

America war efforts and just war theory

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Just War Theory: Alan Dowds article d Civilizations Reluctant Warrior:

America and the War on Terror is an essay supporting Americas war efforts in Afghanistan and Iraq. Given the readiness and enthusiasm with which the United States initiated war against Iraq in 2003, it is difficult to make sense of phrase reluctant warrior. Nevertheless, the central thesis of the article is that military actions taken by the United States over the course of the last eighty years is largely justified. This includes the ongoing War on Terror that was instigated by the September 11, 2001 terror attacks directed against the country. Alan Dowd puts forth several arguments in support of his thesis, some of which are discussed below.

Admittedly, the 9/11 terror strikes were heinous acts that cannot be justified under humanitarian principles. Alan Dowd asserts that the 9/11 attacks were not an attack on the United States alone, but on all of human civilization. The author explains in detail the meaning of civilization and cites examples from recent history when it was saved by American military intervention, the chief examples of which are the two World Wars waged in the last century.

Continuing in this vein, Dowd equates the threat posed by networks such as Al Qaeda to that of totalitarian rulers of the past, including Hitler and Stalin. He tries to draw an analogy between the ongoing military engagements of the United States to its major confrontations against Nazism and Stalinism. Dowd ends the article on a hopeful note, that America and its coalition partners will prevail in the War on Terror, just as they had done on crucial junctures of recent history.

It is important to note that Alan Dowd does not make a serious effort to justify the War on Terror with the conditions laid down by the Just War

theory. The author had not undertaken this task probably because he had a weak case to argue. The invasion and occupation of Iraq is a breach of several of the Just War conditions, the most blatant of which is the numerous civilian fatalities that the war has caused.

The article written by Charles Kegley Jr and Gregory Raymond takes a critical look at the doctrine of Pre-emptive war, which was the cornerstone of the eight year term of George W. Bush. The authors explain the weak premises upon which this doctrine is based and how it fails the standards set by the Just War theory. The action of the United States against Iraq fails the crucial test for a Just War, namely that “ it undercuts a key preemptory norm in international law that underpins all others—the use of force cannot be justified merely on account of an adversarys capabilities, but solely in defense against its aggressive actions” (Kegley & Raymond, 2005) The subsequent revelation that Iraq under Saddam Hussein did not even possess weapons of mass destruction underlines the flaws inherent in the preemptive war doctrine.

Moreover, the preemptive war doctrine has the potential to start a cascade effect, whereby there is worldwide increase in acts of aggression, all in the name of preemption. The authors then cite examples from history, presenting facts from as far back as ancient Rome, to show that preemptive wars had unnecessarily caused large scale destruction of human beings and wealth. In sum, the article by Kegley and Raymond is better argued and illustrated, for it does not shy away from applying international standards for justification of war (which is synonymous with the conditions laid out by the Just War theory). By failing to robustly test the stated hypothesis against the

Just War theory, Alan Dowds article comes across as biased and evasive.

Works Cited:

Dowd, Alan W. " The United States Must Commit to an Ongoing War Against Terrorism." At Issue: Is Military Action Justified Against Nations Thought to Support Terrorism?. Ed. James D. Torr. San Diego: Greenhaven Press, 2003.

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Kegley, Charles W., Jr, and Gregory A. Raymond. " Preemptive War Cannot Be Justified." Opposing Viewpoints: War. Ed. Louise I. Gerdes. San Diego: Greenhaven Press, 2005. Opposing Viewpoints Resource Center. Gale.

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