invade Iraq. During a comprehensive report to the United Nations Assembly, Chief Weapons Inspector Hans Blix had requested that he be permitted to continue his work in Iraq, citing the need for more time, as his group had failed to unearth evidence of the allegedly stockpiled WMDs. But, in defiance of the findings of those charged with assessing the danger of WMDs in Iraq, the U.S. called a

halt to the process already in motion in order to wage war. We now know that Inspector Blix was right: Iraq had no WMDs.

The U.S. attacked Iraq but not North Korea in 2003. But one clear difference between the two cases is that North Korea seems *already* to have possessed nuclear arms which it was poised to use against its neighbors, while Iraq was said only to have a program for the *development* of nuclear weapons. This suggests that the United States' offensive approach to defense will lead to global nuclear proliferation, as overtly threatened nations scramble to protect themselves from unpredictable, offensive war waged by the U.S. administration. Unpredictability implies uncertainty, which undermines the psychological and emotional security of threatened leaders. The offensive behavior of the United States may also galvanize terrorist factions to develop innovative methods of destruction, and the danger of nuclear recipes finding their way into the manuals of terrorist factions will naturally increase with the proliferation of those technologies among governments (Calhoun, 2002). Consider, for example, the case of the Pakistani scientist Abdul Qadeer Khan, who confessed in early 2004 to having sold nuclear secrets around the world. Particularly baffling to those concerned with human security is the U.S. administration's decision to pursue the development so-called "suitcase nukes", which can obviously be carried just as easily in the suitcases of terrorists as in those of U.S. Marines.

Acts of military aggression, even on the part of coalitions with the best of intentions, may have the infelicitous effect of strengthening the popular support of criminal leaders and non-state actors who wield deadly force. When armies invade nations, the people themselves personally witness the destruction and death wrought. For example, long range consequences of the 1999 NATO bombing of Kosovo suggest that people probably cannot be bombed into changing their views; this was illustrated by the election to parliament in December 2003 of Slobodan Milosevic and his Serbian Radical Party ally, Vojislav Seselj, though both men were at the time standing trial at the Hague for war crimes. In fact, the Serbian Radical Party fared better than the pro-Western groups supported by the NATO bombing. Even more disturbingly, the new (anti-Milosevic) Serbian Prime Minister, Zoran Djindjic, was assassinated on March 12, 2003.

But nowhere are the perilous blindspots of "military science" better illustrated than in the cases of Saddam Hussein and Osama bin Laden. By now people are generally aware of the role that the international community played in producing the tyrant that Saddam Hussein eventually became. The picture of U.S. Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld shaking hands with the former dictator in December 1983 tells a thousand words, but unfortunately U.S. security strategists have not read them. Today's ally may well become tomorrow's enemy, and there is no way to retract the technology, weapons, and training already bestowed upon what has transformed into a dictator such as Saddam Hussein or an international terrorist such as Osama bin Laden (who was himself trained and supported by the United States during the Soviet invasion and occupation of

Afghanistan). Until the implications of such cases are taken seriously by administration officials, such blunders are bound to be repeated.

Viewing "the Enemy" as a Locus of Consciousness

On February 1, 2002, China's Foreign Ministry spokesman, Kong Quan, issued the following response to Bush's denunciation of an "axis of evil":

> We always advocate the principle of equality of all countries when dealing with state-to-state relations, otherwise it can only undermine the atmosphere for seeking resolution and harm the maintenance of world peace and stability (*China Daily*, 2002).

Quan's statement correctly expresses the importance of viewing other leaders as persons with perspectives, values and beliefs. I have suggested that the most fundamental problem with the reigning paradigm of military solutions to conflict inheres in the fact that it admits the subjective intention of the killers (so long as they are one's own allies), while dismissing the perspective of "collateral damage" victims as irrelevant and defining the intentions and perspectives of the enemy as "evil". In other words, in demonizing adversarial leaders, the first-person perspective is not entirely ignored as ascription of evil intentions is nearly always made. But thinking seriously about one's adversaries from a first-person perspective, as though they, too, had values, beliefs, plans and projects along the lines of our own, would make it much more difficult to indulge in what sometimes becomes a vicious cycle of violence, a recent example of which being the protracted Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

All people, including so-called "evil" leaders, act on the basis of their own values and beliefs--misguided and confused though they may sometimes be. But conscious agents do not *themselves* regard their *own* intentions as evil, anymore than the soldiers enlisted to kill for a leader's avowed "good" or "just" cause do so with evil intentions. The ascription of evil intentions to one's adversaries effectively precludes the possibility of dialogue, thereby undermining the goals of peace and security with which institutions of national defense are presumably concerned. Bear in mind that people who have nothing to lose are the most dangerous people of all; and when they are placed in desperate or impossible situations, we should expect them to react accordingly. For example, during the 1991 Gulf War, Saddam Hussein's troops set many oil wells on fire. This was a grotesque assault upon the environment and an obvious waste of the nation's resources. But what behavior can we realistically expect of leaders who have been cornered in such a way that they are left with the means neither for escape nor for saving face?

When people offer arguments for taking up arms, they invariably begin with the assumption that the enemy is evil and must be stopped through the use of military force. In cases such as that of Saddam Hussein, few would deny that the leader committed many serious crimes. But to summarily destroy human beings through so-called "collateral damage" in contending with a tyrannical regime is, from the perspective of those who disagree, to make the same mistake that the enemy has already made. Should not, then, the United States' annihilation of innocent people lead others, who reject the U.S. administration's interpretation of its own acts of killing as morally innocuous while nonetheless sharing their meta-view regarding the permissibility of "collateral damage", to follow their example and attempt to *stop U.S. leaders*, whom they regard as "the evil enemy"?

The principle of simple consistency implies that if one is justified in wielding deadly force whenever one *believes* this to be justified, then the same holds true also for other conscious agents. This suggests that sending the military abroad to kill people on their own soil can only lead to more violence on the part of those who find themselves in social climates already conducive to the incubation of terrorists, who may well interpret their own actions as a form of legitimate self-defense. Is this not in fact the best explanation for the murderous insurgency in Iraq years after Saddam had been ousted from power? Note that, before and during the 2003 invasion of Iraq, millions of people in Muslim lands protested in the streets against the United States. Many of those people were carrying signs of support for Saddam Hussein and/or Osama bin-Laden. Others were carrying signs (and this occurred all over Europe as well) of George W. Bush, who was being depicted as the new Hitler. Not only did millions of people participate in these demonstrations, but they were widely broadcast throughout the lands in which they took place, with one notable exception, viz., the United States.

The interpretations of other people matter, strategically speaking, because they base plans, policies, and actions upon *their* interpretations, not upon *ours*. If we are disturbed by those interpretations, then we must attempt to transform them. From the perspectives of the citizens of nations such as North Korea, Iran, Syria, and Cuba, the ongoing threat of preemptive war by the United States (a military superpower) is empirically indistinguishable from the threat of terrorist attack, thus confirming in some of their minds the "Bush = Hitler" hypothesis. Under this interpretation, civilians continually faced with the threat of the use of deadly force in retaliation to their government's policies are being terrorized, while the leaders of those nations are simultaneously placed in the psychologically perilous situation of not knowing whether they will be next in the line of fire. Again, far from promoting security, looming threats of impending military aggression by a nation with vast arsenals of WMDs may well strengthen the domestic support even of criminal leaders. As has been amply illustrated in Iraq, some fraction of those enraged by what they take to be U.S. hypocrisy and hegemony will decide to fight back, even sacrificing their own lives in the process.

If, viewed from a moral perspective according to which each person's life is inviolable, the slaughter of 3,000 innocent Americans on September 11, 2001 was a moral abomination, one might well wonder whether the slaughter of multiple times that number of innocent Iraqis can be anything but worse. In the absence of access to any leader's true intentions, we are left only with the piles of dead bodies that they leave in their wake. Different conscious agents will interpret those dead bodies in very different ways.

The Importance of Dialogue

Third-person theories commence from the conception of others as objects to be talked about, not as other persons with whom to communicate. The "conviction" model of morality conflicts with the basic recognition of one's own fallibility, which rationally requires one to acknowledge that others, too, are persons acting in accordance with their own beliefs (arrived at through historically unique pathways). If individual centers of consciousness constitute the essence of moral value, a genuinely moral perspective will not simply issue edicts about objectively wrong actions and objectively bad states of affairs. In circumstances of conflict, to engage in dialogue is to accord other persons the dignity of having their own opinions and perspectives on the situation. War supporters and war opponents alike can agree about the existence of threats to global security and peace. Having concurred on this point, we need to reflect seriously upon how to avoid repeating the mistakes of history while recognizing that we may be commencing our discussion from quite different sets of premises.

For example, while opponents to the 2003 invasion of Iraq were alarmed by the United States' readiness to defy many of their longstanding U. N. allies, others insisted that the mission was a part of the ongoing "war on terrorism". Some supporters of the invasion maintained that a tyrant such as Saddam Hussein could easily transfer weapons of mass destruction to terrorist factions to do with as they pleased. War supporters and leaders such as U.S. President George W. Bush and British Premier Tony Blair speak in abstract terms of the future triumph of "freedom and democracy," rather than the concrete consequences such as maiming and death, psychological terror, and insecurity to which military campaigns give rise. Bush and Blair also hold a different view about the nature of the terrorist threat than do critics of preemptive military action. In what is apparently the view of Bush (and others), a finite number of terrorists exist and we need only to "hunt them down."

However, because people can be molded into, and are never *born* as terrorists, an effective strategy for confronting the threat posed by terrorist groups must address etiological factors ignored by advocates of preemptive defense. The Israeli-Palestinian, Russian-Chechen, and the U.S.-Iraq situation, among others, suggest that the last way to put an end to the use of deadly violence by subnational factions is by summarily

executing suspects. When during their "anti-terrorist" military actions governments perfunctorily dismiss innocent victims as irrelevant "collateral damage", they confirm the very theories promulgated by dissenting factional groups, some of whom decide to wield deadly force in response to what they regard as war crimes.

Although an international tribunal would seem to be the obvious alternative to the largely indiscriminate destruction caused during wars waged against criminal regimes, the United States withdrew from the International Criminal Court (ICC) on May 6, 2002. The explanation was articulated later that year in the *National Security Strategy of the United States of America* (2002, p. 31):

> We will take the actions necessary to ensure that our efforts to meet our global security commitments and protect Americans are not impaired by the potential for investigations, inquiry, or prosecution by the International Criminal Court (ICC), whose jurisdiction does not extend to Americans and which we do not accept. We will work together with other nations to avoid complications in our military operations and cooperation, through such mechanisms as multilateral and bilateral agreements that will protect U.S. nationals from the ICC. We will implement fully the American Service members Protection Act, whose provisions are intended to ensure and enhance the protection of U.S. personnel and officials.

This is a troubling statement, given that one of the primary purposes of the ICC would seem to be to circumvent the tragic killing of innocent people through war for the crimes of their leaders. But because in the contemporary world the people who hold in their hands the power to wage war are the very same people who hold the key to peace, pointing out what we take to be their moral and intellectual failures and deficiencies will probably not alter their views. Indeed, if we simply assume that an administration is incorrigibly corrupt and/or hopelessly incoherent, then we foreclose the possibility of dialogue, and with it, the possibility of transforming their policies in the future.

When people assume that leaders and governments are evil, they adopt a perspective toward them that permits the rationalization of any number of acts of destruction in the name of "self-defense". In fact, people, leaders, and governments are evolving entities whose attitudes and practices transform over time. Weapons are used by those who wield them for their own purposes, whatever they may be, and nothing could be more obvious than that through the course of their lives people change. We may believe a nation and its government to be our ally today, but in the future this may or may not be the case. The United States treated Saddam Hussein with the utmost respect, as an international interlocutor, during the Iran-Iraq conflict. Did Saddam Hussein really change so much between 1983 (when the U.S. provided him with weapons and chemical technology) and 2003 (when the U.S. effectively ordered his assassination)? And, if so, was not this transformation in fact catalyzed by the military empowerment of this leader by the international community? Cases such as that of Saddam Hussein strongly suggest that the prevailing military paradigm of state security is ill-equipped to face the complex

challenges of the contemporary world. Among other things, it has become increasingly obvious that, since we cannot now know who our allies nor who our enemies in the future will be, we should call a halt to the weapons export trade today.

Conclusion

Moral rhetoric is invariably invoked by spokesmen for nations, but to take morality seriously is to accord all others similarly situated the same rights (and responsibilities) that one accords to one's self. To look at conflict from a moral perspective requires that we consider the viewpoints of individuals, and, extrapolating to the international case, a leader who wishes to conduct himself in conformity with the dictates of morality in his dealings with other nations must accord to all other leaders the rights (and responsibilities) that he accords to himself. There is no room for "free-riders" in international affairs any more than there is room for "free-riders" at the level of interpersonal morality. Can, for example, anyone *rationally* condone "preemptive war" or "offensive defense" as a heuristic principle for all nations? To take another example, if it is wrong for some countries to develop and test nuclear warheads, then it is wrong for any country to do so. If it is wrong for some to develop and stockpile biological and chemical weapons of mass destruction, then it is wrong for others to do so as well. The basis for a peaceful community of nations is the same as the basis for a peaceful community of persons: the members of the group in question must treat others with the same respect with which they expect others to treat them.

Human beings are creatures of habit, and belief is conservative (Harman, 1986). This explains why it is so difficult to overturn deeply entrenched beliefs such as that national defense is no more and no less than a form of legitimate self-defense, even when upon inspection the two prove to be quite different in structure, content and consequences. Given the new kinds of dangers we face in the twenty-first century, we need to examine etiological factors that lead to factional violence but are generally ignored by national security strategists, whose policies tend to focus upon the current situation, not the history leading up to it nor what may later ensue. Unfortunately, the adoption of policies that genuinely promote human security, as opposed to jeopardizing it, has been hindered by the relatively recent capitalization of the weapons industry; an extremely powerful economic force perpetuates the reigning state security model and in fact favors the incessant expansion of the military state (Higgs, 1990). We need to be vigilant of such forces, acting behind the scenes of what may appear on the surface to be a debate about justice and morality; for so long as weapons exports reap hefty profits for the associated corporate interests, the economic perspective will be a formidable enemy to the adoption of truly moral policies at the international level. But the situation is far from hopeless, as a glance at history reveals.

The United States and many other nations used to condone racial and sexual discrimination, and even slavery. These practices contradict the basic principle "treat

equals equally," given that race and gender are not morally relevant properties. After many, many years of dissent by those who recognized the injustice of racist and sexist practices, the laws of civil society finally changed. This was not easy, but in the end reason prevailed, and while some racists and sexists persist, their views are no longer codified as law in modern democracies. In confronting the deeply-entrenched racial and gender prejudice of millennia, promoters of civil rights insisted upon the status of racial minorities and women as *moral persons*.

The same strategy needs to be adopted in resisting modern war, which victimizes human beings in the name of a form of "security"; far from protecting the subjects of morality, it actually puts them at ongoing risk of annihilation. From a moral perspective, a person's citizenship (or lack thereof) should not be used as a basis for deciding whether or not he or she has rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. But deeply entrenched patriotic traditions continue to prevent people from seeing that when they apply different moral standards to their compatriots and to "outsiders", this chauvinism is morally equivalent to racism and sexism. This does not mean that people are incapable, in principle, of recognizing the analogy of patriotism to racism and sexism. But it does mean that we have a long distance to travel before the paradigm of cosmopolitanism favored by Kofi Annan and others concerned with the future of the world and the species will be widely embraced (Williams, 2000).

While it is unfortunate that economic factors often persuade administrators to be more accommodating of unjust policies than they might otherwise be, the same problem occurred in the pre-Civil War United States. Slave-owners were always wary of abolitionists, and they had every economic reason in the world to be so; but eventually it became clear that race is not a moral basis for differential treatment of human beings. The views of slave-owners were obviously buoyed by extraordinarily powerful psychological and emotional forces, and such forces also help to explain the widespread approbation by the populace of the military. Citizens do not wish to believe that their taxes are being used to terrorize, maim and slaughter innocent people; and this is why they so readily accept the euphemistic "collateral damage" apologies proffered to them by military spokesmen. In order to arrive at informed beliefs about the deadly conflicts in which their governments become embroiled, the populace needs to be told the ugly facts. Though often filtered out by the mainstream media, ugly facts are being covered more and more by independent outlets concerned with the fate of the moral persons destroyed during wars waged in the name of "defense".

In a world in which one nation possesses and wields overwhelming military superiority, the prospects may seem dim for the role of morality at the international level. But the fact that leaders persistently offer *moral* interpretations of their actions, even as some of them violate international law, itself illustrates that the populace is moved by moral considerations. The challenge becomes to make graphic the contradictions inherent to policies of mass destruction, which annihilate moral persons, the very repositories of moral value for whom institutions of defense were initially established.

Democracy is founded upon and flourishes under conditions conducive to open dialogue and dissent. Ideas that survive in a democratic society do so because they make sense to the people. At any given point in time, some of the practices and policies of any government comprising fallible human beings will be wrong. But it is one of the crowning virtues of democracy that no policy is etched in stone for eternity.

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