



JOAN *and* RALPH LANE
CENTER *for*
CATHOLIC
STUDIES
and SOCIAL
THOUGHT
at the UNIVERSITY OF SAN FRANCISCO

FOUNDATIONS FOR A NATIONAL ETHICAL DISCUSSION ABOUT IRAQ

Robert W. McElroy

**Lane Center for Catholic Studies and Social Thought
University of San Francisco
Spring Lecture Series 2008
February 1, 2008**

Next month we will begin the sixth year of our war in Iraq, establishing Iraq alongside Vietnam as the longest wars in American history. If this is a sobering milestone for Americans, it is a much more monumental and tragic one for the people of Iraq, who have seen their society roiled by constantly shifting waves of progress and disappointment over these past five years which leave them no more confident of achieving a secure, stable and free Iraq today than they were two or three or four or five years ago. And in those five years more than one hundred thousand Iraqi civilians and four thousand coalition soldiers have died.

The war lurches on, and yet the American national debate on Iraq abates. The United States has come to the conclusion that another year of fighting in Iraq is inevitable. Acquiescence is the order of the day, dictated either by a conviction that the surge is a sign of the broader success that is looming up ahead or the contrasting belief that a new administration will create a pathway to extricate the United States from an unending commitment which its military force structure, and ultimately its political will, cannot sustain.

It hardly seems the moment to begin a fundamental reexamination of the ethics of America's continued commitment to fight in Iraq.

But this is precisely the moment when those religious, educational and cultural communities committed to wrestling with issues of war and peace in American society should undertake a new level of reflection and debate about the continuation of the American military effort in Iraq. For if the surge turns out to be, like to many of its predecessor harbingers of success in Iraq, merely a respite in the cycle of hope and

disappointment which has characterized the Iraqi conflict, then there will be a renewed and volatile debate within the United States about America's moral obligations in Iraq. It is vital that this debate be framed not by the sound-bites and partisan warfare that masquerade as political discussion in America, but rather by an ethics which values equally every human life, which views war as a last resort, which recognizes the power of evil in the world and which respects both America's democratic impulse and the vastness and limits of American power.

This will require providing a framework and vocabulary for identifying the issues at stake in Iraq and the moral reasoning necessary to work through the complex and countervailing ethical imperatives that will have to be weighed one against another in determining a future course of action for the United States.

For the Catholic community, contributing to this public ethical debate on Iraq will require drawing upon the two counterpoised traditions of Catholic teaching on war and peace. The first of these traditions is the deep suspicion of any recourse to war which has flowed from the pacifism of the early Church to the writings of the modern popes. The second is assertion of the just war tradition that war can at times be legitimate and even obligatory.

In early Christianity, pacifism dominated the theological and pastoral life of the Church. Writers could not comprehend how the Jesus who counseled true love of enemies could ever sanction the systematic taking of human life endemic to war. After all, how could the parable of the Good Samaritan, which required strenuous love of the stranger, ever be reconciled with the wholesale slaughter intrinsic to war?

How indeed? This was the question that Saint Augustine confronted in the fifth century when, as bishop of Hippo in North Africa he was the leader of a Christian culture facing the onslaught of the barbarians. Augustine read the same Gospels as the early Fathers of the Church who formed the pacifist tradition, but came to a radically different conclusion about the Gospels' reconcilability with war. As Paul Ramsey, the great Protestant theologian, has noted, Augustine turned the parable of the Good Samaritan on its head. What if the Good Samaritan had been coming down the road twenty minutes earlier, while the man by the side of the road was being beaten? What then would have been the obligation of the Samaritan filled with love for his neighbor? That obligation, Augustine concluded, would have been to intervene with force if necessary to drive off the robbers. So too, the use of force in war was necessary at times to defend the lives and fundamental human rights of peoples who were being victimized.

From this assertion that the call to love not only tolerates a recourse to war, but at times demands it, Augustine fashioned what came to be the just war tradition, a teaching on the ethics of warfare that has been refined over fifteen centuries and now stands as the central ethical framework for evaluating the ethics of war in Western culture. Essentially, the just war tradition consists of the *ius ad bellum* (the conditions that need to be present before a nation can morally resort to war) and the *ius in bello* (the limits placed upon actions even in a morally legitimate war).

Under the *ius ad bellum*, there are seven conditions which must be clearly and simultaneously fulfilled before a decision is made to go to war. First there must be a just cause rooted in the defense of a nation or community against lasting, grave and certain attack. Secondly, a nation must have a right intention in going to war, namely the intention to redress the grave wrong which has been wrought or is threatened. Third, war must be a last resort, i.e. all other realistic avenues for redress must have been exhausted before there is a decision to go to war. Fourth, there must be serious prospects of success in a contemplated war. Fifth, the war must be proportional; thus the war must not produce evils graver than the evil which will be eliminated. Finally, a war must be declared by the competent national authority.

The *ius in bello*, which governs conduct during war, traditionally treats solely questions of means. It consists of two requirements: the prohibition of the direct targeting of non-combatants and the requirement that every act of war should be weighed to insure that the evils unleashed by that act do not outweigh good achieved by the act.

Taken together, the elements of the *ius ad bellum* and the *ius in bello* are meant to embody three countervailing convictions about the moral realities of warfare. 1) war is an enormously evil element of human existence which is all too alluring for human societies; 2) in very limited circumstances war constitutes a morally legitimate and even obligatory avenue for the defense of the most fundamental rights of nations and peoples; and 3) even when war is morally legitimate, it must be fought under strict constraints.

The just war tradition has reflected the fundamental Catholic position on warfare for almost fifteen centuries. But during the past fifty years, enormous changes in the nature of warfare have led the Church to dramatically refine its teaching on the moral legitimacy of war. The invention of strategic bombing has transformed the battlefield, leading to the chilling reality that whole nations are targets of modern weaponry, tactics and strategy. Weapons of mass destruction portend suffering unimaginable in scale and scope, and also the very real threat that for the first time in its history humanity possesses weapons capable of ending its own existence. Finally, the proliferation of such weapons necessitates the sobering calculation that the next recourse to war may easily involve nuclear powers in conflict with one another.

Against this backdrop, Catholic moral teaching has dramatically strengthened its presumption against war. From *Pacem in Terris*'s assertion in 1962 that "it is hardly possible to imagine that in an atomic era, war could be used as an instrument of justice" to Paul VI's clarion call "No more war, war never again" to Benedict XVI's questioning whether "amidst the current destructiveness of war it is even licit to admit of the possibility of a just war", the popes of the modern era have narrowed the pathway for legitimate recourse to war. Specifically, Catholic teaching has strengthened the obligation on nations to exhaust every alternative to war; has called for increased scrutiny of the intentions of any nation which goes to war without the sanction of international authority; and has emphasized the moral obligation of all nations, especially those with the greatest armaments, to reduce stockpiles of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons with the hopes of ultimately eliminating them entirely.

Given this development of doctrine in the Catholic teaching on war and peace, what perspective can Catholic theology bring to the discussion of American policy in Iraq? Specifically, what clarity and insight can Catholic teaching bring to the debate which lies before us about whether America should continue its commitment to the war in Iraq or withdraw militarily?

The *Ius Post Bellum*

For many Catholic thinkers ranging from Kenneth Himes to Louis Iasello to George Weigel, the answer to that question can be found in the *ius post bellum* a significant development in the just war tradition as it touches upon the obligations of nations that are victorious in war. This new doctrinal trajectory, which has occurred both within Catholic moral theology and international law, asserts that the questions of moral obligation after a war has ended have come to occupy such importance that any just war ethic must include as a prominent feature a specification of the moral obligations of victors toward vanquished nations. As a consequence, recent ecclesial, philosophical and international legal authorities have proposed that there exists a third element of the just war ethic which complements the *ius ad bellum* and the *ius in bello*: namely the *ius post bellum*.

The Church has envisioned the goal of this *ius post bellum* as broad and penetrating, namely the obligation “to achieve quickly and effectively the establishment of a just and lasting peace, which is the only admissible goal for the use of force.” Concretely, architects of the *ius post bellum* propose four major elements for action by the victors in war. The first is action designed to guarantee the safety and security of the people of the defeated nation. This entails restoring order, reestablishing effective police functions if they have been disrupted, and maintaining an equitable system of justice which is not run to advance either local elites or the interests of the victor. The second obligation of victors is restoration, the initial reconstruction of civil society and the nation. This restorative obligation involves both material and social elements: the reconstruction of infrastructure necessary for the operation of the defeated nation’s economy and national life, as well as the nurturing of the social and political institutions which are vital to the future functioning of the vanquished state and people. The third obligation of the victorious nation under the *ius post bellum* is to design all of the elements of its occupation so that they contribute toward the earliest possible end of occupation consistent with the ongoing well-being of the defeated nation. And the final element of the *ius post bellum* is a continuing provenance for the defeated nation, which includes at a minimum a role in deterring other enemies from attacking the vanquished state even after occupation has ended.

This elaboration of the just war tradition to include a specific *ius post bellum* is a productive refinement of the tradition. But does the *ius post bellum* constitute the appropriate framework for evaluating America’s current military obligations in Iraq? Writers like Himes, Iasello and Weigel have concluded that it does, and these thinkers suggest that when the United States conquered Baghdad in 2003 it inherited all of the obligations of a victorious party. Accordingly, those obligations form the lens through which the current debate on Iraq should be conducted.

But underlying this argument that the *ius post bellum* should be the starting point for analyzing America’s current ethical obligations in Iraq is the tacit assertion that the war in Iraq ended in May of 2003. This ethical equivalent of flying a Mission Accomplished banner does such distortion to the realities of the past five years that it cannot serve as the foundation for an incisive national ethical discussion about our obligations in Iraq. The Iraq war did not end in 2003. It did not end in 2004. It did not end in 2006. And it has not ended even today.

What ended in 2003 was the warfare that the United States had desired to fight. The war we find ourselves engaged in is the war we did not want to fight but should have anticipated as quite possible when we first entered Iraq: a war of religious, social and political complexity in which ultimately victory cannot be produced even by the military might of the greatest power the world has ever known, because that victory must be political, social and religious in nature and ultimately can only emerge from the Iraqi people themselves.

The *ius post bellum* is a substantive and enormously helpful addition to the traditional delineation of the just war tradition because it specifies the obligations of a victor to build a rightly ordered peace after war has ended. But it cannot be the starting point for America's reflection upon its continuing military commitment to the war in Iraq on two counts – because this war is not over and because it is far from clear that America will be the victor.

A Comprehensive Ethical Foundation for Evaluating America's Ethical Obligations in Iraq: Renewing the *Ius in Bello*

If the *ius post bellum* cannot provide a sound starting point for charting our nation's future course in Iraq, then what framework can serve as the foundation for a productive national debate on this searing issue? Such a framework will have to fulfill several specific requirements. It will have to recognize the fact that the United States is currently involved in a complex, deeply rooted, and multi-front war. Secondly a valid ethical framework must reflect an abiding commitment to the defense of human rights, especially the defense of human life and freedom. Thirdly, this framework must testify to the suspicion toward war which is at the heart of the Catholic ethical tradition, especially in the modern age. Fourth, such a framework must recognize the additional moral obligation that the U.S. now owes to the Iraqi people as a result of past American actions.

Such a moral framework lies latent within the just war tradition. But it is necessary to deepen that tradition in order to bring it to bear on Iraq. The just war tradition demands in the *ius ad bellum* that a robust set of substantive conditions be fulfilled before legitimate recourse to war can be undertaken. These conditions touch upon questions of goals, intentionality, context, proportionality and societal and international approbation. Yet once a war is launched, the governing principles of the just war tradition collapse to the two traditional elements of the *ius in bello*: noncombatant immunity and proportionality of individual acts. Both of these criteria concern means, not ends. Certainly it cannot be the intention of any moral tradition which seeks to morally guide warfare that once war is launched the only germane moral questions are those of means. Such a position is to assert that once a war is launched it is placed on a moral auto-pilot which assumes the deeper questions of war have been answered for a particular conflict once and for all

But much of the horror and complexity of war lies in the fact that it is a dynamic reality, and the dynamism of the conditions on the ground in Iraq form the most vexing challenges posed to America's continuing military commitment there. For this reason, the current formulation of the *ius in bello* must be expanded to include both questions of goals and means, questions of proportionality and context. Specifically, the requirements of the *ius ad bellum* must be added to the *ius in bello* to signify that the moral

legitimation of the resort to force in war is not a one time event, but a legitimation which must be revisited periodically in any protracted conflict. Such an expanded *ius in bello* constitutes a comprehensive ethic of war termination to be utilized in assessing the moral obligations of nations who find themselves involved in war with no sign of conclusion. As such, it provides the most compelling foundation for the current American debate on the war in Iraq because it asks the question: does the American military intervention in Iraq today meet the substantive and the means tests posed by the just war tradition?

1. Just Cause The first of those tests is that of just cause. Already, America is divided by a debate over whether the cause which lay behind the decision to invade Iraq was truly just. This debate is intensified by the fact that the just cause cited for the invasion of Iraq was in fact a jumble of differing causes that ranged from defending the world against Iraq's imminent threat of weapons of mass destruction to the imperative to depose a despotic regime to the desire to transform the Middle East into a democratic haven to the necessity of drawing a line in the sand against international terrorism in Iraq.

The current debate on the justice of the cause for remaining in Iraq cannot countenance such a jumbled just cause.

Moreover, several of the justifications routinely offered for remaining in Iraq must be rejected out of hand as morally insufficient to constitute a just cause under just war reasoning.

It is not a just cause to say that America must remain in Iraq because withdrawal would weaken the United States in the eyes of the world at a dangerous moment in history. Reputational considerations cannot justify going to war or remaining at war in the just war tradition.

It is not a just cause to say that America must sustain a united Iraq as a counterweight to Iran and other hostile powers. For war cannot be justly waged to prop up chess pieces in the international system.

It is not a just cause to say that we must stay in Iraq because to leave is to dishonor the sacrifices of the courageous men and women who have died. The human costs of Iraq – those killed and wounded Americans, Iraqis and allies – constitute the most searing and tragic consequences of this war. But lives already lost or ruined cannot justify a cause which is not already just, and future lives cannot be put at risk in a war which is being waged for what always was or has come to be an insufficient cause.

It is not a just cause to cite a slogan like democracy or freedom in the midst of a protracted war. For in this war it is clear that the concrete realizations of the notions of democracy and freedom look different to Kurds, Shiites and Sunnis, and very different still to the Americans fighting there.

The only just cause which can be invoked at the present moment to justify America's continuing military action in Iraq lies promoting the safety and well-being of the Iraqi people who have suffered so much, especially their safety from the wholesale violence of sectarian fighting. In pointing to this specific cause as central to the moral legitimacy of combat in Iraq, an expanded *ius in bello* shares common cause with those evaluating America's continuing commitment to the war in Iraq through the prism of the *ius post bellum*. The defense of the human rights, security and freedom of the people of Iraq is a truly just cause in just war thinking.

But of course just war thinking demands more than a just cause.

2. Right Intention: The just war tradition is clear in its demand that a nation engaging in war must have as its central intention the service of the just cause which underlies a recourse to war.

. How, then, is one to assess the intention of the United States in Iraq today? In part, we are still there to avoid the specter of defeat. In part we are there to project American power in the Middle East and to prevent a vacuum from forming in the region. In part we are there to nation-build. In part we are still fighting in Iraq as a counterpoise to Iran. In part we are there because oil makes the Middle East important. In part we are still in Iraq to avoid a bloodbath.

If we stand back and ask ourselves honestly, comparing our commitment to Iraq with our commitment in places like Darfur, can we really assert that our commitment in Iraq is reflective more of a humanitarian impulse to defend victims of violence and oppression than it is of the strategic interests of our nation? Just war analysis says that if our intentions speak as much of interest as they do of defending the rights of those who have been victimized, then war-making is morally unacceptable.

It might seem that this criterion of right intention is an idealistic Kantian formula, concerned more with matters of conscience than real world ethics. In fact, this obligation is a hard-headed moral construct designed to safeguard against three grave consequences that can easily flow from a lack of right intention. The first consequence is the tendency for powerful nations to instrumentalize other countries in war for their own ends. When one analyzes America's desire to fight in Iraq as a test case for democratizing the Middle East or as a pivotal fight in the wider war against terror or as critical to maintaining stability in the region, one discerns a commitment rooted more in American objectives that transcend Iraq, rather than directly in the safety and well-being of the Iraqi people. Iraq became a means, rather than an end.

Similarly, America's mixed motivations give rise to the second harmful effect of an absent right intention: all parties to the conflict are forced to operate out of suspicions about U.S. goals and roles. Success in Iraq is critically dependent upon the willingness and ability of all major actors – Sunnis, Kurds, Shiites and Americans – to work in concert for a unified and equitable nation-state. This success has been undermined tremendously by the inability of the Iraqi people to rely upon America's commitment to the Iraqi people as truly central in the U.S. role as liberator-occupier-safeguard. At this juncture perhaps more than ever before, it is essential that the various Iraqi factions be able to trust the United States as a neutral guarantor of security. The influential role that American interest-based motivations have played and continue to play in determining U.S. conduct during the war make this trust much harder to obtain.

The final consequence that the criterion of right intention helps to preclude is the tendency of nations use a truly just cause as an excuse for waging an interest-based and interest-calibrated war. It should be extremely troubling to us that the professed just cause for our intervention in Iraq has shifted so many times during the past five years. Can we really assert that there is a central intention today to our continuing military presence in Iraq, much less that it is the just cause of protecting the Iraqi people rather than injury to U.S. standing and interests? It is difficult to escape the terrible conclusion that America's long intervention in Iraq is best characterized as ongoing war in search of a just cause, rather than as a just cause in search of redress through war.

3. Last Resort

The just war tradition requires that war must be the last recourse of a nation seeking justice in the world. In a protracted war this entails two obligations. The first is to be constantly vigilant for any pathway to peace which might be discerned. The second is an openness to reducing the concrete war aims which are being pursued even in a just cause. These obligations challenge the enormous inertia of war, which focuses on the realization of specific goals and often regards proposals to sacrifice any one of them as undermining the war effort. A *ius in bello* which considers both ends and means demands that every opportunity for peace should be pursued, and that alternative pathways to justice must be pursued even in a just war and even when such pathways might lead to the sacrifice of some just objectives.

There has been no such sustained search for peace in America's intervention in Iraq. Alternatives to war were not exhausted before war began, and they are not being exhaustively pursued now. Options such as a radical federalization of Iraq or an outright partition are either critiqued unremittingly or rejected outright, largely, one suspects, because they contradict America's strategic vision for the region which necessitates a unified Iraq. America must ardently pursue a constellation of alternative options for peace, and those options must include those which sacrifice substantive elements of its current war aims. A nation seeking true justice in the world should be known for its energy in pursuing alternative pathways to peace, not for its single-minded pursuit of the aims which led to war.

4. Approval by Competent Authority

The just war tradition requires that a decision to use military force in war should have the approval of the competent governmental authority. An expanded *ius in bello* requires this approval at every stage of the war's duration. This raises an important constitutional question and a related moral question.

The constitutional question arises from the fact that the Constitution gives Congress the power to declare war and the power to approve all war spending. But it gives to the President the authority to conduct wars. The history of the United States is replete with disputes about how these powers are to be exercised in time of warfare, and another round of separation of powers cases may well yet emerge from the war in Iraq.

But our focus here today is not the question of constitutionality, but of morality. As a moral concept, what does the mandate in the just war tradition for the approval of competent authority mean in the midst of a protracted war? Certainly it must mean that the decision to sustain war, one of the gravest decisions which any nation undertakes, should have a continuing level of approbation throughout society and the government. Certainly it cannot mean that war can be waged by threat of veto and filibuster, with the use of the parliamentary instruments of the minority being the only bulwark continuing the approval of war by the competent authority. In both of the protracted unresolved wars in American history – Korea and Vietnam – the presidents who began the wars refused to bring them to an end, long after they had lost popular support and the support of Congress. Presidents do not end their own wars in failure; it is left to their successors. Constitutionally, this may be acceptable, but morally it is not. It is difficult to understand how one can make the moral case that with two thirds of the American people and the majority of Congress in favor of ending the war in Iraq, there still exists the moral

approbation of competent authority which the just war tradition envisions, even if the president remains committed to the war.

5. Proportionality

The criterion of proportionality is traditionally seen as asking a rather narrow question: will the good likely to be achieved by a particular war outweigh the harm? If advocates for American military action in Iraq were merely proposing that it is morally permissible for the U.S. to continue fighting in Iraq, then the criterion of proportionality would be confined to this important and intricate, but narrow question.

But advocates of a continuing American military commitment to Iraq are not proposing merely that such a continuation is permissible. They are proposing that such a continuation is obligatory in order to advance the order of justice in the world. In such a discussion, the question of proportionality is quite broad, because the nation seeking justice in the world confronts a commitment to a particular conflict not as an isolated choice, but as one in a constellation of choices about how to advance justice in the world. Thus proportionality is not a binary question but a comparative one. As it pertains to the issue of America's obligations to continue extensive combat operations in Iraq at the present moment, the question of proportionality is this: does the expenditure of resources in Iraq necessitated by an ongoing American military commitment there represent the best way that those resources can be utilized to advance the order of justice in the world?

The first step in answering this question lies in identifying what the United States will obtain by continuing its military commitment. The answer is not a free and stable Iraq. It is not peace. It is not any other certainty of outcome. Rather, it is the opportunity to see if sustained military action will promote better outcomes for the people of Iraq. That's it. There are reasonable arguments that continued military action will bring about a stability in the country that can allow Iraq's factionalized society to coalesce, or at least come to some peaceful accommodation. There are equally reasonable arguments that America's continued military presence decreases the pressure for Iraq's conflicting factions to come to agreement about the nation's future. There are very strong arguments that an ongoing American combat presence is essential to preventing wholesale massacres after the United States leaves. There are also strong arguments that continued American military action only masks the cauldron of violent Iraqi factionalism that will erupt whenever America ceases to station more than a hundred thousand fighting men and women to keep the lid on the country. Thus the objective that the United States will obtain by continuing its military commitment for the next several years is nothing more and nothing less than the opportunity to see if military action will bring about a better Iraq.

How else might the resources which will be consumed in Iraq during the next several years be spent? President Bush requested two hundred billion dollars in funding for the Iraq war in the 2008 federal budget. Is the expenditure of these funds on the war in Iraq the best way to advance justice in the world? The United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization estimates that twenty four billion dollars per year would constitute the additional official development assistance to the poorest nations of the world necessary to halve world hunger in fifteen years. What good would this accomplish? Twelve million deaths each year of children under five in the developing world are strongly associated with malnutrition. One hundred fifty million children in developing nations suffer from protein energy malnutrition. More than eight hundred million people are hungry and undernourished. Halving each of these numbers would cost less for the next twenty years than the cost of the Iraq war for the next two years. What calculus of justice would say

that America's obligation to justice in the world is better fulfilled by fighting in Iraq rather than by fighting world hunger? What criterion of proportionality would say that the good to be achieved in Iraq outweighs a radical global drop in the malnutrition that kills millions of children a year?

Conclusions

Even as economic issues threaten to move the discussion of America's commitment to Iraq further offstage in current public discussion, the United States still faces a coming moment in which it is going to have to confront the question of Iraq policy once and for all. One essential ingredient for productive conversation about the painful options that confront America in its current military commitment to Iraq is a common ethical framework through which to evaluate the conflicting moral priorities which the United States confronts.

An expanded *ius in bello*, containing a full-bodied moral analysis of the issues presented in this war, provides the most powerful foundation for a national dialogue which is substantive, incisive and respectful.

Such a *ius in bello* reveals that there is a genuine just cause that can be identified as a foundation for continuing widespread military operations in Iraq. That just cause lies in the goal of safeguarding the future of the Iraqi people, especially from the specter of wholesale killings.

If all that the just war tradition required for waging war was a just cause, then the ethical legitimacy of remaining in Iraq would be secure. But just war thinking has never been about any single element of moral analysis. And in meeting all of the other requirements of the just war tradition about the ethics of waging war, a continuing American military commitment to war in Iraq falls short. Our very mixed intentions do not constitute the clear right intention demanded by just war thinking, and these mixed American intentions have greatly hobbled the war effort, especially in the minds of the Iraqi people. Where the just war criterion of last resort demands that a nation constantly pursue all other means of achieving justice through non-combat means, the American intervention in Iraq has always been marked by a profound inattention to alternative pathways, and it continues to be marked by that inattention today. Where just war thinking demands the approval of competent authority to wage war, the United States now wages a war which neither Congress nor the American people wish to continue.

Finally, the United States faces a substantial claim in justice to safeguard the future of the Iraqi people, but is that claim really greater than other claims to America's power and treasure, such as a radical reduction in world hunger that would save far more lives? This question is especially important, because what the United States gains by its expense of hundreds of billions of dollars and, even more painfully, many American lives, is not the guarantee of success in Iraq, nor even the clear probability of success in Iraq. What it gains by that expenditure of money and lives is merely the opportunity to determine if warfare can substantially advance the well-being of the Iraqi people.

This is not enough, especially given the inability of the United States to establish a secure foundation for peace in Iraq during the past five years.

The belief that America should begin a prudently planned military withdrawal from Iraq as soon as possible does not rest on a denial that one can locate a just cause for remaining there. Rather, it rests upon the conviction of fifteen centuries of just war thinking that a just cause alone is not sufficient for a decision to wage war. And it rests upon five years of experience which teach us that the United States does not have the

cultural insight, the moral authority, the strategy and tactics and the nation-building skills to guarantee a secure and stable future in Iraq.