

Second Philosophy

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INTRODUCTION

We live in an era of wars. In the last century two world wars were fought and in our new century there have already been numerous wars, with the UK and USA currently involved in two active wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. When the question `Can There Be a Just War?`, is put, there seem to be at least three possible reactions.

The Realist will say the question does not make sense. Morality, concepts of justice, have no place in deciding whether wars should be fought. Wars are fought for reasons of power and national security. They are, as Von Clausewitz said, `the continuation of politics by other means.' For the Realist war is pretty much inevitable. Its roots are deep in aggressive human nature, the state of nature is the state of war as Hobbes rightly pointed out. All that matters is governance - who gets to decide on the territory, the way the resources are split and how these gains can be maintained. We impose states upon ourselves to organise the fight efficiently and then get on with the action. From then it is all a matter of Realpolitik, securing the long term future of your side. Morality not only has no part to play in these affairs, except as an instrumental means of gaining an advantage, but it could be a positive hindrance in the serious business of winning.

The Pacifist says that morality is all. War should never be undertaken, mass killing can never be justified for political reasons. The consequences of war are always harmful and there are always non violent alternatives that can be attempted. For the Pacifist, The Realists are the unimaginative cynical ones, the ones with power and privilege invested in the war machines of nation states. The ones with a vested interest in blocking and discrediting imaginative counter proposals for world peace that challenge their corrupt ideology. The masters of Peace here challenge the Masters of War.

Of course the Realists and others have their own rejoinders to the Pacifists. They are Utopian Idealists. Naive and irrational they peddle their peaceful intentions attempting to control the clean hands moral high ground. All they achieve is the continued oppression of countless people and the encouragement of aggressive dictators who are prepared to chance their hand when they sniff the stench of defeatism. Surely the example of Hitler has ended forever the pretensions of the Pacifists?

Finally we have the Just War Theorists, who allow the justice of war within the rules. The war must have a Just Cause, it must be sanctioned by lawful authority, it must have the right intention - no hidden agendas. It can only be used when all other peaceful options have failed. It must have a probability of success, and it must have anticipated proportionality ie the expected good must exceed the expected evil. The Just cause can cover anything from defence against an invasion, to intervention to prevent serious violations of the basic rights of foreign citizens.

Michael Waltzer, a leading theorist on these matters, groups these reasons together as Resistance to Aggression ie the right to resist the use of armed force in violation of someone else's basic rights. If you act aggressively you forfeit your right not to be warred against.

Just War Theories are rejected by the Pacifists for their failure to issue an absolute condemnation of war. They are derided by the Realists as a face saving device to disguise the real intentions of states ie to secure national security. At best they can always be avoided, when needed, and at worst they slow down and weaken a countries legitimate right to defend itself. Even the Just War Theorists themselves are divided on issues, such as the role of international agencies such as the UN, and the rights of intervention in sovereign states. Many would like to see

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a general strengthening of the world order in favour of intervention by democracies for democracies against dictatorships; intervention backed in the last resort by military force.

So where do you stand on the issue of Just War? Can there be such a thing, is there never such a thing? Is the concept incoherent from the start?

QUESTIONS:

1. Are you a Realist, a Pacifist or a Just War Theorist and why? Why do you reject the other alternatives?
2. Should Just War Theory sanction intervention in sovereign states in the name of human rights and democracy?
3. Was the war in Iraq a Just War?

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DISCUSSION:

WindWalker: I consider myself a realist.... In every war one side always believes the war is Just... so in that sense I would have to say that either ALL wars are just or ALL wars are not.

Shingles: Interesting that the account of the Realists says that Morality is irrelevant here

Reflection: well that sums it up well Oswy, thanks

Reaser: do you think pacifism takes the moral high ground? Why?

Reflection: I don't think wars are really matters of choice and so are not really matters of justice or philosophy (so a realist maybe)

Oswy: Wind, which option are you going for?

Simulat: I can't fit myself into any of those categories

Renald: Reaser, I was curious about that, too. I think there are arguments to be made for pacifism that don't rely on morality, per se.

Oswy: Reaser, I think they perhaps claim the moral high ground?

Reaser: hmm

Simulat: it seems to me that a war always has two sides, and that each side do their best to claim the high ground

Oswy: Well the categories were only to simplify are there others that are better descriptions.

Guillermo: I would like to say, before you all decide in which bag you want to put yourself into, that because of the nature of this subject, it is at the end about YOUR actions, and not just another philosophical word wrestle. No country, no powers that be is going to ask you whether to start a war or not. No matter what you say here and how clever your arguments are, only your actions are truly relevant in war and peace.

WindWalker: that is a hard question... in the long run I think all efforts should be made to avoid wars... but are not... however there are times when going to war is required for survival

Shingles: I order for 'Justice' to be granted to a war, there needs to be a higher authority than those countries involved. Where would that higher authority come from, Oswy & everyone?

Reaser: no it is a thing that you believe in, maybe others don't but I would rather die than injure

Renald: Shingles, I'm not sure I can grant your premise.

Oswy: Guillermo. Could not the discussion influence public opinion and so decisions about war?

Shingles: alright, where is it mistaken, Renald?

WindWalker: that is for the most part true Guillermo... and most wars are seldom about the issues presented to the general populace

Oswy: Shingles many look to the UN but it seems very flawed to me?

Reflection: well the winners always determine the history and how things are interpreted I think

Guillermo: Oswy: not this discussion

Renald: Shingles, I'm struggling with that. I might have said it's more important that those initiating war be able to justify it to themselves, but the point has already been made that everyone manages to do that handily :-b

WindWalker: Ref... the winner always influences history... because they are the ones who get to write it

Oswy: Guillermo who knows where our influence extends? But you may be right.

Guillermo: and the powers that be have far better tools to affect the public opinion than a handful of rational peace loving citizen

Oswy: All I am still not getting a clear view on whether you think a war could be just and on what terms. We have heard something about self defence?

Oswy: Just even.

Reflection: it may be that modern nation states are more like single celled organisms (complex, but not really with a brain like we have) and that they respond to stimuli in certain ways, so that after 9/11, the ambient anxiety of "the people" attached to the nature of the nucleus (the republican government) reacted with war

Oswy: Is war just realpolitik and that the end f it. No further discussion needed?

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Alaya: yeah I think as Guillermo, actually whatever my position is, I will never be consulted about, are we going in war or not, and it will not strategically be explain either.. from where I stand , after seeing many empire political film, as documentary, I realised, that its many times more strategic, and they also, do that as a ransom of depth unto they owe money.. there are economic rights over the human rights that prevails. Most of the time

Guillermo: self defence doesn't sound right when the "self" is a huge number of people, whose actions are coordinated by a small ruling elite. Who is the "self" in that?

Renald: Oswy, I'm of the opinion that war can be just, which I suppose makes me a theorist of that kind. But the notion that it must be justified by some other authority... I hadn't considered that, and I find it problematic.

WindWalker: Oswy, we generally never really are sure what wars are about... even after the war is over the victors change the slant of things... the Civil War in the USA is a good example of that

Shingles: What I'm trying to point out is that there are only national/international boards of humans that can decide whether a War might be 'Just' or not. In terms of civilian justice the higher authority is the Judge and Jury, but can we say that those other equal boards of humans are a higher authority? Or would it be, as Sartre roundly puts it 'A law without a lawgiver', Renald & Oswy?

Reflection: good point wind, the way wars are considered even after the fact (much less before) is likely to be epiphenomenal

Oswy: All, isn't there a case to say that there are principles involved here. eg self defence. as in the case of the Nazis.

WindWalker: Renald... during the Crusades both sides believed they were fighting a JUST war.... one goes into a war believing they are unjust...

Reaser: have you read about Albert Goering?

Oswy: All, some of you seem to be saying that because the causes of war is complex then we can never have principles that apply to starting a war or engaging in it. Is this not the Pacifist position?

Alaya: there are negotiation table in witch only the big shot of the planet are sitting, and they are playing risk with the world, saying,, are we attacking this here, and I have to make a deal with the duc , there, unless he let me this country over there... so i will have to invade there ..etc

Renald: WindWalker, the Crusades are a whole diverse topic in themselves. And I suspect some of those involved in initiating or extending wars are quite aware of the injustice of it. I suspect there were such people involved in Crusades as well.

Guillermo: of course there were

Reflection: Oswy the pacifist position seems frankly fanciful on the face of it, after all it does not correspond to human experience in recorded times

WindWalker: Alaya... I agree with you on one thing... wars have more to do about money and power in most cases than other issues... the issues given to the people are the justifications for the hidden reasons

Renald: Ref... Is that the "it's never been done" argument? :-)

WindWalker: Renald and the same holds true for WWII...

Marya: It rather sounded like evolution in a sense

Shingles: war happens, it's terrible and horrifying, but it may be necessary where the consequences of NOT going to war might be worse. It's a tough assessment to make. I wouldn't want to have to make it

Oswy: All what I am getting at is that we have evolved principle in these matters eg the idea of last resort, the idea of probability of success and proportionality we try to regulate our entry into war by these means?

Shak: Seems to me societies need force in order to protect cooperative activity, especially contract and property. Internationally, that would equate to armed defence of the state. And if you have an army, there will be times when you'll have to use it.

Reaser: so why do soldiers look so haunted by the consequences of war?

Reflection: seems a lot like plate tectonics to me Renald, those plates seem to work in just certain ways and not others (until the real forces involved are identified and somehow changed, which isn't done through debates over justice, I don't think):)

Shingles: I think the example of Hiroshima shows Proportionality for what it is, Oswy

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Marya: people go to war for many reasons it would seem - power being the most prevalent - power/control - and from that, survival and continuation - irrelevant of moral questions perhaps - more the enforcing of one way over another

WindWalker: Shingles, I agree that not going to war sometimes can be worse than not doing so... and that is where the dilemma arises

Renald: Ref... that obviates a lot of questions and debates, I'll bet.

Reaser: Hiroshima was a threat to the Russians

Guillermo: Oswy: at the same time our weapons have evolved more dangerous.

Reaser: did WW2 ever end?

Oswy: Shingles, I am not sure Hiroshima is on the point of regulating the causes of war but you could make a case it was proportional in terms of ending the war with Japan?

WindWalker: Reaser and the first war we fought against Iraq caused the Soviets to realize they didn't stand a chance, and thus the USSR collapsed as a result

Reflection: well, it might Ren, but we might then debate different issues, such as whether the globalization of economic production and purchasing is the sort of a force, that might actually alter the behaviour of these single celled creatures as they become part of an interdependent organism (or not)

Shingles: The thing I see get ignored a lot of the time, is that state leaders are placed with an awful lot of responsibility. So to question the nobility of those Leaders' causes would be rather churlish, having not experienced such massive responsibility for ourselves

Oswy: All Well you all sound like Cheney? Do you not think there is a role for morality at all in regulating which wars can be fought?

Reaser: yes but we still have Korea Cuba etc Iraq showed that without total destruction war is not winnable

Marya: whose moral view though Oswy?

Simulat: I agree with Reflection - justice isn't really a term that can be applied to war - Shingles has pointed out too that we don't have a standard for calling a war just or unjust, and as many people have said we citizens hardly ever know why a war is being promoted - I can't see how a concept of justice can be used in that sort of context

WindWalker: morality is a relative issue... how do you decide what it moral

Reaser: Iraq 2 was merely a threat to people who want to bomb the US

Renald: Ref, sure... but something guides what we might hope for in terms of behaviour being altered. We don't have to call those guides justice -- or morality, for that matter -- but we can call them that, if it makes sense to do so.

Reaser: you bomb us we can do this

Oswy: Marya, Augustine and Aquinas pretty much laid down the principles of just war. So it's their moral view that we might subscribe to?

Reaser: and we didn't even use 1 nuke

Shingles: I think the idea of a noble cause is desired by some citizens. That they may feel no guilt for it (which is ridiculous as they have little to no responsibility for the decision to go to war), Sim & all

Marya: I don't know what their views are on morality Oswy so I couldn't say - but I do expect that what was considered moral thousands of years ago would not be so today

WindWalker: Iraq 2 had nothing to do with the people of Iraq... we were told it was against Saddam... but the fact is the war was planned before Bush ever got into office

Guillermo: why should one take Aquinas seriously?

Simulat: yeah Reaser, The US really showed its power in Iraq - it all worked out just as the US wanted :^)

WindWalker: Hey... I like Aquinas

Oswy: Simulat, Wind, what about things like the Geneva Convention to regulate the rules of war. What about our prosecution of genocidal war criminals. These are not relative things they are to an extent absolutes to regulate war?

Reaser: oh yes but don't fly planes into our buildings or we will come and publicly destroy you

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Reflection: agreed Ren, I think that we can discuss philosophically whether or not we think war is desirable generally or not (although most of us probably agree about that), but how to go about actually minimizing the probability of it seems to require the discussion of different sorts of variables, it seems to me

Oswy: Guillermo Because he was rather clever and worth listening to.

WindWalker: The only ones who enforce the Geneva convention are people who side with us... while the motives are good... they are biased

Guillermo: does someone really plan his/her moral actions by guidelines laid by a catholic in 13th century? I'm just curious

Renald: Reaser... do you really think that's message that was communicated?

Simulat: I think the Geneva Convention is fine Oswy - and I have no problem with prosecuting war criminals - I hope that bush goes to jail for his crimes

Oswy: Can we save Iraq for later and keep to the idea of justice for the time being?

Shingles: Oswy, the populace must see 'Justice to be done', even if the state leaders are well aware that persecuting the 'war criminals', is quite a petty thing to do, Oswy

WindWalker: Guillermo... yes lots of people do... I don't agree with them... but many do

Renald: No, Reaser, I want something that I have to interpret or ignore :-/

Reflection: the other thought about that Ren, is that whenever the forces arise that make my amoeba want to go to war, I find myself generally being persuaded that the criteria for just war are being met, (not speaking personally actually) so our ability to make these judgements accurately at the critical time seems highly suspect

Guillermo: is there a Thomist here?

Oswy: Simulat my point was that these things are international conventions they are progress and they are not relative things.

Simulat: Reaser - considering that the people who planned the attack on 9/11 were in Afghanistan - the US military has a very bad aim

Alaya: Renald are you a dualist god?

WindWalker: in my life time I have yet to see a war where both sides abided by the Geneva Convention

Oswy: Guillermo, what is wrong with the principle that war should be a last resort. Or don't enter a war if the losses are going to be out of proportion to any conceivable gains. These things affect policy makers now.

Reaser: it did not matter who planned it , it was a clear punitive action Saddam was just the example to be set

Renald: Alaya, I don't know... which says something about my omniscience, at least.

Marya: Guillermo, what is a Thomist

Guillermo: I see no hands raising up. so I'll rephrase the question. Does someone here plan his/her moral actions by the guidelines laid by Thomas Aquinas?

Guillermo: "Thomism is the philosophical school that arose as a legacy of the work and thought of Thomas Aquinas."

Reaser: no not me

Shingles: Ay, yes, War perhaps SHOULD be entered into if winning it will profit that nation, Oswy & all

Marya: yes ... and what was the gist if you can put it briefly, Guillermo

Alaya: there are so many nuance possible, so many factors that can interfere the decisions of a country, and sometimes its look like an obligation, like a dependence, on others, economic dependences, man mad

Magenta: soldiers always seem to be perceived as tools of war, but they are people with families and dogs and lives. And so are those people who happen to live in war zones. I find it bizarre that people can be seen as expendable - for the greater good.

Alaya: man made

WindWalker: war on the basis of economics....

Guillermo: then why is he relevant? I know his principals are affecting lots of people, yes, even decision makers in high places, but are you among them?

Reaser: and they suffer for years

Renald nods at Magenta

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Oswy: Guillermo the principle of just war do affect policy makers we don't expect our governments to go to war unless its a last resort.

Shingles: It seems to me to be symptomatic of leading people on such grand a scale as nationally, Magenta

Simulat: Oswy - So is your thinking that we can draw up a document that defines whether a war is just or not? Given the secrecy and obfuscation I doubt it. The US tried very hard to get the UN to ratify its war in Iraq - but even without the ratification they invaded

Magenta: and obviously someone decides that the loss of life is worth it

WindWalker: Magenta... that is the problem with war... war is fought by people who see units of soldiers... not individuals

Magenta: why do they? Because it's convenient?

Reaser: no people will fight Chamberlain had a piece of paper

WindWalker: training

Alaya: people are rarely involve in those war decision, they are not civil wars... obligation stand for this part to. From my point of view

Shingles: because they are required to, Mage

Shak: Some folk live in green fertile places. They get up early and work till late to build a decent culture on it. Others look from less favourable circumstances and ask themselves why they shouldn't have the same chance. Especially since they fancy themselves stronger in a fight. War may be part of human biology, and in that sense inevitable.

Oswy: Shingles it depends how you define profit. Not living under the Nazis was profit of an intellectual kind that benefits the whole world?

Shingles: or rather, obliged to, Magenta

Marya: I think if any of us take a personal view on any war - that would be the only means by which we could 'feel justified' or not - if we were under attack personally, or what we consider to be 'right and just' or what we see as 'our way of doing things' - that is part of our survival mechanism - we will fight to survive - that is the way we are programmed as a species and that is why we have survived. So no, it's not pretty or comfortable but that is the nature of humanity.

Reaser: the world is a nasty place; my view is that I don't need to make it worse. I don't seek to influence others though

Guillermo: it's a long road from survival mechanism and aggression to highly planned techno-wars

Shingles: Well, not for the Nazi's but yes for their enemies. + you have just pointed out that 'profit' is a necessarily loose term for politics, Oswy

WindWalker: A lot of it comes down to identity... we know and recognize our kin, neighbors, friends.. we see them like us... but those guys over there... well they're somehow inferior... so it ok to kill them

Marya: and what is the motivation, Guillermo - is it not the same mechanism?

Guillermo: you might just as well say that using SL is a part of human biology because we have a need to communicate

Oswy: OK I will now let you loose on the last two questions the second was to consider strengthening world organisations to allow democracies to intervene in non democratic states. Zimbabwe and Burma would be top of my list.

Oswy: The third was, was the war in Iraq a just war?

Alaya: well Shak, since all land are process today, more than it was before there are some game around this .. as also access to certain good territories , witch access is denied unto others sometimes, for good sometimes, like it was in Palestine, Israelite were just at the border, and both cant cross to get to the village to get goods

Renald: What a surprisingly depressing bunch y'all turned out to be today...

Guillermo: Marya: of course it makes the wars possible. All I said, it's a long road from you to the battle fields

Guillermo: soldiers are just being used, nothing more

Oswy: Renald why are we depressing I'm now depressed?

Simulat: Oswy - I think that the results of intervention like that have been uniformly disastrous

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WindWalker: No the war in Iraq was not just a war... it was a political move to secure the oil fields there and to set up a permanent base in the Middle East

Alaya: land properties, is stronger than ever. I guess

Reaser: men are but straw dogs

Marya: Of course it is Guillermo - It's not pleasant, not even remotely, but there is no point in us tip-toeing around the truth

Alaya: as well as land propriety

Reflection: Renald, this topic is decidedly not upbeat

Guillermo: Marya: and the truth here is...?

Shingles: As an Englishman, not a Zimbabwean, the current crisis doesn't really concern me. But if forces going in and sorting everything out will make everyone else feel happier, then go for it. Hang on, wait, there's no Oil or Gold in Zimbabwe that we could acquire. Oh well, best let them sort it out for themselves, Oswy & all

Marya: that it is a survival mechanism, Guillermo

Oswy: Windwalker - So removing Saddam for defiance of UN resolutions had nothing to do with it? This is realpolitik with a vengeance

Reaser: the world is a place where people will kill one another

Guillermo: Marya: war?

Marya: yes Guillermo

Reflection: wind, the Iraq war was the mass reaction of the American people to 9/11, and without which it would not have happened, and in that since is not explained by oil (although the first gulf war can be explained almost entirely on the basis of that economic factor)

Guillermo: Marya: if we'd fight face to face with sticks and stones, I might agree

Reaser: can we discuss crochet next week?

Oswy: Shingles you raise an important point should I be concerned with what goes on in other states or do I leave alone?

Simulat: WindWalker - I think that the war in Iraq served the purposes you say - but that it also served the neo-con agenda of putting the US on a permanent war footing

Marya: Well the world has become more complicated Guillermo - and so do the means that are used to ensure that survival

Renald: Oswy, I get through life largely on hope. I don't mean to say I expect nothing but improvement or progress, or even that I know in detail what those are. But the notion that the worst in us is not only inherent, but always wins, and always will, so why bother -- I find that very depressing. Fortunately, just hearing people say it, no matter how often or with what evidence, is never perfectly convincing.

Shingles: It depends what 'principles', to use your term, you will commit yourself to, I think, Oswy

Simulat: the neocons read Orwell closely

Guillermo: Marya: wars do not start from soldiers' aggression and need to survival

Marya: I know that Guillermo; that's not what I was saying :)

WindWalker: Oswy... I met with well connected with W Bush in 1999 before he was elected and he told me at that time that plans were on the table if bush got elected a reason would be found to go into Iraq..... and he said why... and it all happened like he said

Shingles: V good Simulat :)

Shak: We might remember we're all here with the powers we have as humans, such as they are, because we're the result of a biological process which relies essentially on heavy early death. It may not be such a bad thing?

Oswy: Renald I agree with you I think we are better than that and we can make progress.

Marya: And Renald - I think there is hope - we don't have to accept it and 'we' as a species are changing in many ways - I don't think it is ultimately inevitable :)

Alaya: what is the major reason for the crisis , lately, land propriety, and the capacity of people to have a land, and a house on it, never saw so many refugees from there land , these days, in Asia in Africa, in South America, cause there are rip out of the land.. and the wars , is civil there and is backed by corp interest... and arms are given there,, and land get valuable more and more, war for land it is

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Reflection: Renald, I am very hopeful about this issue, because I believe, on average, economic globalization will reduce the tendencies of these organisms to resort to war

Renald: Ref, I must say... every time you refer to "these organisms" I shudder. But don't let that stop you.

Reflection: sure wind, about the bush contingency plans, but it could not have been sold to the American people without the provoking catalyst of 9/11

Shingles: its ok, surely he sees he himself is one of 'these organisms', Renald

WindWalker: Alaya.. There are a lot of mineral resources in the African countries that other countries would like to be able to get and they don't want to compete on the world market to get them so they support sides

Marya: Renald, as the world becomes smaller - I do think people will tend to become more 'connected' to each other - as we have already done in the last few decades - and I think the more that takes place, the more people will see each other as just people ... there is a long way to go but it can be done .. just my thought on it

Renald: Shingles, I don't doubt that. But the implications of the grammar are opposite.

Shingles: why yes

Reflection: thanks Ren:))

Reaser: yes but it was new to the UIS to be attacked at home as they said 911 changed everything

Oswy: All, some of you still seem to be saying that unless a war is absolutely pure in its intentions that it should never be fought? But can't the moral reasons for a war ie to protect the civil rights of foreign citizens outweigh the other reasons? Isn't that the case in Iraq?

Reaser: US

Shingles: I certainly never said that

Renald: Thank you, Marya, that's good to hear.

Reflection: Shingles, I am a small cell in one of them only :))

WindWalker: Exactly Ref... and boy was Bush happy when 9/11 came along because all he had to do was switch our attention from the terrorists in Afghanistan to Saddam

Reaser: we lost Mountbatten, and the IRA bombed England yet until recently Americans funded the IRA

Oswy: Marya, does not your hope imply more international cooperation to deregulate war?

Marya: yes Oswy

Simulat: Oswy - are you serious? How did the war in Iraq defend anybody's civil rights?

Shingles: If we're thinking at all that War can have 'Pure Intentions' then it's laughable

WindWalker: agrees shingles

WindWalker: only part of America supported the IRA

Renald: Oswy, I wouldn't require perfection or purity of anything, because I don't think it's possible. At the same time, I find wars of interference difficult to justify -- and I certainly don't think Iraq could meet such a standard if one were well-established.

Oswy: Simulat Try the Kurds the Marsh Arabs for a start.

Marya: I 'think' the problem of war stems from a 'them and us' mentality - and that is hard to overcome, but not impossible

Reaser: yes but when it was applied to you, you locked these people up and even allegedly said torture was ok

Guillermo: Marya: I still don't get it how you can draw the line from survival instinct to (modern) war, without twisting the reality in highly Dawkinsian way.

Guillermo: Marya: only you can overcome it

Oswy: Saddam's regime killed at least 600,000 people some using poison gas what about their rights.

Shingles: Even if one rids himself of the 'them and us' mentality, it's really, really difficult to eradicate it in ones fellows, Marya

Marya: Guillermo - why have humans ever fought wars - to dominate or control or protect one's own way - it's not a long shot to see that in present times is it?

Renald: Oswy, here's where my realist side kicks in pretty strong... what about their rights?

WindWalker: we used the Kurds and MARSH Arabs as a justification... before that time we never cared at all

Simulat: The war has probably killed that many Iraqis too Oswy

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Oswy: Renald if you believe in rights why not extent them and if you have a chance by war. Zimbabwe would be better off with a new regime installed by South Africa and other democratic states

Guillermo: Marya: yes, but it's a bit different if two tribes fight from the territory than when American kids fight for oil on the other side of the globe; for oil companies that is, not for oil

Renald: Oswy, I take a practical view, I'm afraid. If I thought a military or police force at my disposal were truly capable of liberating another nation, I might be more inclined to give it a shot. But I don't know of any such force, certainly not at the disposal of my nation.

Marya: yes it is different, and I know what you're saying about people being used as pawns in a larger 'game' so to speak, but the crux is still power/control

Reflection: but Oswy, of course, none of the democratic countries are going to intervene in third world conflicts, unless the bulk of their populations will support that sort of intervention (which because of the expense), on average they will not, I think

Alaya: Oswy, I'm not in that, position, arm are given unto people to fight for the civil right but in the same time they are armed, and criminalised, so it a dead end, war lords are made that way, where made as this in all the country where strangers interest came by, to call for a development of the country, exploitation, it is.. over human right in most of the case, I wonder if one day we would see the leader of a corp or a country take a field in which he will and his opponent make is battle in it leaving all civilians out of this, but taking only the voluntary soldier with them, noting more, how many war and how many man would there be ...?

Reaser: it is more the fear that Israel will be nuked I think , is that ever a difficult situation

Guillermo: Marya: yes, but in my first example the power is shared more than in the latter example. So in the latter the fighting is done for other people's interests - like you said, pawns in a game

Oswy: My second question implies that we should be more willing to create a force that can intervene. Two divisions in Darfur would save a lot of people.

Shak: Iraq: The logic was that Saddam had already demonstrated his willingness to take up arms against the West, and Al Qaeda had demonstrated their readiness to mount suicide attacks in the heartland of Western countries. Only a matter of time then before Al Q was given access to the resources of a state. Bad news. Needed action.

Shingles: I have big issues with other nations EXTERNALLY installing a Democracy into a country. It's hypocritical

WindWalker: Oswy... and where will we get mindless robots without bias to enforce no wars

Renald: Oswy, I don't think they would save that many people in the long term... it would take more than military, and more than two divisions -- whatever that means.

Oswy: Apologies if I am not answering everyone but there are a lot of lines of argument here.

Renald: Shak, Saddam never took up arms against "the West"

Reaser: yes that is certainly a stumbling block, yet I have issues with the subjugation of women

Renald: By that argument, we should have invaded Pakistan.

Shak: Renald: Kuwait?

Renald: Kuwait is hardly "the West"!

Reflection: I think Shak's good restatement of the mindset of that time, demonstrates why people are quite likely to see the criterion of the just war theory satisfied in anticipation of war, even when in retrospect this becomes clearly not the case

WindWalker: where is the galactic federation to enforce peace on earth when we need them

Oswy: Alaya I am not sure if you are agreeing with me. You don't favour a free for all in international affairs do you? You must think there are some principles to follow?

Renald: Oswy, my impression is that Alaya sees the free-for-all as persisting no matter what.

Shingles: there are always some principles to be artificed. Always

Shak: Renald, what was at stake in the first gulf war was the West's access to oil - its life's blood. That's what the US responded to.

Oswy: Shingles care to list a few?

Shingles: 'Equality for all', that's a principle

Second Philosophy

WindWalker: being a realist I would like to see peace and mankind living together without wars... but I know that is not going to happen... unfortunately I really don't have much long term hopes for the human race

Shingles: as such, artifice

Oswy: Renald we also responded to naked aggression. Like in the Falklands where another set of tin pot dictators tried it on.

Renald: Shak, Oswy, I understand that. But it's a sham argument still.

Renald: Also, Oswy, it wasn't quite naked aggression, in the US took care to clothe it first.

Oswy: Renald It didn't seem like a sham for the Kuwaitis

Shingles: The 'Golden Rule', that's a principle, a blatantly artifice one

WindWalker: Oswy... for the people of Argentina the Falkland's were considered to be something they were trying to reclaim from aggressors

Reflection: Wind, while I would agree with the first part, the second part seems unnecessarily bleak, after all no world wars for 60 years, no nuclear exchanges despite 100,000's of nuclear weapons, and increasing economic interdependence in the world, along with enormous increase in person to person contact between cultures, in circumstances like SL:)))

Oswy: Shingles how does equality for all apply to just wars?

Renald: I certainly don't mean to justify Saddam's actions in order to render the US response unjust. I just don't see the justice of the one depending so neatly on the justice of the other.

Shingles: sorry, I thought you were only asking for examples of principles, Oswy

WindWalker: Reflection... what do you mean no world wars for 60 years... there has not been any point in the last 60 years where war was not being fought on this earth!

Simulat: A great injustice is now going on in Sudan - but is the best way of dealing with it to invade Sudan? I don't think so

Oswy: Windwalker I think that is true and we are seeing an increasing tendency to regulate what happens at least in some areas by principles. eg the War in Kosovo

Reflection: wind, the difference between a world war, and the sorts of wars of the past 60 years, is the difference between a hurricane and an afternoon thunderstorm

Reaser: do you think this is to do with the gradual disappearance of resources?

Shingles: The WW were a bit of a freak occurrence really. I'd be surprised if global conflict returned in the next few centuries. Not personally, of course. Windwalker

WindWalker: the situation in Sudan is most interesting to me... it actually began over 40 years ago and has been declining ever since... I had good friends there.. I wonder what has happened to them

Oswy: In other areas we see a woeful failure to act eg Rwanda, Darfur, Burma, Zimbabwe.

Marya: As a matter of curiosity, if the people of Sudan were 'like' westerners and followed a democratic way of life - do you think the west would be more inclined to step in?

Reaser: Sudan is becoming a desert

Shingles: Do you mind if I ask you a question, and I mean it seriously: Just what about that failure to act is woeful? Oswy

Guillermo: Reflection: the hurricane lasted for some years, but the afternoon thunderstorm has been on ever since.

Reaser: and China, it is said Beijing will be covered by desert in about 30 years

WindWalker: shingles ... I'm not sure.. there is a possibility we could see global war in another 30 years... but if the economics go right I don't think we will

Reflection: well Marya, the US really didn't step in to defend England until it was attacked at Pearl Harbor

Renald: Marya, I think that would make a great deal of difference. But I'm not sure it would make enough difference, given how much else is going on. Of course, since the situation there isn't new, if the difference had been present all along, the "West" might be busier there now and less so in SW Asia.

Shingles: an excellent statement, I agree with that last bit, Windwalker

Second Philosophy

Oswy: Shingles. Because it leaves millions at the mercy of tyrannical governments who use genocide and other abuses to oppress citizens. Under the UN charter this can sanction international efforts against such regimes eg Kosovo.

Marya: Aye Ref, but that was quite some time ago - if England was attacked now, I expect the US would be the first to put themselves in the line of fire for us

Reflection: Guillermo, in the hurricane 100,000,000 people died, in the thunderstorms since only a few percent of that

WindWalker: Marya.. that is true... because at the moment England is the only ally we have... so to speak

Renald: Marya, Ref... it goes in waves. We have our introverse periods and our extroverse periods.

Simulat: Oswy - rather than war to defend oppressed people it might be better to just make it very easy for oppressed people to go elsewhere

Renald: Although even that occurs at different levels of US society... the bulk of us never look outside.

Oswy: Ref, they were helping The Brits in a covert way long before Pearl Harbour.

Reaser: but it is not cyclical, that is an illusion

Shingles: Ok, ok, I understand the wider implications, the global effect. but you personally, find it woeful, when it doesn't directly effect you, So I just wondered what's going on there. What principle do you hold that this 'lack of action' offends so, Oswy?

Simulat: Of course - that would involve lots of changes to both our ideas of nations, and to our ideas about economics

Reaser: there is an exponential increase in technology

Renald: Shingles... none is free while any are chained, perhaps?

Marya: I think the bonds are greater now than ever before, and the more 'threat' that is perceived from countries or cultures that are not like our own, the closer western societies will become - there is a great bonding between people in the face of a common 'enemy'

Shingles: I'm afraid that one went over my head, Renald

Reflection: right about covert Oswy, but that's the point it was covert (and probably constitutionally illegal:))

Renald: I was responding to your question of Oswy, Shing, about why he cares.

WindWalker: for America there is a strong link to England because America see's England like us... they are the most like us in many ways...

Shingles: I guessed that much, but I don't understand the statement. Could you elaborate it for me, Renald?

Oswy: Simulat It is not always possible for people to go elsewhere. We should collectively be tackling dictatorships that abuse civil rights. This s the Cosmopolitan argument. It applied to Iraq as much as the neocon agenda.

WindWalker: so what you are saying Oswy, it that we need an undercover hit squad to take out those we consider dictators?

Renald: Shingles, it's basically a variant on the argument from our common humanity. If it's not a quote it's a paraphrase, though I can't remember who said it.

Simulat: I don't mind tackling dictatorships Oswy - but going to war with them rarely works out well

Shingles: oh ok, I still don't understand

Oswy: Windwalker. I am saying that if the UN charter could be made less spineless ie it sanctioned more intervention in sovereign states and this was directed against dictators then we might get somewhere morally in international relations. Once caught the dictators could face their own people like Saddam

Shingles: Did you see my question to you, Oswy?

Renald: Lawyers and white hats will defend it SL, I suspect. We're called residents, after all, not citizens.

Simulat: But Oswy - one thing I'd like to point out is that going to war is very much tied up, these days, with both our concept of sovereign states with definite borders, and with our ideas of economics and how people should earn their living

Reflection: or Oswy, the peoples' of the countries might become so disturbed by the UN increasing their taxes for wars that they did not feel involved in that they could pull their support from the UN (as would likely happen in America, even now)

Second Philosophy

WindWalker: Oswy... but the UN cannot be made less spineless because the Tyrants also have standings in the UN and don't vote against their own interests... nor do those who buy or sell to them

Oswy: Simulat You have to pick your targets. It worked in Kosovo Sierra Leone Iraq the Falklands. It would not be proportionate to attack China in order to free Tibet?

Renald: Why stop there? Let's free China.

Reaser: do you think the UN will go the way of the League of Nations?

Renald: No.

Oswy: Shingles Sorry can you say again got lost in the line of fire.

Shingles: ah I see, we'll only step in if its worth our while. If we are more powerful than our enemies

Oswy: Renald I think we should keep pressure on China. I wasn't happy about the Olympics et al

Guillermo: what do you mean by "we"?

WindWalker: shingles... that sadly is the way it works

Shingles: It followed on from you answering my previous question: "Ok, ok, I understand the wider implications, the global effect. But you personally, find it woeful, when it doesn't directly affect you, so I just wondered what's going on there. What principle do you hold that this 'lack of action' offends so, Oswy?"

Renald: Shingles, it's more complicated than that. I want it to be worth the while of the people we're "stepping in" for, too. And the record there suggests that's not automatic.

Shingles: huzzah, we see it for it is, Windwalker!

Reaser: we won't solve war here you know

Renald: Oswy... it might help if we had some leverage with China.

Oswy: Shingles the phrase worth our while implies there is something disreputable about making that choice. Just war theory says there must be a probability of success and it must be proportional. An attack on China however we feel about Tibet is neither of those things.

Shingles: ?

Reaser: China has killed people to such an extent it makes Hitler look like a boy scout leader

Oswy: Shingles Sorry I thought I had made that clear. I am upholding a principle of universal human rights as in the UN Charter.

Reaser: the figures are terrifying

Shingles: Alright that is understandable at least. Oswy. Thank you

Reaser: their own people I mean

WindWalker: my question is... if there truly is a just war... would men destroy themselves to destroy the enemy ... even if everyone on both sides were killed... and if so... what does it say about those fighting

Renald: What?

WindWalker: would we for example create a doomsday scenario if we thought we were going to be defeated?

Reaser: yawn I quote Bob Dylan, "If god is on our side he'll stop the next war"

Reflection: "better dead than red" was the old saying in the cold war wind

Shingles: he also said 'everybody must get stoned'

Oswy: Windwalker Just war theory rules that out. Unless you were fighting a war of self defence and were left with no alternative. of course some would say if we were attacked by an overwhelming force eg The Chinese invaded up the Channel they we should surrender to avoid further bloodshed. I don't subscribe to that.

Marya: Wind, mutual assured destruction is not useful for survival (obviously) and I rather hope that it never will happen ...

Reflection: Oswy, you don't subscribe to surrender in extremis?

Oswy: OK I am going to draw things to a close with a sort of summary.

Renald: WindWalker, I don't think that question can be answered. Obviously people get all kinds of determined things in their heads, and can stick with them past all sense. If you're asking what such behaviour would say about such people, that's one thing, though I have no answer. If you're asking about what that possibility says about PEOPLE in general, all it says to me is that we can be dangerous and foolish. But I think we all know that.

Oswy: I think we have divided between the Realists who are sceptical about the role of morality in these issues and Just War theorists of one shade or another who see some chance that morals have a role.

Second Philosophy

Guillermo: I don't think willingness to die on a battlefield for some abstraction like country or honor is good for the survival either - except for the smart ones who avoid it

Oswy: The Pacifists seem to be nowhere?

Shingles: good, useless in a fight, Oswy

Alaya: why do you see moral as a chance, I only see human right there, no moral or chance of it

Oswy: Some of us are optimistic that further progress can be made to internationalise or globalise the conduct of war. Others see that as futile. The realists are convinced that issues of power and economics will always trump and negate what the idealists are attempting to do. The idealist sees this as depressing.

Renald: No.

Shingles subscribes to the realists

Guillermo: and most people are something in-between those two

Alaya: will always, isn't what I say, it was an exposition of some actual facts that are now...

