



Is war successful in achieving its objectives?

Presented by

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Sir Hugh Beach saw active service in France and Java and was awarded the Military Cross. He then had various top staff appointments including Master General of the Ordnance and Director of the Council for Arms Control. Since retiring he has worked tirelessly for peace mainly through Christian organisations and has numerous publications.



The Preparing for Peace Project

In 2000, Westmorland General Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Britain, began a PEACE initiative, called Preparing for Peace, to explore these questions with international experts and witnesses. This is one of the papers.

The themes were:

- Can we demonstrate that war is obsolete?
- Is war successful in achieving its objectives?
- Can war be controlled or contained?
- What are the costs of war?
- What are the causes of war?
- Can the world move forward to another way?

Is war successful in achieving its objectives?

General Sir Hugh Beach

Let us start by putting together two well known aphorisms. The first is from Karl von Clausewitz in his book *On War* written in the aftermath of the Napoleonic wars. "*Der Krieg ist nichts als eine Fortsetzung der politischen Verkehrs mit Einmischung anderer Mittel.*" That is to say – ‘war is nothing but the continuation of political traffic with an admixture of other means’. The second is from Basil Liddell Hart, written after World War I: "The aim in war is to achieve a better peace". These make it clear that war is the interruption of an otherwise peaceful process of struggle, engaged in because those who start it believe they will emerge at the end in a better position politically than they would have been if they had stayed within the normal domain of politics. This domain includes, of course, not only voting and elections and the contest in parliament and press, but also economic and political pressure exerted on other countries or groups in the pursuit of political ends. Those who go to war think they can do better than this. Their ends may be good or bad and often they miscalculate. We have seen both in Germany in the late 1930s and in Serbia in the 1990s how a man can gather to himself dictatorial powers, through the democratic process, and then use them to pursue a war policy that brings his country to the brink of ruin. Quite clearly in such cases the wars, so far from achieving their objectives, produced a peace that was catastrophically worse than the continuation of political traffic would have been. So perhaps we can re-phrase the question along the lines of ‘*Can* war be successful in achieving its objectives?’ The answer, I believe, is that war is usually not successful in this way (because at the end of it *all* participants are worse off than they would have been if the war had not taken place) but that it can be successful, at least in the sense of being the lesser of two evils. I am aware that some thinkers believe this notion of ‘the lesser of two evils’ is logically incoherent and inadmissible. But I suggest that the price of taking an absolutist, pacifist position should be paid only by the pacifist. In today's world the price of such policies is often paid by innocent, civilian parties. A military man must choose the best among bad courses, but not be shy of saying that he does so on clear moral grounds. I will come back to this in a moment. Meanwhile it may be useful to distinguish some general categories.

The most straightforward, it seems to me, is war as *self defence*. In 1980, almost as soon as he had seized power in Iraq, Saddam Hussain started a war against Iran. In 1985-7 fighting intensified with heavy loss of life. In 1988 a ceasefire was declared and in 1990 a peace treaty favouring Iran was agreed. It seems to me quite certain that had Iran not defended herself – albeit at great cost – her situation politically would have been far worse as the vassal of Saddam. In moral terms almost everyone agrees that a country

has a right to defend itself against unprovoked aggression and clearly sometimes this defence is successful in achieving its objectives.

A generation earlier, in 1958 the then King Faisal of Iraq was assassinated, a military coup brought in a left-wing government under a man called Kassem, Iraq left the Baghdad Pact and almost at once started to make threatening noises against its neighbour Kuwait. The British Government, then responsible for Kuwait, pre-positioned an infantry battalion in Bahrain, a planning Headquarters in Aden, an air-portable Infantry Brigade in Kenya (I was on its Staff in Nairobi) and a parachute battalion in Cyprus. In 1961 Kuwait was given full independence from Britain with Shaikh al-Salem al-Sabah as Emir. Almost at once Kassem started to move his tanks up to the border. The British deployment plan went into action (by agreement of the Emir, of course) and we put strong forces into north Kuwait along the Mutla Ridge. They were bombed up and fully ready to fight. This was enough and as a result not a shot was fired. Kassem called off his tanks. The British were soon able to go home. Kuwait enjoyed 30 years of peace. This was military action as *deterrence*. It was in dismal contrast to the weak line taken by the American Ambassador April Glaspie in August 1990 which led Saddam to assume that this time he could get away with overrunning Kuwait. (Some of you may wish to point out that the West had been supporting Kuwait during their war with Iran, thinking the latter to be the worse of the two. The enemy of my enemy is my friend. It was indeed a disastrous miscalculation but does not affect my argument.) As a deterrent military action *can* be successful. Diplomatic pressure unsupported by any sign of military commitment can spectacularly fail. So, *pace* Scilla Elworthy, do not let us get too far carried away by the notion of non-violent conflict resolution as a panacea.

A third category, and perhaps the most topical, is war as *humanitarian intervention*. Is this ever justifiable and under what circumstances can it succeed? I spoke just now of a 'successful' war in terms of the lesser of two evils. Let me now amplify this by rehearsing the views of Christian thinkers under the rubric of the 'Just war'. The two most prominent, Augustine of Hippo and Thomas Aquinas, were philosophers of the first rank who took their stance explicitly not on revelation but on the basis of natural Law. To my knowledge no better framework has been proposed. The American bishops, in a 'reflection' adopted in the fall of 1993 entitled *The Harvest of Justice is Sown in Peace*, gave a useful summary of Just War thinking and their version is followed here.

1. Just Cause: *Force may be used only to correct a grave, public evil, i.e. aggression or massive violation of the basic rights of whole populations.*

If we go back to the roots of Just War doctrine we find Aquinas saying (*Summa Theologiae 2a2ae. 40,1*): 'a just cause is required namely that those who are attacked deserve it for some wrong they have done. So Augustine: "We usually describe a just war as one that avenges wrongs, that is, when a nation or state has to be punished either for refusing to make amends for outrages done by its subjects, or to restore what it has

seized injuriously. Those wars are looked on as peacemaking which are waged neither from aggrandisement nor cruelty but with the object of securing peace, of repressing the evil and supporting the good".

Augustine was thinking (primarily in terms of war to resist aggression; one can hear the distant echo of Vandals hammering on the gates of Hippo. But his definition fits modern circumstances. If wickedness is being committed - people killed, populations uprooted - the use of force can be justified to restore what has been seized injuriously. The moral case seems indisputable. Moreover there is considerable support for Augustine's view in contemporary international law. 'There is general agreement that, by virtue of its personal and territorial supremacy, a State can treat its own nationals according to discretion. But there is a substantial body of opinion and practice in support of the view that there are limits to that discretion; when a state renders itself guilty of cruelties against and persecution of its nationals in such a way as to deny their fundamental rights and to shock the conscience of mankind, intervention in the interests of humanity is legally permissible'. (L. Oppenheim in *International Law, Vol 1*, Longman, 1948, p. 279)

In a judgement in the House of Lords last March (on the Pinochet case) Lord Millet gave as his view: 'the doctrine of state immunity is the product of classical theory ... It is a cliché of modern international law that the classical theory no longer prevails in its unadulterated form ... the way in which a state treats its own citizens within its own borders (has now) become a legitimate concern to the international community'. (*The Times*, 29 March 1999). In a remarkably prescient lecture given in 1998 the secretary-general of the UN Kofi Annan said: 'The (UN) charter protects the sovereignty of peoples. It was never meant as a license for governments to trample on human rights and human dignity. The fact that a conflict is 'internal' does not give parties any right to disregard the most basic rules of human conduct. ... All our professions of regret, all our expressions of determination never again to permit another Bosnia or another Rwanda, all our claims to have learned something from the recent past will be cruelly mocked if we now let Kosovo become another killing field'. (*IHT* 27-28 June 1998). And of course they did.

The British Government, commenting on this issue early in 1999, contented itself with observing: 'There may also be cases of overwhelming humanitarian necessity where, in the light of all the circumstances, a limited use of force is justifiable as the only way to avert a humanitarian catastrophe'. (FCO Memorandum to the Select Committee for Foreign Affairs. 22 January 1999). Authorities differ on this point. There can be little doubt however of the moral justification. Where a country is inflicting gross, flagrant and continuing abuses of human rights on its own people, other countries in a position to do so have a right to intervene. Some would say they have a duty to do so (see UNA Policy Statement 2001, Para 3.7) - though Augustine does not go so far. But in other respects he goes further. While some punitive element may well be necessary his emphasis on peacemaking (*pacis studio*) and supporting the good (*boni subleventur*)

opens up much wider perspectives. In practical terms these motives can cash out into the form of specific political objectives, such as:

- stopping the fighting or enforcing a cease-fire
- preventing the forcible movement of populations, as in 'ethnic cleansing'
- enforcing the delivery of humanitarian aid and safe extraction of the sick and wounded
- restoring pre-existing boundaries or enforcing those newly agreed
- setting up democratic institutions, or most ambitiously
- establishing an international protectorate under UN control

All of these 'causes' and no doubt many others could properly qualify as 'just' under Augustine's rubric.

2. Legitimate authority: *Only duly constituted public authorities may use deadly force or wage war.*

By this Aquinas meant that it is only the sovereign who has the right to go to war, not barons or private warlords. Augustine goes further when (as quoted by Aquinas) he says, "The natural order conducive to human peace demands that the power to counsel and declare war belongs to those who hold the supreme authority". Arguably, if one is intervening for the sake of international peace and good order, then only an international authority has the right to 'counsel and declare war'. This could be a regional organisation such as the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), a Treaty-bound alliance such as NATO or the EU, or even an *ad hoc* coalition as in the Gulf War. But all of these come ultimately under the jurisdiction of the United Nations, both in principle and as a matter of practical politics. It is clear that the United Nations is the supreme source of legitimacy where action in support of international peace and security is concerned, and it is emerging in that capacity in the case of internal conflicts. No one would dispute; indeed the British government explicitly recognised (in the FCO memorandum quoted above) that interventions would preferably be based on an authorisation given by the Security Council under Chapter VII of the UN Charter. The Allied campaign in the Gulf in 1991 and the air campaign against Serbia in 1995 which led to the Dayton settlement had indeed been authorised in this way. But is such endorsement indispensable? Did, for example, the absence of such authorisation in March 1999 render NATO's operation in Serbia and Kosovo illegitimate?

The following considerations are relevant. First, NATO's actions were in no sense arbitrary or ill-considered but the product of unanimous agreement among nineteen democratic nations. Secondly, NATO's actions responded directly to the flagrant disregard by Milosevic of UNSCR 1199 (passed the previous autumn) calling on all parties to cease hostilities. Thirdly, the Security Council had made a singularly ill judged move at the end of February 1999 by failing to renew the mandate of the UN Preventive Deployment Force (UNPreDep) in Macedonia. This force, some 1000

strong, had been in place since 1995 and had been much praised as a trail-blazing and successful exercise in pre-emptive deployment. China vetoed its continuance for no better reason than Macedonia's unexpected decision to establish diplomatic relations with Taiwan - an issue totally unrelated to the Balkans crisis. (The Force has never gone back. How very useful it would have been recently). This arbitrary act on the part of China put in question her motives for not endorsing forceful action against Serbia. Sensitivity to her own human rights record might well be relevant, as might the issue of Chechnya in the case of Russia. However, on 26 March, two days after the bombing had begun, a resolution in the Security Council sponsored by Russia, calling on an immediate cessation of violence, was defeated by twelve votes to three - only China, India and Namibia voting in favour. The representative of Slovenia made the robust point that, in his view, the Security Council has the 'primary but not exclusive' responsibility for maintaining international peace and security. This is arguably an accurate reflection of what Article 24 of the UN charter says. Finally the Security Council, by UNSCR 1224 of 10 June 1999, indisputably conferred *post facto* recognition of what had been done, endorsing the 'Petersberg Principles' (which I will explain in a moment) and authorising NATO to establish an 'international security presence' in Kosovo.

This episode raises a deeper question. It is clearly too much to hope that the power of veto in the Security Council will never be used for self-serving reasons. Does it then make sense to rest such a veto, on matters relating to humanitarian intervention, in the hands of countries such as Russia or China whose human rights record is so deeply flawed. In my opinion endorsement by the Security Council is a sufficient but not always a necessary condition of legitimate intervention. A more pragmatic argument concerns the effect of NATO's action upon those who choose to see it as unilateral and high-handed. Might this not encourage other parties to act *ultra vires*? The Russians in Chechnya have arguably taken a leaf out of NATO's book, though in fact the circumstances are quite different. It has even been suggested that third parties, fearing similar NATO domineering, might conclude that their best safeguard would be to acquire weapons of mass destruction. This argument is highly speculative, however.

3. Right Intention: *Force may be used only in a truly just cause and only for that purpose.*

At first sight this looks like tautology: a simple restatement of the Just Cause criterion. In fact it goes much further. Augustine says (again as quoted by Aquinas): 'The craving to hurt people, the cruel thirst for revenge, the unappeased and unrelenting spirit, savageness of fighting on, the lust to dominate and suchlike - all these are rightly condemned in wars'. This should warn us against several misleading motives. It should lead us to be wary of the surge of righteous anger when a city like Dubrovnik is shelled just because it is old and beautiful - and within range of guns: when a family is burned alive for belonging to the wrong religion. It should lead us to be cautious in applying Augustine's earlier remarks about avenging wrongs and punishing. The Allies in the

Gulf War set as their aim to evict Iraqi forces from Kuwait, acting under a Security Council Resolution (678 of 29 November 1990) which authorised the use of 'all necessary means' in securing withdrawal of Iraqi forces to positions held before the invasion and the restoration of 'international peace and security in the area.' They did not aim to break the power of the Republican Guards, still less topple Saddam Hussein. When they had succeeded in their limited aim they stopped, the 'savageness of fighting on' was eschewed. Many have since argued that this was a mistake. The Security Council Resolution would arguably have allowed further allied action preventing the use of Iraqi tanks and armed helicopters to suppress the Kurdish and Shia uprisings (which the allies had incited) and secured Saddam's removal while still stopping well short of Baghdad. This might indeed have achieved a better outcome, but the point can never be proved.

It is a difficult question to what extent self-interest is a necessary ingredient in Right Intention. If not, then how are politicians in a democracy to justify sending young men and women to suffer and (possibly) die where no national interest is involved? How likely is it that, as the price of success mounts, the political constituency, nurtured on television, will lose patience and enforce a humiliating withdrawal, leaving things worse than if force had never been used? Somalia was a vivid object lesson. It is a common criticism of western motives in the Gulf war that the price of oil was the underlying stake, but there was nothing ignoble in that. Poor countries suffer much more than rich ones from high commodity prices – indeed high oil prices can be of direct benefit to producer countries like ours. In Kosovo humanitarian concern for the sufferings of the Albanian inhabitants was clearly the main motive but the 'credibility' of NATO was also at issue. This is seen by some people as American hegemonism and resented accordingly. A more balanced view might be that NATO represents American commitment to European peace and security – which still seems to be indispensable. If so the credibility of NATO is a good thing and we should support it. Another consideration was that if Milosevic was allowed to have his way in Kosovo it could have led to a wider Balkan war; or at least the encouragement of other villains in other places, from which NATO nations themselves would be bound in the end to suffer. This used to be a popular way of thinking known as 'domino theory', but it is now largely discredited. Or one can contend, following Donne, that no man is an island. Henry Kissinger wrote: 'Humanitarian intervention asserts that moral and humane concerns are so much a part of American life that not only treasure but lives must be risked to vindicate them: in their absence American life would have lost some meaning.' (*IHT*, 16 December 1992) He added that no other nation had ever put forward such a proposition, but there I think he was wrong. George Robertson, when British defence minister, insisted that he wanted the British military to be a 'force for good'. So do we all. The problem is that this argument proves too much. If Kosovo, why not Tajikistan or Nagorno Karabakh (both members of the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council): why not Sudan or Sri Lanka (both of historic concern to Britain) or any other of the 22 countries where there are conflicts going on at the moment? Will it do to say that these countries are not on our doorstep or, more to the point, on our television screens? Joseph Nye

may have come closer to the mark in saying: 'a foreign policy of armed multilateral intervention to right all such wrongs would be another source of enormous disorder'. (*IHT*, 16 December 1992). It would be going too far to say that self interest is a necessary ingredient but in my view it is not an illegitimate one – if you will forgive the double negative.

4. Probability of success: Arms must not be used in a futile cause or in a case where disproportionate measures are required to achieve success.

Leaving on one side the question of proportion, since this rates as a separate criterion in its own right, this clause introduces a crucial point: that the practicability of what is proposed is a key element in formulating the ethical judgement. It is not a moral act to set the military off on a given course if they are likely to fail, however just the cause. To say this is not to set pragmatism over against morality but to recognise an essential ingredient in the moral judgement itself. If what is proposed will not work then, however lofty the motive, the proposal must be rejected. One cannot, of course, claim that military forecasts of the likely outcome are necessarily infallible, quite the reverse. The military are often wrong, even on strictly military matters; how else can one account for the fact that, in all the wars of history, roughly 50 percent of the generals have been losers? One is saying only that they must be asked and their answers heeded.

In Kosovo the initial aim of Operation *Allied Force* was to force Milosevic to accept the substance of the Rambouillet proposals. It was widely expected that a few days bombing would suffice. Failing this, the military aim was starkly defined by General Wesley Clark: 'We are going to systematically and progressively attack, disrupt, degrade, devastate and ultimately destroy these (Yugoslav) forces and their facilities and support. This is not an attack on the Serb people'. (NATO Press Briefing, 25 March 1995)

These aims turned out to have no immediate prospect of success. So far from moving towards the Rambouillet proposals, Milosevic proceeded to vandalise and/or expel the majority of Kosovan Albanians. So far from crumbling in a few days, he stuck it out for 78. So far from being devastated, the Yugoslav forces in Kosovo survived largely intact. Certainly their freedom of manoeuvre on the ground was seriously curtailed. And NATO quickly achieved air supremacy, at least in the sense of being able to operate without pilot casualties above 5000m. But the stated objectives were not attainable and something new was urgently needed. The answer was found in the principles adopted by foreign ministers of the G-8 (i.e. including Russia) on 6 May 1999, often referred to as the Petersberg principles. These required:

- Immediate and verifiable end of violence and repression in Kosovo
- Withdrawal from Kosovo of military, police and paramilitary forces
- Deployment in Kosovo of effective international civil and security presences, endorsed and adopted by the United Nations

- Establishment of an interim administration for Kosovo
- The safe and free return of all refugees and displaced persons and unimpeded access to Kosovo by humanitarian aid organisations
- A political process towards the establishment of an interim political framework agreement providing for a substantial self-government for Kosovo, taking full account of the principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, and the demilitarisation of the KLA.

These aims proved eminently attainable. Milosevic accepted on 3 June 1999. On 10 June the Security Council underwrote the measures; bombing ceased and withdrawal of Yugoslav forces began, being completed in good order by 20 June. By September the KLA had been effectively disarmed and were being reorganised into the Kosovo Protection Corps; a UN civil presence had been installed and the Albanian population had returned (reportedly some 720,000 of them) much faster than had been expected or indeed desired. Many intractable problems remained. But as an exercise in ethical pragmatism at a very difficult juncture the Petersberg principles rate highly. They met in full the criterion of reasonable prospect of 'success' on their own terms. Success in any larger sense is, I agree, much more problematical.

5. Last resort: *Force may be used only after all peaceful alternatives have been seriously tried and exhausted.*

In other words if measures short of armed force would suffice then armed force should not be used. Articles 33 to 42 of the UN Charter describe a wide spectrum of measures available to the international community, starting with enquiry, mediation, conciliation and so forth, *via* diplomatic and economic measures up to demonstrations, blockade and 'other operations' by land, sea and air forces. Before the Gulf War both Houses of Congress authorised the President to use US armed forces only after he had certified that 'all appropriate diplomatic and other peaceful means had failed'. In many cases it may be appropriate to use these various measures in chronological sequence, only moving up the ladder as and when softer approaches have been tried and failed. But in other instances it may be that to go in early and hard, albeit on a limited scale, might avert much bloodshed. For example it is widely argued that had the UN, led by the United States, committed ground troops with air support in former Yugoslavia at a much earlier stage (e.g. to prevent the destruction of Vukovar by the Serbs in 1992) it could have nipped that war in the bud. This line of thinking implies a judgement at the outset that gentler methods are bound to fail and that recourse to the methods of last resort (albeit under the general rubric of minimum force) were better taken earlier than later. It is also relevant that economic sanctions, especially when sustained over a long period, can cause just as much suffering to the poorest and weakest in society as a war. The term 'last resort' need not, on this reading, be understood chronologically. In Kosovo, perhaps NATO's action would have been better taken in the autumn of 1998, when it was first authorised in principle. Milosevic's token agreement with terms brought by Ambassador Holbrooke sufficed to let him off the hook.

The two last criteria will be considered together.

6. Proportionality: *The overall destruction expected from the use of force must be outweighed by the good to be achieved.*

This is the crucial consideration that in effect subsumes all others. It is also arguably the most difficult because it involves weighing in the balance things that, even in theory, are incommensurable. How many Dutch lives was it worth to protect Srebrenica? Can one put a price on a principle? Yes, one does it every day so there is no dodging, and certainly there are no easy answers. One of the most notable features of recent years has been the way in which the issue of proportionality has dominated at least the vocabulary of debate. Only very rarely have disproportionate interventions been explicitly threatened: for example by the Americans against Serbian Bosnians in summer 1995 and against Saddam Hussein a year later. After the event it is always claimed that the actions have been proportionate.

7. Non-combatant immunity: *Civilians may not be the object of direct attack, and military personnel must take due care to avoid and minimise indirect harm to civilians.*

It is again notable the way in which everyone pays at least lip-service to this consideration. More to the point is the way in which it was taken with all seriousness by the Allies in the Gulf War and by NATO in bombing Bosnia.

In Kosovo it was a crucial feature of Operation *Allied Force* that not only were military targets struck but, as Wesley Clark had promised, their 'facilities and support'. According to the International Institute of Strategic Studies, all oil refining capacity in Serbia was shut down, 50 percent of military fuel stocks were destroyed and 25 percent of all fuel stocks. Fourteen power stations were knocked out and 63 bridges destroyed as well as many important industrial sites (*Strategic Comments, Vol 5 Issue 7, September 1999*). Michael Binyon, (writing in *The Times*, on 22 May 1999) accurately prefigured the end of Milosevic's resistance: 'Day after day the vital foundations of daily life are being blown away: blackouts, fuel shortages, blank television screens, broken bridges and regular interruptions to water, gas and sewage systems leave a population increasingly bewildered. The slow build up has only made it worse'. An independent group of Serb economists has estimated that 44 percent of industrial production was destroyed leaving Serbia the poorest country in Europe. (*The Guardian*, 15 October 1999).

Two questions remain. First, could NATO have brought Milosevic to accept the Petersberg principles without attacking Serbia's infrastructure (oil, water, power, and telecommunications). Secondly, could the attacks have been more discriminate?

The answer to the first question is almost certainly no. The pressures on Milosevic can be listed as follows, in growing order of importance as one goes down:

1. Terms on offer more favourable to Serbia than those at Rambouillet. (They explicitly recognised the involvement of the UN on the ground, involved no automatic referendum on the future of Kosovo and gave NATO no running rights over Serbia other than in Kosovo.)
2. Growing strength of the KLA and effectiveness in forcing Serbs into the open, thus creating targets for B-52s with cluster bombs. (Mount Pastrok 7 June)
3. Disaffection in the Serb military and reluctance of young soldiers to continue
4. Success of NATO attacks on infrastructure (as above)
5. Withdrawal of Russian support prior to G-8 summit at Petersberg, 6 May
6. Milosevic's indictment as a war criminal, which seems to have thrown him off balance
7. The serious prospect (however politically fraught) of a NATO land offensive.

Whilst the ordering of this list is certainly open to question, it seems clear that the last four, at least, were of predominant importance. In the opinion of this writer the attack on infrastructure was a necessary, though certainly not sufficient, condition of 'success'. It is plausible to argue that more emphasis on this aspect, at an earlier stage, might well have brought the bombing to an end sooner and with less loss of life.

NATO apologists maintain, following General Wesley Clark, that Operation *Allied Force* was not a war against the people. The fact remains, however, that leaving aside genuinely accidental damage (and this was serious enough), targets were struck which went beyond any reasonable definition of military. In my opinion such impermissible targets included: a tobacco factory (Nis), food processing plant (Valjevo), bulldozer factory and heating plant (Krusevac), fertilizer factory and petrochemical plant (Pancevo), Zavasta motor plant (Kragujevac), interior ministry, socialist party HQ with TV tower and state TV and radio building (Belgrade). Against this it will be said that some of these, at least, were believed to be dual-use; e.g., car factories were also used to make armoured vehicles. The media facilities were used for war propaganda and incitement to racial hatred. The most inexcusable targets were the Danube Bridges at Novi Sad, far to the north of the country, whose use can have had little impact on operations but whose demolition is continuing to cause huge loss and inconvenience to all riparian states. (Normally 10 million tons a year of grain, coal and ores are carried).

It will be said that every target was approved, at least in principle, by all the participating countries; but doubtless great pressure was brought to bear (for example, by General Wesley Clark on the French) to agree to dubious cases. It is claimed, probably correctly, that a number of targets were owned or controlled by Milosevic's 'cronies'. Dragan Tomic, speaker of the Federal Parliament, was director of Yugo Petrol. Milan Beko, minister for privatisation, was director of the Zavasta plant. Milosevic's son Marko had extensive tobacco interests. (*IHT*, 20 April 1999). General Short, the NATO air commander, made no secret of his ambition: 'to go hard after Belgrade and the leadership targets and everything that Milosevic held dear, and make it very clear to him that was exactly what we were doing'. (*IHT*, 16-17 October 1999). But this

objective pushes beyond the limits of proportion and discrimination. Finally, it is claimed that all target dossiers were submitted to legal scrutiny; in which case one has to ask, who was paying the lawyers fees?

In short the strongest case against NATO's actions, in the light of Just War criteria, lies in the area of proportion and discrimination. Three further points bear on this issue. First, the fact of bombing (in most cases) from 5000 metres made discrimination much more difficult and doubtless led to some of the much-publicised cases of admitted accidental damage. The aim was laudable - to save the lives of NATO's pilots and so incidentally prevent the erosion of political support. Many people, not least airmen, have argued that the price in needless damage to civilians was too high. Secondly, the use of precision-guided munitions, particularly against fixed targets whose location and use was precisely known, was a great bonus for proportion and discrimination. It can be argued that *only* precision weapons should be used against such targets in the future. Thirdly, the use of cluster bombs seems morally dubious. NATO officials say that about 1,100 cluster bombs were dropped, containing more than 200,000 bomblets, with a failure rate of 5 percent. It follows that 10,000 or more unexploded cluster bomblets remained. The post war casualty rate in Kosovo (170 up to mid-July 1999) was reportedly comparable to Afghanistan and worse than Mozambique. Nearly half of these were due to cluster bomblets, the remainder being due to anti-personnel mines (*IHT*, 20 July 1999). These figures suggest that cluster bombs deserve to join anti-personnel mines in the category of inhumane weapons.

I launched into the discussion of Just war principles as a means of defending my thesis that war can, in certain circumstances, be the lesser of two (or more) evils. In choosing Kosovo as the worked example I was deliberately going for a very difficult and controversial case. Let me quote one or two more recent examples where I believe military intervention was, or could have been, more obviously beneficial. In the recent report by Secretary General Kofi Annan on Srebreniça he says "We (the UN) tried to create - or imagine - an environment in which the tenets of peacekeeping - agreement between the parties, deployment by consent and impartiality - could be upheld... [But] an arms embargo with humanitarian aid and the deployment of a peacekeeping force ... were poor substitutes for more decisive and forceful action. ...The cardinal lesson ... is that a deliberate and systematic attempt to terrorise, expel or murder an entire people must be met decisively with all necessary means. ... In Bosnia and in Kosovo the international community tried to reach a negotiated settlement with an unscrupulous regime. In both instances it required the use of force to bring a halt to the planned and systematic killing and expulsion of civilians." And referring particularly to Africa Mr Annan said in a recent speech: "We have in the past prepared for peacekeeping operations with a best-case scenario. The parties sign an agreement; we assume they will honour it, so we send in lightly armed forces to help them". "The time has come for us to base our planning on *worst-case* scenarios; to be surprised by co-operation if we get it. And to go in prepared for all eventualities, including *full combat* if we don't...If

we don't want to do it properly, should we do it at all? That is what the Security Council members must now ask themselves".

It is important to recognise how awful many of the post-colonial rebel movements in Africa are. "Burned down villages, chopped off tongues, mutilated bodies, amputated limbs, raped women and kidnapped children" have been the norm according to Thandika Mkandawire, Director of the UN Research Institute for Social Development. He says "these guerrilla movements are not exploiting national grievances, and may have no social base at all at the local level. They usually have, literally speaking, nothing to offer". Sierra Leone is a case in point. The Revolutionary United Front (RUF), however idealistic its origins, soon embarked on the naked pursuit of power and diamonds. Its methods have been unspeakable. The United Nations force, UNAMSIL, had been ineffective to the point of embarrassment. The British Parachute Regiment, in Freetown ostensibly to evacuate civilians, did an excellent strong-arm job in May 1999. It was then replaced by a smaller lightly equipped mission - one third to train local Sierra Leonean army recruits, the rest to act as protection force. A British patrol, on liaison duty, was captured and humiliated by a gang of thugs. Their rescue was very skilful, but not cost-free. This led to a review of the size, make-up and rules of engagement of the protection force, and an amphibious group arrived to back it up. It is a high-risk operation in a volatile country. But that is not to say we are wrong to be there.

Because, if we choose *not* to go, then we must heed the story of General Romeo Dallaire, Canadian commander of United Nations forces in Rwanda in 1994, the one man who consistently warned of coming slaughter, and sought authorisation to prevent it. He was not allowed to and was so broken by his experiences that four years later he could neither eat, sleep nor concentrate enough to read a newspaper. "I am in a valley at sunset, waist deep in bodies, covered in blood. I am holding up my arms trying to get out. Each time it comes back the scene is worse. I can hear the rustle of bodies and I am afraid to move for fear of hurting someone".

These are his post-traumatic nightmares. What had happened was this. In January 1994, he sent a fax to UN Headquarters reporting that a Hutu militia informer had told him that they were training men who could kill 'up to 1,000 Tutsi in 20 minutes' and that all Tutsi in the capital were being registered, probably for extermination. General Dallaire's cable was not taken seriously and no action was taken. After the killing began in April he asked for more men and a mandate that would let him intervene. Instead the UN cut his troops. An inquiry five years later agreed with General Dallaire that a few thousand men might have saved 800,000 lives. "We didn't need overwhelming force, but punctual and appropriate use of force" he said, "I needed three battalions in the first three weeks to break the embryo of genocide". As it was he could do nothing.

So, if one sees a situation in which a state, or an armed faction within a state, is inflicting upon its own people, gross, flagrant and continuing infringements of their

human rights (genocide even); if one has the wherewithal in the shape of armed forces with rifles, tanks and guns and the necessary training and skills to stop them; if one chooses to stand aside and let the killing continue then one cannot be surprised if nightmares follow. There is a famous Latin tag from Tacitus: '*Solitudinem faciunt, pacem appellant*' 'they make a desert and call it peace'. We now know how to promote a better kind of peace. But it *may* take guns to do it.

Summing –up

Your question was 'Is war successful in achieving its objectives'. Since the answer to that question is often, and quite obviously 'no' I sought your leave to re-phrase the question as 'Can war be successful in achieving its objectives'. I have argued that in certain circumstances it can be, at least in the sense of being the lesser of evils. What those circumstances are I tried to illuminate by reference to Christian Just war principles. I chose as principal example the case of Kosovo and then looked briefly at some other contemporary instances. I want to say one more thing. Even if military intervention is sometimes the best thing we can do, it can never do more than a very little. In all cases prevention is better than war. This brings in the whole issue of peaceful conflict resolution. Scilla Elworthy talked about this and I will not repeat what she said. Such action is *always* preferable to the use of armed force. But sometimes, sadly, it fails or has not even been tried. We must have ways of coping when this happens. But even when the use of armed force results in the cessation of violence – that is peace as *Pax* the simple absence of war - then begins the far longer and more arduous process of rebuilding the shattered social fabric: peace as *Shalom*. The military can play a part in this - unarmed and using their skills as interlocutors, reconcilers, guardians and physical repairers of the infrastructure. But the task is essentially non-military because it involves restoring the economy, political system, rule of law, and civil society. It costs time money and patience. But it can be done.

So the military can have a part to play in achieving a better peace. But it is a rough and ready tool, a blunt instrument if you like. Its use should always be the last resort. It must be applied with as much precision as possible, and that may not be much. Its role is always the minor one, though it always attracts much publicity. There is no glory in it though there may be death. I have always mentally compared the soldiers' job with that of keeping the drains flowing freely. A dirty job, but someone has to do it.

Hugh Beach

July 2001

Biography

General Sir Hugh Beach, GBE, OBE, KCB, MC.

Sir Hugh Beach saw active service in France and Java and was awarded the Military Cross. He then had various top staff appointments including Master General of the Ordnance and Director of the Council for Arms Control. Since retiring he has worked tirelessly for peace mainly through Christian organisations and has numerous publications.

b. 20.May.23.

Education: MA Peterhouse, Cambridge

Major jobs include: Commander of the Staff College, Camberley, 1974-75
Deputy Commander-in-Chief UK Land Force, 1976-77
Master-General of the Ordnance, 1977-81

Other roles include: Director of the Council for Arms Control, 1986-89
Vice-chair of the Council for Arms Control, 1989-99
Member Peace Forum CTBI, 1986-
Member of Committee of Management for Council for Christian Approaches to Defence & Disarmament, 1988-

Achievements include: One of 57 former generals and admirals from the USA, Russia, Britain, France and 13 other countries, who signed a statement on the future of nuclear weapons in 1996. "We, military professionals, who have devoted our lives to the national security of our countries...are convinced that the continuing existence of nuclear weapons...constitute a peril to global peace and security..." In 1997 he made the case against land-mines in a letter to The Times. Publication of numerous papers on military matters and arms control.



Westmorland General Meeting

Westmorland General Meeting is a Meeting for Worship and Business of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers), comprising Friends from the Swarthmoor, Kendal and Sedbergh, Lancaster and Preston areas in the north-west corner of England. George Fox, founder of the Society, made his first visit to these towns, villages and dales in 1652, and the region continues to be known among Friends as the birthplace of Quakerism.

Quakers seek "that of God" in everyone, worshipping together in silence without doctrine or creed. For three hundred and fifty years Friends' Peace Testimony has been at the centre of a corporate witness against war and violence, through conscientious objection, conflict resolution, service in the Friends' Ambulance Unit or alternative paths of conscience. In the 21st Century we face fundamental changes to the 'engines of war', and new social and international challenges in a changing world, yet the Peace Testimony of 17th Century Friends still bears powerful witness.

In 1660 Friends declared:

All bloody principles and practices we do utterly deny, with all outward wars, and strife, and fightings with outward weapons, for any end, or under any pretence whatsoever, and this is our testimony to the whole world.

Today the Society's book of 'Advices and Queries' advises members:

We are called to live 'in the virtue of that life and power that takes away the occasion of wars'. Do you faithfully maintain our testimony that war and the preparation for war are inconsistent with the spirit of Christ? Search out whatever in your own way of life may contain the seeds of war. Stand firm in our testimony, even when others commit or prepare to commit acts of violence, yet always remember that they too are children of God.

