

War, Peace, and International Politics

War is Hell. It was not a poet who said that, but a General, and a successful one at that - who better to know?

Still, War is sometimes necessary for the defense of our Country and our Lives. Because War is Hell, it should Only be used as a last resort for the justifiable defense of our Country and our Lives.

A clear, bright line can be drawn dividing War into 2 kinds:

1. War for acquisition, expansion, or imposition of our beliefs - in short Offensive War - is immoral, wasteful, destructive, and should be avoided by civilized peoples.
2. War for Defense, is justifiable, moral, expected, and at times an unfortunate necessity to secure civilization.

The Same clear line can be drawn between National Interests and National Security.

National Security means only one thing: Defense. Only when our Nation is legitimately threatened should we initiate the Hell on Earth that is the final right of all threatened peoples. Homicide should be the last resort to being slain.

National Interests, on the other hand, can be almost anything: trade, oil, a non-strategic allies' wars, civil unrest elsewhere, human rights abuses inside other regimes, and None of it is justifiable reason to go to war.

Prudence, care, and continuous review should guide all warring parties to be sure they do not fall into the first category. The End of the War and the Restoration of Peace should be planned before hostilities are joined. Every expedition into

violence has a natural end where the aggressors cease.

War Wastes Everything.

No matter how short or controlled the war is, it inevitably costs huge amounts of money to blow stuff up and to rebuild it. Not only does war have high direct monetary costs, war also upsets the markets because projections based on peace cannot be met and industry suffers. War costs peoples' lives. Family, friends, and future friends are lost and all that they would have added to society dies with them.

War does not create more innovations. It does force them through society faster, but at the highest price, and in the direction of destruction.

The wounds of war are deep, slow to heal, and easily re-infected. If one's government starts a war and loses, the result is nothing short of catastrophic. But even if your government wins, your reputation as benevolent people has suffered and provokes future retaliation.

Because Everything is at stake every time war is waged, it should only be used when Everything is already at stake. As an American, you sacrifice part of your rights to secure others, but the former should not outweigh the latter. That is, one should only risk one's life, when one's life is at stake, and every war risks everyone's lives.

Morality in War always sides with the Defender. This is true in all conflict ranging from simple assault to World War.

In order to understand who has the high-moral ground in a conflict, we must examine History.

Historically, the US began with a policy of Non-interventionism.

Non-intervention is not abandonment, it is non-meddling. It keeps the US cautiously neutral in world affairs. Non-interventionism doesn't prevent us from defending ourselves, it keeps us from offending other nations.

The Founding Fathers recognized the futility of involving us in the myriad civil wars in Europe and around the globe - wars fought for forgotten reasons with nothing to gain but pain, and which are best left to the local mongers. They cannot hurt us.

US non-interventionism didn't last long as we soon entered the war of 1812, but at times the spirit has been followed, and until recently it looked as if we might resist the temptation to conquer the world, until the last super powered opposition collapsed.

In the last 30 years since Vietnam, the United States has deployed troops more than 60 times. This in spite of the fact that no war has been declared by Congress. Most of the deployments have been very small on the order of a few hundred troops, some have reached numbers of over 10,000, and one numbered more than 650,000: Desert Storm.

On September 11th, 2001 the US was attacked, but the attack on 9/11 does not justify all future wars against everyone. It only justifies war against those specific perpetrators and their supporters for the express purpose of preventing such future attacks. The US is always justified in identifying our attackers, identifying their motives, defeating their plans, and re-securing its peace.

Identity: Though the attack may have been motivated by evil, the 9-11 attack was not perpetrated by the Forces of Evil. To identify our enemies as "Evil" is sanctimonious, inflammatory, and most importantly it misses the mark. The attack was planned and carried out by mortal men. As mortal men, they have identifiable motives and defeatable plans.

Motive: The motive of the hijackers on 9-11 was made perfectly clear. This was not an attack on Chevrolet, Barbi Dolls, and Apple Pie. The express goal of the hijackers was retaliation for American military intrusion in the Middle East.

Terrorists do not attack military targets directly because they have no chance to win, so they attack the economic and emotional support therefore, the citizens. Their goal is chaos. If they can lure the greater power into a bigger war, perhaps they can entice others to join their cause, and they may have a chance to come out on top in the ensuing mayhem. The US will win so long as the status quo remains.

Since Vietnam, The US has lost relatively few men in combat, maybe fewer than 10,000 including those lost in the 9-11 attack. But we could have lost 10 times that number. Most reasonable estimated put the number of losses in Desert Storm or any similar excursions in the 10,000's, and that doesn't count retaliations.

When the US deploys troops, it is fine print in America, but you can bet it is War in the headlines in whatever country we invade. Today the US stations over 250,000 troops in every continent on earth.

In the Middle East, our involvement is well documented. We participated in the official creation of Israel following WWII to the great apprehension and disdain of the Arab States. However, every attempt to rend the Jewish state from its Holy Land will surely meet with failure. Their claim to that land is as ancient and legitimate as all the other groups who perpetually fight over that particularly cursed Peace-on-Earth rock.

The Israelis must realize though, that they will be suicidally bombed until they give back legal control to the people of the other nation who share that area. No leader can be defeated until after he has apparent authority. Ultimately, those willing to

cooperate will survive, and the rest will kill each other.

In the past, the US trampled around a bit Red-Coat style spreading its society to people whether they wanted it or not. As a result, the US has lost much of its peaceful reputation. American flags burn in nations throughout the world. During these efforts the US has created some of its worst enemies including Osama Bin Laden, General Noriega, and no doubt future opponents as well.

Americans have not sought to conquer the world, but as all leading powers, we must guard against self-appointed shepherding.

No State should aspire to be the world's policeman. The legal structure which calls for a policeman is entirely different from the world's legal structure. Policemen are trained to protect people's rights within a legal system. When one sovereign state dispatches police within another state's legal system, it undermines that state's legal system, which is, of course, illegal.

Policemen are trained to protect people's rights. Military are trained to kill people. When the US acts as the world's policeman, it sends the military. It would be more compassionate to conquer the country, and impose our courts and policemen designed to protect people's rights. But it's their country, not ours. Democracy cannot be thrust upon a people, it must be earned.

The solution in any event is clear. Re-Draw the battle lines along the line of National Defense, and abandon military efforts advancing mere National interests.

The best international policy was outlined by Teddy Roosevelt. "Walk softly and carry a big stick." (though he was more of a rough rider) More specifically, the US should systematically withdraw its forces from non-strategic locations world wide and refortify its strategic positions. If the US has offended cultures world wide, this will begin to undue that. The US should not

continue to involve itself militarily with allies who do not offer any strategic advantage.

The world is currently divided into roughly 206 sovereign states. By definition sovereign countries control the territory within their borders and are justified in waging war to protect those borders. This is the way the world is. It exists this way not because of any imposed legal system. The UN does not have any legal jurisdiction over world states, nor does the World Court, nor any other intergovernmental organization. The world is this way through the actions of its people.

The recognition of sovereign states is crucial to the world peace. States must allow other states the self-determinism outlined in our Declaration of Independence. Reasonable people can disagree, that is a cornerstone of our own legal system. The idea is that Sovereign nations, like free people, should be allowed to develop along their own philosophical lines so long as it doesn't threaten the other's development. Without the security that their sovereignty will be respected, any state is justified in whatever course of action will lead to that sovereignty and security, including war.

The world states may eventually unite, and there are good and bad ways this can occur. The world should not unite through force when there are peaceful, productive methods like Trade available.

So, when the call is to war, we must take all prudent measures, and make sure we follow these simple guidelines.

1. Do not start the fight,
2. Be sure, if you do not go for it, the fight will come for you
and
3. Fight to end the fighting

As for Iran, apply the above 3 part test. If any are missing, do not war.

Lastly, Congress is the proper authority to declare war, not The President. We do not believe that 650,000 troops constitutes a “police action” as contemplated in our founding documents. Don’t be persuaded by the innuendo that “The President knows more than you and I.” There are only a few points to know, if he knows anything, it’s one of these points, and he should be held to tell the Congress to get approval for war. Otherwise, he will have the power of a monarch, and we will have sacrificed one of our crowning achievements.

As for the war on terror, how long will it last? To the extent that countries cannot control their internal terrorist populations or let them propagate and train to threaten the US, those countries sacrifice their sovereignty and we are justified in controlling their internal affairs in regards to the terrorists. But even this “new” war - which is really not new at all - we must envision an end.

The people are the key. We must undermine the support for the terrorists with trade with the people. If we act aggressively, we will spawn more terrorists. The only way to defeat them is to act morally when it comes to conflict. The terrorists cannot maintain their threat without being able to sell our provocations to their supporters.

At some point we must be satisfied that we have rooted out the perpetrators. We cannot continue to attack everyone who has any link to our enemies. We cannot stop individual attacks like McVeigh’s, and 9-11 with force, we must win that war morally. But the terrorists also cannot win with individual attacks. They can only win if the power structure is changed. Their goal is to goad the major powers into opposing one another militarily, then hope to come out in the winner’s favor.

Technology is advancing at a rate too fast to keep in check. Weapons of mass destruction will be available to whoever wants

them soon. The larger and more powerful a group becomes, the more its interests vest in the status quo. Large nations will not attack us because we are too interconnected. There is prosperity in cooperation. Ultimately, we will have to trade with the people to regain their support. Not incidentally, the most powerful militaries are usually the richest.

The key to avoiding destruction will be to avoid becoming a target. Creation and distribution of the wealth through free trade will remove us as a target. When the prosperity of the West is spread around and is replete, and there is no center to bomb, the terrorists will be defeated, and we can be at peace.