The U.S. Bishops and War since the Peace Pastoral*
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Perhaps no document by a U.S. religious institution has generated as much attention as the U.S. Catholic Bishops' 1983 pastoral letter, *The Challenge of Peace*. At the time, its moral criticism of nuclear weapons was considered such a threat that the Reagan administration went to some length to influence—and, when that failed, to discredit—the document. It was translated into numerous languages and became one of the most widely distributed documents ever issued by the U.S. bishops. It was a cover story in *Newsweek*, the topic of countless editorials, and was selected as religious news story of the year in 1982 and 1983 by numerous publications. The pastoral also generated a cottage industry of commentaries and books, and became a model for pastoral letters by other denominations. George Kennan described it as "the most profound and searching inquiry [into nuclear ethics] yet conducted by any responsible collective body." McGeorge Bundy called it a "landmark" and the *Boston Globe* called it "revolutionary." Andrew Greeley went so far as to conclude that the pastoral "appears to be the most successful intervention to change attitudes ever measured by social science."1

Given the unique nature of the document and the confluence of events contributing to its impact, it is not surprising that subsequent bishops' documents did not compare. But it does not follow that the peace pastoral was the end of serious episcopal engagement on war and peace. The bishops' engagement did not end; what ended was the style of and political context for that engagement. Intensive processes of public consultation and monograph-length pastorals were replaced with shorter, more accessible statements and more systematic efforts to improve the education and advocacy capacity of dioceses and parishes. After the Cold War ended, the bishops were not faced with a world seemingly on the brink of nuclear war and an administration that [End Page 73] was actively and publicly outspoken against the Church's position. Changes in leadership also had an impact, as the generation of Vatican II bishops who were active and influential on international issues gradually gave way to bishops who were preoccupied with other matters, especially after the sex abuse crisis of 2002-2004.

issued illustrates the extent of episcopal engagement: dozens on the U.S. military interventions in Central America in the 1980s and dozens more on the Balkan wars. The largest number of major statements was on Iraq. In addition to U.S. military interventions, the bishops were often one of the few voices urging constructive U.S. engagement in resolving a host of local and regional conflicts, from the perennial priority issue, Israel-Palestine, and a sustained, twenty-year engagement in Northern Ireland to Northern Uganda, Colombia, Congo, Sudan, and South Africa, to name just a few. Finally, the bishops continued to address nuclear weapons and other issues, such as landmines, the arms trade, U.S. military spending, and conscientious objection.

The breadth of issues the bishops addressed was matched by the variety of ways in which they engaged. In part inspired by the peace and economy pastorals, the bishops undertook a much more focused effort, beginning in the late 1980s, to develop diocesan and parish education and advocacy networks around issues of social justice. The multi-year Catholic Campaign to Ban Landmines in the mid-1990s and the debt relief campaign of the late 1990s to the present were two of the most sustained and comprehensive of these efforts. Beginning in the mid-1990s, Catholic Relief Services, the bishops' development agency, also began devoting many more resources to education and advocacy in the United States. The bishops played the role of convener as well, hosting a decisive, off-the-record gathering of all the major players on debt relief at Seton Hall University in 1998, and hosting a similar gathering on the arms trade in 1996. They also deepened bonds of solidarity by sending dozens of U.S. bishops' delegations to conflict zones and hosting a similar number of advocacy visits by bishops from these areas.

A short article cannot begin to do justice to this breadth of issues and variety of types of engagement on issues of war and peace. This article focuses on the three issues that posed the greatest challenge to the strict interpretation of the just war tradition enunciated in the peace pastoral: (1) nuclear weapons, the challenge of the 1980s; (2) humanitarian intervention, the challenge of the 1990s; and (3) preventive war and occupation in Iraq, the challenge of the first decade of the twenty-first century. Nuclear weapons represented the unfinished agenda of the pastoral, an on-going effort to apply the pastoral's strict *jus in bello* analysis, not only to new developments in nuclear policy, but also to other issues, notably landmines, bombing campaigns in the two Iraq wars and Kosovo, and economic sanctions. Humanitarian intervention and preventive war presented challenges to the bishops' restrictive interpretation of the *jus ad bellum* [End Page 74] and highlighted the need to develop a *jus post bellum*. All of these challenges reinforced the importance of developing the spirituality, theology and ethics of peace that the bishops called for in the often-ignored third part of the pastoral.

**Nuclear Weapons: the Unfinished Agenda of the 1980s**

The most important long-term contribution of the peace pastoral and subsequent statements was to help cement the revival of the just war tradition in U.S. public debates
about war, a revival that began with the Vietnam War. This revival is most evident in the just war's *jus in bello* criteria, which were at the heart of the bishops' analysis of nuclear weapons: proportionality (prohibits attacks which cause disproportionate harm) and discrimination (prohibits direct, intentional attacks on civilians).

The peace pastoral was a document of the Cold War, and its visibility and impact were largely a function of the crisis in U.S.-Soviet relations and the widespread fear of global nuclear war in the early 1980s. A little more than a year after the bishops issued a major follow-up report on nuclear deterrence, *A Report on The Challenge of Peace and Policy Developments: 1983-1988*, the Berlin Wall was torn down and the nuclear issue quickly receded in importance. The fifty-five-page 1993 statement, *The Harvest of Justice Is Sown in Peace*, devotes only four pages to the nuclear question. This document marked a shift in the bishops' priorities. They continued to address nuclear use and deterrence, the preoccupations of the pastoral, but nuclear disarmament received much greater emphasis.

Consistent with the only formal condemnation of the Second Vatican Council—counterpopulation warfare—the pastoral categorically rejected "city-busting" nuclear strategies as indiscriminate; opposed, on prudential grounds, the first use of nuclear weapons; and expressed a strong skepticism about, but did not rule out the moral possibility of, a limited second (or retaliatory) use. What Bryan Hehir called a "centimeter of ambiguity" about use was grounded in empirical judgments about the political and psychological significance of breaking the taboo against nuclear use, the tremendous difficulty in controlling and limiting nuclear war, and the morally disproportionate harm that would be involved in even limited nuclear strikes.

Ironically, after the end of the Cold War, while the risk of global nuclear war receded, the risk of nuclear use increased. Nuclear proliferation, especially by Iraq, Iran and North Korea, "loose nukes" from the former Soviet Union and Pakistan, the rise of global terrorism, and some U.S. policies all contributed to this greater risk of nuclear use. While *The Harvest of Justice* largely reiterated the basic approach of the peace pastoral on nuclear use, it went beyond the pastoral in concluding: "Indeed, we abhor any use of nuclear weapons." This strong language was inserted by Cardinal Joseph Bernardin of Chicago, who had chaired the pastoral's drafting committee. He insisted that it did not change the "centimeter of ambiguity" about use in the pastoral, but was needed to reinforce the bishops' concerns at a time when the risk of nuclear use seemed more likely.

The bishops continued to oppose new or redesigned weapons that were part of a warfighting strategy, such as the Robust Nuclear Earth Penetrator (so-called "mini-nukes" or "bunker busters"), and they continued to oppose first use in the face of an intentionally ambiguous U.S. policy, which held out the possibility of using nuclear weapons in response to non-nuclear threats. Bishop Wilton Gregory's statement prior to the 2003 Iraq war was typical:

We are threatened by regimes and terrorists who ignore traditional norms governing the use of force; all the more reason that we must uphold and reinforce them through our own
actions. Any implied or express threats to defend against Iraq's weapons of mass destruction by using our own weapons of mass destruction would be clearly unjustified.2

The second preoccupation of the pastoral, nuclear deterrence, continued to receive attention in subsequent years. The main policy issue was missile defense; the main internal Church issue was the continued viability of the bishops' strictly-conditioned moral acceptance of deterrence.

The bishops had concluded in 1983 that deterrence could be morally acceptable if (1) it was limited to deterring nuclear use and did not involve nuclear-war fighting strategies; (2) sufficiency, not nuclear superiority, was the goal; and (3) deterrence was a step toward progressive disarmament.3 These conditions constituted an "interim ethic" whereby certain limited forms of deterrence may be acceptable in the short- or mid-term, but the direction of deterrence must be a global ban on nuclear weapons.

The most important change in U.S. deterrence policy that emerged after the pastoral was the Reagan administration's Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI), dubbed "Star Wars" by its critics. It was announced just before the bishops issued their pastoral in 1983. While its parentage is complex, one factor in this closely-held decision was a concern about the apparent decreasing public support for deterrence and its moral legitimacy that the freeze movement and the pastoral seemed to represent.4 Whether [End Page 76] or not the bishops' moral critique played a role in President Reagan's decision, his administration sold SDI as a morally superior approach to nuclear deterrence, and, while the bishops did not address the issue until June 1988, the pastoral was often cited by proponents and opponents alike as providing moral support for their position.

The bishops' five-year report on deterrence was most notable for its lengthy analysis of SDI. They concluded that, while the ethic of intention that sought to justify missile defense as a way to transcend deterrence was legitimate, the morality of SDI also depended on an ethic of consequences. They came to a "prudential judgment that proposals to press deployment of SDI do not measure up to the moral criteria outlined in this report."5 While some of the stated objectives of moving away from deterrence were laudable, the bishops were concerned about the negative impact on arms control agreements, especially the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty; that SDI could contribute to a new arms race; that it could undermine the stability of deterrence; and that its cost could be morally disproportionate.

The continued validity of the bishops' strictly-conditioned moral acceptance of deterrence was not a major policy issue after the pastoral, probably because many foreign policy specialists mistakenly believed that the bishops had, for all practical purposes, condemned both nuclear use and deterrence. Within the Church, however, this was the most important issue, at least for nuclear pacifists. Cardinal Bernardin was clear from the first meeting of the committee that drafted the 1988 report that its mandate did not include a reconsideration of the pastoral's moral analysis of nuclear weapons, but only an evaluation of U.S. nuclear policies since the pastoral. From the time of the debate on the pastoral, Bishop Thomas Gumbleton, auxiliary bishop of Detroit and a member of the
committees that drafted the peace pastoral and the 1988 report, eloquently argued that it was obvious that the bishops should withdraw their moral acceptance of deterrence because U.S. nuclear policies did not meet the bishops' strict conditions. He only acquiesced in the report when a paragraph was added that acknowledged his position, without endorsing it. At subsequent major anniversaries of the pastoral, Pax Christi issued statements—the most notable in 1998 by ninety-four Pax Christi bishops—calling on the USCCB to declare the U.S. nuclear deterrent immoral, once and for all.

What is interesting is that the bishops did not change their position, even in the face of statements by some Vatican officials that seemed to support the nuclear pacifists. In 1988, 1993 and afterward, the bishops continued to argue that their conditional acceptance of deterrence remained a useful guide for evaluating the moral status of nuclear weapons in a post-Cold War world. Rather than undermining their moral credibility, as the nuclear pacifists claimed, the bishops believed their position rightly acknowledged the fundamental moral dilemmas still posed by nuclear weapons, yet also highlighted the moral urgency of creating the institutions of cooperative security and pursuing the specific policy measures necessary to move toward nuclear disarmament.

The conditional acceptance of deterrence formula was less about providing a basis for proscribing nuclear deterrence, in general, and more about prescribing directions for policy. The bishops repeatedly noted that progress on nuclear disarmament was not commensurate with the new opportunities afforded by the end of the Cold War. They acknowledged that the risk of nuclear war between the Cold War rivals had virtually disappeared along with entire categories of weapons (e.g., the INF Treaty), and that the deployed U.S. arsenal was a fraction of what it was. Yet, they criticized deployment of missile defense and other destabilizing nuclear policies, and the refusal to ratify the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, to commit to a no-first-use policy, and, after the 2002 Moscow Treaty, to pursue deeper cuts in still-robust nuclear arsenals. Given the clear and consistent criticisms, supporters of U.S. policy found little to comfort them in the bishops' approach.

These internal Church debates on the morality of the U.S. deterrent sometimes obscured the most important evolution of the bishops' position after 1983. The peace pastoral focused on the arms control criteria embodied in the first two conditions for the moral acceptance of deterrence. With the end of the Cold War, the bishops shifted their attention to the third condition: mutual, verifiable disarmament. What was seen as an almost utopian moral ideal in 1983 became a "policy goal" in 1993. Numerous subsequent statements reiterated this emphasis on nuclear disarmament.

While the nuclear pacifists were challenging the bishops' moral integrity for failing to condemn deterrence, nuclear realists were challenging their strategic sophistication, not least because of their call for disarmament. Fortunately for the bishops, by the mid-1990s, former military leaders, notably General Lee Butler, gained wide attention with calls for nuclear disarmament. A decade later, Henry Kissinger, George Shultz, William Perry, Sam Nunn, and other prominent realists, most of whom had roundly criticized the peace pastoral when it was issued, joined the call for a global ban.
on nuclear weapons.\textsuperscript{18} The new calls for a global ban by respected military leaders led to a novel joint initiative of religious and military leaders in June 2000. After almost a year of careful work, the heads of major Christian denominations in the United States joined former military leaders in an unprecedented statement.\textsuperscript{19} This statement enabled the generals to be associated with more sophisticated moral arguments for disarmament, arguments they would not make on their own, while the religious leaders gained credibility from the generals who, by association, helped them overcome the gap between technical and moral competence.

The nuclear issue was, by no means the only or the most visible \textit{jus in bello} issue addressed by the bishops after the pastoral. Their strict interpretation of non-combatant immunity and proportionality shaped their campaign to ban landmines, their response to the bombing campaigns in Iraq I and II, and Kosovo, and their decade-long effort to reshape the Iraq embargo.

As the only religious group in the inner circle of the Vietnam Veterans Nobel Prize-winning effort to ban landmines, the bishops' Catholic Campaign to Ban Landmines brought two things that the secular organizations involved in the campaign mostly lacked: a strong moral critique and the ability to mobilize ordinary people against U.S. policy. The bishops' conference hired Sr. Janice Ryan, former president of Trinity College in Vermont, to run the Catholic Campaign. Throughout the mid- to late-1990s, the bishops played a key role in generating support for congressional legislation on landmines. Educational packets were sent to virtually every parish in the country, diocesan and parish legislative networks were mobilized, and many bishops weighed in on legislation as they criticized the U.S. refusal to join the 1997 Mine Ban Treaty.\textsuperscript{20}

The U.S. bombing campaigns reflected two countervailing developments. On the one hand, with new "smart bombs" and stricter rules of engagement than in the past, the United States had the intent and ever-increasing capacity to wage what it claimed, in each case, were the most discriminate bombings ever. On the other hand, the doctrine of overwhelming force and the emphasis, until Afghanistan, on fighting "zero-casualty" wars led to targeting basic infrastructure, bombing from 15,000 feet, and other tactics that effectively reversed, in the view of the bishops, the duty of care soldiers owed civilians. The bishops' interpretation of \textit{jus in bello} obligations was far stricter than the conventional understanding. Prior to the Iraq war in 2003, Bishop Wilton Gregory defined them as follows: "In all our actions in war, including assessments of whether 'collateral damage' is proportionate, we must value the lives and livelihood of Iraqi civilians as we would the lives and livelihood of our own families and our own citizens."\textsuperscript{21} Given their concerns about the "fog of war" and the limits of their clerical competence, the bishops avoided sweeping moral judgments about on-going military interventions, but they did not refrain from all criticism. During the Kosovo intervention, for example, Bishop Joseph Fiorenza cautioned that we are "increasingly troubled by the escalating NATO air campaign, which is causing mounting civilian casualties and is increasingly directed against essential civilian infrastructure. These attacks pose an immediate threat to the civilian population and risk the long-term impoverishment of Yugoslavia, yet appear to have limited success in halting ethnic cleansing in Kosovo."\textsuperscript{22}
The Iraq embargo (as well as later embargoes against Haiti and Serbia) posed particular challenges for the bishops because they had taken the "let sanctions work" position in opposing the U.S. intervention in 1991. By that summer they were testifying before Congress for an easing of the embargo because of the massive suffering and death it was causing in Iraq. For the next twelve years, they issued a series of statements calling for replacing comprehensive sanctions with much more targeted ("smart") sanctions, with much broader humanitarian exemptions, so as to ensure that sanctions would be an alternative to war not an alternate form of war.

Challenges to the Jus ad Bellum

Modern Catholic teaching on the ethics of war and peace can be understood as an effort to hold the line against total war. Nuclear weapons, landmines, bombing campaigns and sanctions challenged the bishops' strict interpretation of jus in bello norms. The end of the Cold War brought a host of new issues that challenged a strict interpretation of the jus ad bellum. The main challenge of the 1990s was humanitarian intervention; the main challenge of the first decade of the new century was preventive war and its progeny: occupation. [End Page 80]

Humanitarian Intervention: The Challenge of the 1990s

Genocide and "ethnic cleansing" are types of total war that flourished after the end of the Cold War. These types of total war do not challenge a strict just war approach (they are universally condemned) as much as the military interventions that seemed necessary to stop them. Part of the legacy of Vietnam was that the U.S. bishops, like many religious leaders in the United States, adopted a healthy skepticism about U.S. military interventions, opposing the contra war in Nicaragua, the interventions in Grenada and Panama, and the first Iraq war. Their skepticism corresponded with official Church teaching and the Holy See's pronouncements on these conflicts. Conservative critics, such as James Turner Johnson and George Weigel, dismissed the bishops skepticism as a "functional pacifism" that effectively emasculated the just war tradition. Others, including some in the Vatican, reinforced this critique by suggesting that the Church should discard the just war tradition altogether. The bishops' response to the long litany of genocides and humanitarian catastrophes, from Somalia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, and Rwanda to East Timor, Kosovo, and Sudan challenged the descriptive power of the critics and the normative claims of the pacifists.

Those who labeled the bishops "functional pacifists" objected to their claim in the peace pastoral that just war analysis begins with a presumption "in favor of peace and against war," a presumption which can be overridden only for "extraordinarily strong reasons." According to the bishops, this presumption was the common starting point for the just war and non-violent traditions, making them "distinct but interdependent methods of evaluating warfare." The dramatic non-violent political transformations in the Philippines, Eastern Europe and South Africa in the 1980s and early 1990s led the bishops to give special emphasis to the interdependence of the two traditions in The
Harvest of Justice: "One must ask, in light of recent history, whether nonviolence should be restricted to personal commitments or whether it also should have a place in the public order with the tradition of justified and limited war."  

These statements reflected a growing appreciation in Catholic teaching of the normative power of nonviolence as well as its practical efficacy, and they coincided with a growing commitment to non-violence among a minority of Catholics. The effect on the bishops' analysis was mostly indirect, however. The growth of non-violence reinforced the presumption against war, the last resort criterion, and support for conscientious objection, but the just war tradition clearly remained in possession. In official Church teaching, non-violence remained an option for individuals, not states; few bishops doubted that U.S. military interventions should be judged by just war criteria. [End Page 81] That the bishops were neither functional nor principled pacifists was evident in their treatment of humanitarian intervention.

In the peace pastoral, the bishops addressed the first principles of international security, with humanitarian intervention they were forced to reexamine the first principles of international affairs more broadly, namely, the meaning and relevance of sovereignty, non-intervention, and the global security architecture of the U.N. Charter.

At a time when the United States was turning inward, the The Harvest of Justice offered an extended ethical argument for a more responsible and engaged U.S. foreign policy. They argued that the end of the superpower rivalry gave the United States, as the sole superpower, a historic opportunity and "special responsibility" to play a leading role in building what the bishops called a new system of global "cooperative security." The humanitarian nightmares in Somalia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Haiti and Rwanda severely tested these hopes for a "new world order." In the face of these conflicts, the bishops remained skeptical of military solutions, especially unilateral ones by the United States. But they saw a new opportunity for the United States to help the United Nations develop its capacity to mount effective peace operations that could help resolve them.

The hopes for a more responsible U.S. role were reinforced by the ecclesial context. Pope John Paul II was outspoken in calling for not only a right but a duty of humanitarian intervention to "disarm th[e] aggressor" when "the survival of populations and entire ethnic groups is seriously compromised." Over the course of the next decade, this developed into strong support by Pope Benedict XVI for a nascent concept in international law of a "responsibility to protect." The bishops were also besieged by appeals for outside intervention from the Church in conflict zones.

Building on these developments within the Church, The Harvest of Justice proposed a moral framework that Robert McNamara called "one of the most interesting and important recent attempts to confront [the] moral blind alleys" of humanitarian intervention. The bishops rooted their analysis in a cosmopolitan understanding of international affairs that is human-centric rather than state-centric. They reiterated long-standing Church teaching that sovereignty and non-intervention "remain crucial to maintaining international peace and the integrity of nations, especially the weaker ones,"
but are not absolute norms. Consistent with their healthy skepticism about military force, they emphasized that "nonmilitary forms of intervention should take priority over those requiring the use of force." "Military intervention may sometimes be justified," however, "to ensure that starving children can be fed or that whole populations will not be slaughtered." According to the bishops, these cases represented "St. Augustine's classic case: love may require force to protect the innocent." Finally, the bishops tied the "right to intervene" to the "broader effort to strengthen international law and the international community." They urged that this right be "more clearly defined in international law" and suggested that "multilateral interventions, under the auspices of the United Nations, are preferable because they enhance the legitimacy of these actions and can protect against abuse."33

The most sustained effort to apply and develop these general criteria was the war in the former Yugoslavia, the bishops' highest priority international issue between 1991 and 1995. As part of blanketing the former Soviet bloc with delegations of bishops and leaders of Catholic foundations during a six-week stretch in the summer of 1990, a delegation, led by Archbishop Theodore McCarrick of Newark, went to Yugoslavia. The delegation arrived in Zagreb on August 17, the day the Krajina Serbs began the "Log Revolution" in Knin, what turned out to be the first shot in a decadelong war over the dissolution of Yugoslavia. The following day, in an hour-long lecture, the Archbishop of Zagreb, Cardinal Franjo Kuharic, a powerful and respected defender of Catholic and Croatian identity, warned the delegation that Yugoslavia was at risk of imploding. If that happened, he argued, independence was the only way Croatia, Slovenia, and other constituent republics could guarantee their survival and democratic flourishing in the face of the virulent, aggressive Serbian nationalism of Slobodan Milosevic.

In part as a result of this delegation (which also went to Serbia and Slovenia), when full-scale fighting broke out after the June 25, 1991 declarations of independence by Slovenia and Croatia, the bishops were nearly alone in Washington in voicing concern. By the time war erupted in Bosnia-Herzegovina in May 1992, they had invited Cardinal Kuharic to address their general meeting in November 1991 and had issued numerous statements calling for constructive U.S. engagement and recognition of the new countries. All told, from 1990 to 1999, Archbishop McCarrick and other U.S. bishops made more than a dozen trips to Croatia, Bosnia Herzegovina, Kosovo and Serbia, including several to Sarajevo during the siege. The bishops also helped give the Church in this war-torn region a voice in Washington by hosting a similar number of visits by Cardinal Kuharic and Cardinal Vinko Puljic of Sarajevo, Bishop Franjo Komarica of Banja Luka, and other Church leaders.34

A May 1993 letter on the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina from Archbishop John Roach to Secretary of State Warren Christopher reflected the delicate balance between the bishops' strict interpretation of just war and their support for humanitarian intervention—and how susceptible their nuanced position was to misunderstanding. The purpose of Archbishop Roach's four-page letter was to reject "arguments that the United States has no role or responsibility in stopping the slaughter in Bosnia [-Herzegovina]," while raising serious moral concerns about the Clinton administration's proposal to lift
the arms embargo and employ airstrikes against Serb forces. He noted that there was ultimately no military solution to the conflict, only a political one. Nevertheless, citing the pope's January 1993 statement about "disarming the aggressor," he concluded that there was just cause to use limited force "to defend largely helpless people in Bosnia[-Herzegovina] against aggression and barbarism." As an alternative to Clinton's "lift-and-strike" proposal, he called for more limited options of using international forces to establish and defend "safe havens," to protect fleeing refugees, to ensure the delivery of aid to the needy, and to enforce economic sanctions and any future political settlement.  

Fueled by a misleading Los Angeles Times news service article that singled out the language about just cause to disarm the aggressor, a letter that was intended to raise moral doubts about Clinton's "lift-and-strike" policy instead generated front-page headlines around the country claiming the bishops endorsed U.S. military intervention. The media firestorm led Archbishop Roach and Bishop Anthony Pilla, president of the conference, to issue unusual separate clarifications, insisting that the "bishops have not given a categorical endorsement to U.S. military intervention in Bosnia[-Herzegovina]." Until the war ended in 1995, the bishops continued to support limited forms of military intervention in Bosnia-Herzegovina, under U.N. auspices, for strictly humanitarian objectives.

Rwanda's three-month genocide in 1994 didn't afford the same kind of long-term engagement as Bosnia-Herzegovina, but the bishops did urge the United States to support U.N. intervention to stop the slaughter. In the case of East Timor, the bishops had long been virtually alone in Washington in bringing attention to the plight of this country suffering under Indonesian rule. When Indonesian security forces and militias unleashed a violent campaign in response to the U.N.-sanctioned independence referendum of August 30, 1999, Archbishop Theodore McCarrick and Bishop John Cummins of Oakland were in Saigon and had to cancel their planned visit to [End Page 84] East Timor. Thomas Quigley, the bishops' specialist who had preceded the bishops to Dili, was forced to leave Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Bishop Carlos Ximenes Belo the day before his residence was burned down and he was forced into exile. In a moving appeal, Bishop Joseph Fiorenza wrote President Clinton about the massacres; the killing of priests, women religious, and Caritas workers; and the wounding of Bishop Basilio Do Nascimento of Baucau and the exile of Bishop Belo. He demanded: "Mr. President, this must end, and end immediately. A peacekeeping force must be sent to the region, with or without the acquiescence of Jakarta. . . . We cannot betray them."

The U.S. intervention in Kosovo was distinctive. While U.S. troops had been engaged in humanitarian interventions in Somalia and Haiti and the United States had launched limited military strikes against Serb forces in Bosnia-Herzegovina, this was the first time the United States, under NATO (but without U.N. Security Council) authorization, embarked on a major war for ostensibly humanitarian reasons.

Bishop Fiorenza issued a statement on the first day of the NATO bombing in March 1999. Consistent with the bishops' practice of broad consultation, the statement, drafted only two days earlier, had been reviewed and approved by the Vatican Secretary of State,
bishops in Kosovo and Serbia, CRS personnel in the region, a half dozen prominent ethicists, and the bishops' sixty-member administrative board. In his statement, Bishop Fiorenza said that it "was clear" that the humanitarian objective of protecting civilian populations was "legitimate." "What is less clear," he continued, "are the consequences of the use of force." He asked:

What harm will Serb civilians suffer? Will bombing protect the civilian population in Kosovo against aggression or instead intensify these attacks and strengthen the Yugoslav regime's resistance to a political settlement? What are the consequences of failing to act? What is the likelihood of bombing achieving its aims, and what is likely to follow if bombing does not succeed? Finally, how does bombing comport with international law?

What is clear is that there is no substitute for a genuine dialogue between the parties to this conflict, a dialogue that, in the end, offers the best and only hope for a new relationship between the peoples of the region, one based on authentic self-government, with control of local institutions returned to the local population and effective guarantees of minority rights put in place and enforced.40

Bishop Fiorenza's acknowledgement that there was just cause for international action, and his emphasis on success, proportionality, and negotiations was consistent with the Holy See's position. His application of the legitimate authority criterion, however, diverged somewhat from the Holy See's approach. As with Iraq in 2003, the Holy See maintained that the NATO intervention was illegal because it lacked U.N. Security Council approval. Bishop Fiorenza's oblique reference to international law acknowledged, but did not emphasize, this concern. In Somalia, Haiti, Bosnia Herzegovina and Rwanda, the bishops assumed U.N. approval was important, and in The Harvest of Justice they said multilateral interventions, under the auspices of the U.N., are "preferable because they enhance the legitimacy of these actions and can protect against abuse."41 Since, in Kosovo, the U.N. Security Council was incapacitated by the Russian veto, the U.S. bishops were less willing than the Holy See to insist on U.N. approval, especially given that the intervention was multilateral and had widespread international support. Similarly, in condemning the Iraq war in 2003, the Holy See emphasized the lack of U.N. Security Council approval much more than the bishops. In fact, in the floor debate on the bishops' November 2002 statement on Iraq, the major question at issue was whether legitimate authority required U.N. Security Council approval as a matter of principal or only as a matter of prudence in that particular case. They concluded it was the latter.

The bishops' approach to humanitarian intervention is important for three reasons. First, it rightly refocused the just war debate—which had been preoccupied with last resort, probability of success, proportionality and discrimination—on just cause and legitimate authority. While the bishops did not insist on U.N. intervention, their support for humanitarian intervention was tied to calls for much more concerted efforts by the United States and others to strengthen the capacity and political will of the U.N. to develop its peace enforcement operations. Second, while the bishops always emphasized the need to give priority to non-military means, their position on humanitarian intervention showed
that the facile labeling of the bishops as "functional pacifists" misunderstood the seriousness with which they took the tradition. Third, it made clear that a just war analysis that permitted some forms of multilateral humanitarian intervention had to be tied to a much broader ethic and international effort that could address the root causes of these internal conflicts, that could support the spread of democratic and just political and economic orders, that could prevent conflicts and settle them promptly and peacefully when they erupt, and that could help rebuild and heal broken societies. In short, the bishops' just war analysis of humanitarian intervention was linked to an ethic and strategy of peacebuilding.

**Preventive War and Occupation: The Challenge of the New Century**

The wars in the Balkans personified the religious-ethnic nationalism that erupted with such ferocity after the Cold War. They were followed by 9/11 and the emergence of global religious terrorism. While they were very different phenomena and they would resent the comparison, religious nationalists in Bosnia-Herzegovina shared something with al Qaeda terrorists: both preached a form of total war—holy war. In *The Harvest of Justice, Living with Faith and Hope after 9/11*, and innumerable statements on particular conflicts and ecumenical and inter-religious initiatives, the bishops broke significant new ground in responding to these conflicts in which religion played such a prominent role. I have examined that topic in detail elsewhere.

While holy war, whether religious-nationalist violence or religious terrorism, is an obvious affront to the just war tradition, like genocide, it has long been widely condemned. The more insidious challenge to the tradition came from the Bush administration's response to religious terrorism and the "rogue" states that supported it, especially its preventive war doctrine. This doctrine posed the most serious threat to the just war tradition since the advent of nuclear weapons and, in many ways, epitomized what was wrong with the "war on terror."

In November 2001, the bishops issued a major statement on U.S. policy after 9/11. The statement covered a range of issues, but a major focus was Afghanistan. Afghanistan represented a departure from international law. Terrorism had been treated as a crime, not an act of war that justified military intervention against governments (like the Taliban) that supported or harbored them. Afghanistan did not, however, represent a significant departure from the just war tradition. While not advocating military intervention, the U.S. bishops acknowledged that the United States and the international community had just cause to use limited force to defend against al Qaeda and the Taliban government, which was directly and indirectly complicit in supporting bin Laden's terrorist enterprise. As in all their statements on war, they raised concerns about proportionality and probability of success, and about abiding by the *jus in bello* criteria.

The bishops' main concern after 9/11 was not military intervention in Afghanistan. Instead, they urged that security be defined broadly so as to address the roots of
terrorism, and they warned against a counterproductive overreaction to 9/11 that relied excessively on military force and succumbed to the temptation to trade freedom for security. The over-reliance on military force that they warned against reached its zenith with the preventive war justification for the invasion and occupation of Iraq in 2003. This justification, one of several, was the major reason the Vatican and Church leaders around the world were so outspoken in opposing the war.

Immediately after the 9/11 attacks, Cardinal Bernard Law of Boston, chairman of the bishops' International Policy Committee, appointed Mary Ann Glendon of Harvard Law School (and later U.S. Ambassador to the Holy See) to head a subcommittee to develop the bishops' response. That subcommittee met by conference call almost weekly for several months to develop the bishops' position on Afghanistan and their November 2001 statement on terrorism. It then set to work developing a detailed argument against military intervention in Iraq, which was approved by the full committee at its semi-annual meeting in December 2001. The full committee presented its case against intervention in a meeting with National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice on May 21, 2002. That meeting was followed by a letter from Bishop Wilton Gregory to President George Bush on September 13, 2002, which he delivered to Dr. Rice three days later in a joint meeting with Presiding Bishops Francis Griswold and Mark Hanson of the Episcopal and Evangelical Lutheran Churches, respectively. The full body of bishops issued a major statement opposing intervention on November 13, 2002, which was followed by a statement by Bishop Wilton Gregory, president of the conference, on February 26, 2003. Cardinals Theodore McCarrick of Washington, William Keeler of Baltimore, Edward Egan of New York, and Anthony Bevilacqua of Philadelphia met with Dr. Rice on March 3, 2003, two days before special papal envoy Cardinal Pio Laghi delivered a letter from Pope John Paul II to President Bush. In what White House observers considered an unprecedented snub, Cardinal Laghi was not permitted to talk with the media on White House grounds, as was typical for dignitaries meeting the President.

In addition to these activities at the leadership level, the Church had not seen so much organized local activity on an issue of war and peace since the peace pastoral. Most bishops issued their own statements against the war, and many asked parishes to distribute the November statement, and, in some cases, asked that it be read from the pulpit. It was not uncommon for USCCB action alerts on the war to be included in parish bulletins, and many parishes and dioceses sponsored educational programs on the war.

The extent of the activity was surprising given that the war came in the middle of the sex abuse crisis, when the bishops' moral credibility was at an all-time low. One of the casualties of the sex abuse crisis was that the bishops' position on the war was not taken as seriously as it otherwise might have been. In fact, Cardinal Law, the architect of and spokesman for the bishops' position, and the bishop with the closest relationship to the Bush administration, was at the epicenter of the sex abuse crisis.

By the time the bishops developed their position on intervention in Iraq in late 2001, Iraq had become a perennial issue. No other single international issue had received as much
attention at the bishops' general meetings. In opposing the war, as in their earlier statements urging a reshaped embargo, the bishops were clear that the international community had a moral duty to address the threat the Iraqi regime posed to its neighbors and its own people. The question was one of means.

What was new this time was the Bush administration's preventive war argument. In its *2002 National Security Strategy*, the administration argued that if the threats represented by Iraq and 9/11—a rogue regime, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and global terrorism—were to converge, the combination would be so threatening that traditional strategies and norms would not be adequate. Notions of self-defense against aggression or anticipatory self-defense against an imminent attack had to be rethought. Waiting for the mushroom cloud in Manhattan or an attack that appeared imminent could be disastrous. Even long after the intervention, the president and his subordinates repeatedly argued that all that was needed to justify military force was a "potential" or "gathering" danger.46

In effect, the bishops acknowledged the Bush administration's point: Iraq was a hard case. But, as lawyers like to say, they implied that "hard cases make bad law." The bishops, with the Holy See and Catholic leaders around the world, were deeply concerned about the precedent that would be set if this new doctrine of preventive war were widely accepted. The bishops were willing to go beyond the *Catechism* in acknowledging the possibility of responding to an imminent attack (as opposed to only actual aggression). But they could not countenance the emasculation of just cause and last resort that would occur if only "potential" or "gathering" dangers justified resort to war. In their November 2002 statement they concluded:

Based on the facts that are known to us, we continue to find it difficult to justify the resort to war against Iraq, lacking clear and adequate evidence of an imminent attack of a grave nature. . . . [W]e fear that resort to war, under present circumstances and in light of current public information, would not meet the strict conditions in Catholic teaching for overriding the strong presumption against the use of military force. . . .

We are deeply concerned about recent proposals to expand dramatically traditional limits on just cause to include preventive uses of military force to overthrow threatening regimes or to deal with weapons of mass destruction. Consistent with the proscriptions contained in international law, a distinction should be made between efforts to change unacceptable behavior of a government and efforts to end that government's existence.47

Like other opponents of the war, the alternatives to the use of force that the bishops proposed included continued work through the U.N. to ensure compliance with U.N. resolutions regarding inspections and the destruction of weapons, a strengthening of non-proliferation measures, and "constructive, effective and legitimate ways to contain and deter aggressive Iraqi actions and threats." They urged effective enforcement of the military embargo and maintenance of political sanctions, with "much more carefully-focused economic sanctions which do not threaten the lives of innocent Iraqi civilians."48
While the bishops' opposition to preventive war was essential if they were to preserve a restrictive interpretation of the just war tradition, their cautions about prospects for success, in retrospect, were prescient and foreshadowed their approach to the post-intervention occupation. They warned:

[The] war against Iraq could have unpredictable consequences not only for Iraq but for peace and stability elsewhere in the Middle East. The use of force might provoke the very kind of attacks that it is intended to prevent, could impose terrible new burdens on an already long-suffering civilian population, and could lead to wider conflict and instability in the region. War against Iraq could also detract from the responsibility to help build a just and stable order in Afghanistan and could undermine broader efforts to stop terrorism.  

Three months later, Bishop Gregory added: "A post-war Iraq would require a long-term commitment to reconstruction, humanitarian and refugee assistance, and establishment of a stable, democratic government at a time when the U.S. federal budget is overwhelmed by increased defense spending and the costs of war."  

With the U.S. occupation of Iraq (and the continuing U.S. role in Afghanistan), the bishops were faced with issues that were largely unexplored in Church teaching. The moral dilemmas involved in counter-insurgency warfare in both countries were not new. What was new was the ethics of occupation and exit. These issues required a composite moral analysis, which drew on elements of the \textit{jus ad bellum}, \textit{jus in bello}, and, what some have called, a \textit{jus post bellum}.  

The bishops developed this composite moral analysis in two dozen letters and statements on post-intervention Iraq. Bishop Gregory's March 19, 2003 statement insisted that the United States protect civilians, prevent civil strife, and "accept the long-term responsibility to help Iraqis build a just and enduring peace." In a letter to Congress in early April 2003, and in a subsequent meeting of Cardinal McCarrick and a dozen other religious leaders with Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld that same month, the bishops urged greater funding than was proposed for reconstruction and humanitarian needs, and opposed proposals to give the Department of Defense control over reconstruction. Secretary Rumsfeld dismissed these concerns, especially the need for the Defense Department to respect the critical role of private relief and development agencies like Catholic Relief Services, which had been on the ground in Iraq through most of the period between the two wars.  

The bishops' position on post-intervention Iraq was notable in that it rejected a common "anti-war" argument: if it was immoral to intervene, it must be immoral to stay. They acknowledged that there was a relationship between an ethics of intervention (the \textit{jus ad bellum}) and an ethics of exit (\textit{jus post bellum}). Certainly, the failure to gain the necessary Iraqi and international support for U.S.-led rebuilding in Iraq was complicated by the fact that so many considered the original intervention to have been illegal and immoral. Nevertheless, as Bishop William Skylstad said in November 2006,
the focus should be "more on the ethics of exit than on the ethics of intervention." He summarized the bishops' position as follows:

The intervention in Iraq has brought additional moral responsibilities to help Iraqis to secure and rebuild their country. Our nation's military forces should remain in Iraq only as long as their presence contributes to a responsible transition. Our nation should look for effective ways to end their deployment at the earliest opportunity consistent with this goal.

Reading their pre-war and post-war statements together, the bishops were suggesting that Iraq may have been an optional, immoral war in 2003, but deep engagement, including with military forces, was not an optional moral commitment after the intervention.

The bishops defined a robust set of U.S. responsibilities, from protecting civilians and establishing security to ensuring political stability, respect for basic human rights, especially religious freedom, and massive economic reconstruction. This maximalist understanding of U.S. responsibilities, with Iraqi interests as paramount, distinguished them from the much more minimalist approach of many opponents of continued U.S. military engagement, who gave priority to U.S. interests. At the same time, the bishops' realism about the limits of military action, their calls for regional engagement with Syria, Iran and other neighbors, and their opposition to permanent military bases distinguished them from the Bush administration.

Their ethic of responsibility towards Iraq did not resolve the many tough policy decisions that had to be made; that was too much to ask of ethics. But it helped frame the debate and keep the focus on what Americans owed to whom at a time when campaign promises and legislation to "end the war in Iraq" had relatively little to do with ending the war for Iraqis. The focus on U.S. responsibilities toward Iraqis also was essential to ensuring that the preventive war rationale for the original intervention lost whatever moral and political credibility it might have. In placing the onus on the United States to bear the burdens of what it wrought in Iraq, the bishops were helping to reduce the chance that fears of global terrorism would lead the United States to succumb to the temptation of preventive war in the future.

Assessing the Bishops' Role

The bishops' responses to the nuclear issue in the 1980s, humanitarian intervention in the 1990s, and preventive war in the first decade of this century had several defining characteristics.

First, they grew out of an ethic of responsibility—that of the United States to the rest of the world and that of the Church in the U.S. to the universal Church. The bishops were always cognizant of the fact that they had a special opportunity and obligation—of which the Church around the world constantly reminded them—to use their influence to help ensure that the United States met the special moral responsibilities that came with being
the world's sole superpower. In the case of sins of commission, such as morally dubious nuclear policies and preventive war in Iraq, the bishops tried to prevent the misuse of U.S. power in ways that undermined the global common good. In the case of sins of omission, such as the failure to support effective international action to stop genocide in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Rwanda, the bishops urged much more creative and collaborative uses of U.S. power and influence to strengthen norms and institutions of global cooperative security. They rejected the U.S. exceptionalism inherent in the preventive war doctrine and other policies, and retained a healthy skepticism about the good that could come from the use of military power. Yet, far more than many foreign policy elites, they were quite hopeful and insistent that U.S. ideals and influence could be critical in shaping a more peaceful and just world.

Given their understanding of U.S. global responsibilities and the size, wealth and influence of the Church in the United States, the bishops were always cognizant of their responsibility to the Church around the world. Their efforts to influence U.S. policy were intimately linked to their sense of obligation to deepen the bonds of solidarity with the wider Church, especially in areas of conflict and deprivation. They went to great lengths to ensure that their positions on U.S. military intervention were consistent with and informed by those of the Holy See and the episcopal conferences in the countries most affected by U.S. policies. This commitment to collaboration and solidarity often bore most fruit, not in statements, but in giving the Church in war-torn areas a voice in Washington and in supporting the efforts of local churches to influence their own governments.

A second characteristic of the bishops' work on U.S. military policy: they held to a strict interpretation of the just war tradition against those pressing for a more permissive one, as well as those claiming that it was long past time to discard the tradition altogether. Much as they had done on nuclear weapons in the peace pastoral, the bishops broke new ground in several areas, developing moral criteria for assessing humanitarian intervention, economic sanctions, secessionist conflicts, and a responsible exit from Iraq.

A third defining factor was their underlying ecclesiology. In some respects, ecclesiology—i.e., the role of bishops vis-à-vis the political order and the laity—over-determined ethics in the internal Church debates about war and peace. Iraq in 2003 is a case in point. In their statements against the war, the bishops were clear about the nature and limits of their role as religious leaders and pastors: [End Page 92]

We offer not definitive conclusions, but rather our serious concerns and questions in the hope of helping all of us to reach sound moral judgments. People of good will may differ on how to apply just war norms in particular cases, especially when events are moving rapidly and the facts are not altogether clear. Based on the facts that are known to us, we continue to find it difficult to justify the resort to war against Iraq, lacking clear and adequate evidence of an imminent attack of a grave nature. . . .

There are no easy answers. Ultimately, our elected leaders are responsible for decisions about national security, but we hope that our moral concerns and questions will be
considered seriously by our leaders and all citizens. We invite others, particularly Catholic lay people—who have the principal responsibility to transform the social order in light of the Gospel—to continue to discern how best to live out their vocation to be "witnesses and agents of peace and justice"

(Catechism, #2442).  

Despite the bishops' early and active opposition to the war, a large percentage of letters criticizing the bishops' position came from Catholic activists who objected to this nuanced understanding of the bishops' role, urging them, instead, to simply condemn the war as immoral. As with nuclear deterrence, they wanted the bishops to be more "prophetic" in their witness. Conservative critics, meanwhile, developed a novel version of their long-standing criticism that the bishops went beyond their competence in intervening in policy matters such as Iraq. In an unusual effort by the U.S. government to counter the Vatican's outspoken moral opposition to the war, U.S. Ambassador to the Holy See James Nicholson invited Michael Novak to give a talk in Rome justifying the impending war. Citing paragraph 2309 of the Catechism ("the evaluation of [just war criteria] . . . belongs to the prudential judgment of those who have responsibility for the common good"), Novak acknowledged the right of "distant commentators" to speak on the morality of the war, but insisted that they defer to the public authorities who had the primary responsibility to apply just war norms in particular cases. At about the same time, George Weigel argued that the just war tradition "exists to serve statesmen." Religious leaders had a role in nurturing the "moral-philosophical riches" of the tradition, but they did not possess the "charism of political discernment that is unique to the charism of public service."  

What the liberal critics too often failed to appreciate was that the bishops' reluctance to offer definitive moral judgments on particular wars or policies was not a function of excess caution or fear of a political backlash, but was in keeping with their effort to uphold an ethics and ecclesiology consistent with the Second Vatican Council. Their statement on Iraq was typical of the care they took to distinguish moral principles from prudential moral judgments. They were careful to avoid "moralizing," or oversimplifying, issues in the name of being "prophetic." Moral condemnations [End Page 93] were considered not only poor morality, but also poor pedagogy, since they were unlikely to persuade policymakers and the wider public. Most important, they were poor pastoral practice, since they might, for example, create crises of conscience among Catholics in the military that were not warranted by the situation. The bishops' main goal was to provide a moral framework that could inform the prudential judgments of policymakers and citizens. Therefore, they were always clear about the limits of their competence vis-à-vis the secular order and vis-à-vis the laity's leading role in social action.  

The conservative critics were on solid ground in seeking to respect the relative autonomy of the secular order and preserve the leading role of the laity in matters of public policy. They were far too confident, however, that the decisions of policy-makers were, in fact, grounded in serious efforts to apply just war norms. Moreover, they were far too ready to dismiss the role of the bishops, as teachers, in preserving the integrity of the just war
tradition in the face of those who would emasculate it with a doctrine of preventive war. They were also far too ready to minimize the role of the bishops as religious leaders, who rightly did not shy away from controversial judgments about Iraq and other wars because they could scarcely ignore their right and responsibility to be engaged in debates about the most consequential decision governments make: the decision to go to war.

A fourth characteristic: the bishops' impact. In assessing impact, it is common, even among Church actors, to apply a functionalist, political science metric to the bishops' engagement on policy. In some respects, that is perfectly valid, because the bishops were trying to influence public policy decisions just as other non-governmental advocates were: through the persuasive power of their ideas, direct advocacy, and their ability to mobilize a wider public.

From this purely functionalist perspective, the bishops' influence was mostly indirect and thus inherently difficult to trace. Especially on decisions as momentous as resort to war, the Church was just one of a large set of powerful actors, at home and abroad, and morality was just one of a host of factors that shaped decisions. The evidence of the bishops' impact on specific policies is necessarily anecdotal. The most direct impact the bishops had was probably on the congressional vote to impose a moratorium on landmines, where authors of the legislation, such as Senator Patrick Leahy (D-VT), and the Vietnam Veterans publicly credited the bishops with playing a decisive role. But, for the most part, the bishops did not have the kind of direct impact on military policy that they had on poor country debt relief legislation, where the USCCB helped draft two major pieces of legislation and played a key role in getting them through Congress. More typically, the bishops' position did not prevail, but they were visible in the debate. During the House debate on a resolution calling for a freeze on nuclear weapons in 1983, a series of "Dear Colleague" letters by both proponents and opponents of the freeze claimed the bishops' support for their position (the bishops had not taken one). During the debate on the MX Missile in March 1985, the New York Times took the unusual step of publishing, in full, the bishops' letter opposing the MX. Prior to the second Iraq war, most polls showed that a majority of Catholics supported the war. Interestingly, however, a Le Moyne College/ Zogby International poll, in March 2003, found that 57% of Catholics expressed support for the bishops when told they opposed the war and a Wall Street Journal/NBC News poll in January 2003 found that Catholics were 10-15% less likely to support the war than the general public.59

Ultimately, a functionalist focus on the bishops' impact on specific policy decisions misunderstands the bishops' role in these debates. A proper ecclesiological understanding of the bishops' role suggests less of a functionalist focus on specific policies and more attention to their impact on fundamental issues. The principal impact—and one of the main goals—of the peace pastoral and subsequent interventions was to restore the just war tradition's relevance for public policy. While realism retained its dominant place in foreign policy, by the mid-1980s, the just war tradition was no longer considered anachronistic by secular elites, an uninvited guest at an exclusive party. The bishops played a singular role in this development. Much more than the Holy See and most other episcopal conferences (or, for that matter, other religious voices), the U.S. bishops
carefully cultivated a just war analysis in their statements. That said, one need not be a
cynic to question whether the use of variations on the just war tradition by successive
U.S. presidents to justify military interventions in Panama, Iraq I and II, and Kosovo
reflected a tendency to (mis)use morality to justify decisions made on other grounds. That presidents and policymakers felt a need to justify their decisions on moral, not just
national security, grounds is progress. As Michael Walzer maintains, it opens the door to
"[t]he exposure of hypocrisy [which] is certainly the most ordinary, and it may also be
the most important form of moral criticism."

A Future Agenda: Developing a Theology, Ethic and Praxis of Peacebuilding

In April 2002, the University of Notre Dame's Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies and Catholic Relief Services began a series of consultations with other key academic and Church institutions, and lay organizations on the role of the Church in peacebuilding. The first goal was to better map, analyze and support the mostly unheralded work of the Catholic Church in preventing and mediating conflicts, and in promoting post-conflict reconstruction and reconciliation. The second goal was to
develop a theology, ethic and praxis of peacebuilding that is comparable in scope and sophistication to the Church's teaching on the use of force. This series of consultations
[End Page 95] led, in 2004, to the formation of the Catholic Peacebuilding Network, a
network of almost two dozen major Catholic academic, charitable, and institutional Church entities. The CPN began by convening five major international conferences,
developing new capacity-building initiatives with the Church in areas of conflict, and
conducting a major, inductive research project on a theology and ethic of peacebuilding.

The CPN is just one example of a growing emphasis on peacebuilding as a missing
dimension of a Catholic approach to war and peace. Peacebuilding is a logical outgrowth
of and complement to the bishops' strict interpretation of the just war tradition. A strict
interpretation that calls for a global ban on nuclear weapons presumes the need to
develop a political ethic of cooperative security that offers effective alternatives to
existing nuclear deterrents and to preventive force as a means of halting nuclear
proliferation. Legitimizing limited forms of multi-lateral humanitarian intervention
presumes that most forms of intervention will be non-military; and that more effective
ways of conflict prevention, conflict management, and post-conflict reconciliation can
and must be found. Similarly, the just war tradition needs no reinterpretation to condemn
religious violence, but more is needed to address the "roots of terrorism," and the
conflicting claims of self-determination and the deeply-rooted sectarianism that underlie
so many religious-nationalist conflicts. In post-intervention Iraq and Afghanistan, it is
essential to distinguish between the ethics of intervention and the ethics of exit, an issue
mostly not addressed by the just war tradition.
This is a critical time for the Church's teaching on war and peace. The strict interpretation of the just war tradition that shaped the peace pastoral and the bishops' subsequent work on U.S. military policies over the past twenty-five years has faced some of the most serious challenges since the advent of the nuclear age. These very challenges have also created an especially propitious moment for the Church's teaching to develop in new directions. The credibility and validity of the strict interpretation of just war will depend not just on whether decision makers and the wider community accept these moral limits but equally on whether the Church can define and put into practice a peacebuilding spirituality, theology and ethic that can deal with the many pressing issues of war and peace not addressed by the just war tradition.63 

Footnotes

* Parts of this article are taken from a talk given at the annual conference of the Council on Christian Approaches to Defense and Disarmament, National Cathedral, Washington, D.C., 21 September 2008.


5. The Harvest of Justice, 33.


9. Admiral James Watkins, a Catholic and one of a handful of people involved in the decision, apparently was troubled by the bishops' moral criticisms of deterrence. See John Newhouse, *The Nuclear Age: From Hiroshima to Star Wars* (M. Joseph Ltd., 1989).


12. Interestingly, many of these same bishops continued to vote in favor of the official USCCB statements that reiterated the pastoral's formula on deterrence. For a summary of Pax Christi's approach, see Nancy Small, "Is Nuclear Deterrence Still Moral?" *America*, 29 September 2003, 14-16.

13. According to Douglas Roche, a special advisor to the Holy See Mission to the UN, "Because the nuclear weapons States have decisively shown that they consider nuclear weapons permanent instruments in their military doctrine, the Holy See has withdrawn the limited acceptance it gave to nuclear weapons during the Cold War." Douglas Roche, "Nuclear Weapons and Morality: An Unequivocal Position," Colloquium on Ethics of War after 9/11 and Iraq, Georgetown University, Washington, D.C., 11 November 2005. While Roche reflects statements by some Vatican officials, it is not clear that these statements supersede Pope John Paul II's 1982 message to the UN, which was the original basis for the bishops' strictly-conditioned acceptance formula. Pope John Paul II, "Message to the Second Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly Devoted to Disarmament," no. 3, 1982, cited in *The Challenge of Peace*, 54, n. 173.


16. See, e.g., "It is truly necessary for all persons of good will to come together to reach concrete agreements aimed at an effective demilitarization, especially in the area of nuclear arms." Pope Benedict XVI, "World Day of Peace Message," 1 January 2008; Drew Christiansen, S.J., Testimony on behalf of the USCCB on the Moscow Treaty before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, 23 July 2002.


20. For a history of the wider campaign to ban landmines, including the significance of defining the issue in normative terms, see Leon Sigal, Negotiating Minefields: The Landmines Ban in American Politics (New York: Routledge, 2006).


26. The Challenge of Peace (italics in original), 38.

27. Ibid., 51.

28. The Harvest of Justice, 12.

29. Ibid., 45-46.


34. In one of their more novel interfaith initiatives, the bishops worked with a Jewish donor in the United States to send money to an Orthodox charity in Serbia, which hand-delivered the cash to Bishop Komarica, who was under house arrest, so he could help those trying to escape ethnic cleansing in Banja Luka.


36. The Cleveland *Plain Dealer* 's editorial was accompanied by an editorial cartoon with several bishops checking the sights on rocket launchers as they opened boxes of weapons ready for Bosnia Herzegovina. Editorial, "Bosnia[-Herzegovina]: The Bishops' Just War," *The Plain Dealer*, 14 May 1993.


38. Bishop Daniel Reilly (Norwich), chairman of the International Policy Committee, urged the U.S. "to do all it can to equip, transport and sustain U.N. forces in this desperately needed humanitarian mission. . . . Action by the international community at this time is a basic obligation of solidarity." Statement on Rwanda, 23 June 1994.


40. Bishop Joseph Fiorenza (Galveston-Houston), president, NCCB/USCC, Statement on Kosovo, 24 March 1999.


42. James Turner Johnson acknowledged that the bishops' position on humanitarian intervention "contrasts sharply with [their] earlier skepticism" about the just use of military force in *Morality and Contemporary Warfare* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), 96.


47. USCCB, Statement on Iraq, 13 November 2002.

48. Ibid.

49. Ibid.


51. This section is drawn from my more detailed treatment of the ethics of exit from Iraq in "Our Moral Duty in Iraq," America, 18 February 2008; and "The Dilemma in Iraq," America, 6 March 2006, 19.

52. In a letter urging the bishops to support withdrawal of U.S. troops from Iraq so as to "bring an end to this war," fourteen Catholic Democrats cited the bishops' just war arguments against the original intervention as the basis for urging the bishops to support the withdrawal of U.S. troops. Letter from Timothy Ryan, Rosa DeLauro, Marcy Kaptur and eleven colleagues, 28 June 2007.


54. Ibid.

55. See, e.g., The Harvest of Justice, 45.


62. For papers and video from these conferences and other information on Catholic peacebuilding, see http://cpn.nd.edu.


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