

**FORCIBLE HUMANITARIAN INTERVENTION:
PRACTICAL OBJECTIONS TO THE ETHICAL
PRINCIPLES AND APPLICATIONS**

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Abstract

This paper addresses three categories of objection to the use of direct military coercive force for humanitarian reasons. They are; practical feasibility, moral acceptability and political viability. These three categories are not totally exclusive, but most objections will fall into one or more of them. The analysis of the objections provides a guide to when and how such force may be implemented.

If a civil and caring society professes concern about human rights then it is difficult to argue that some sort of obligation does not exist to do something effective to address clear and repeated gross abuses of human rights. A purely pragmatic approach when addressing some of the worst and most wanton human rights abuses will not be successful without the support of a robust moral position.

Introduction

One could provide all sorts of arguments as to why humanitarian intervention might, under some circumstances, be a moral requirement but people are not swayed by ethical arguments alone. The logistical and strategic outcomes of humanitarian intervention are vitally important, and these outcomes must ensure that lives and resources are not needlessly wasted in pursuing unattainable objectives. The technical challenges of carrying out forcible humanitarian intervention in order to fulfil the humanitarian requirements and objectives are many and varied. The category of practical feasibility, as discussed in this paper, includes some of the fundamental requirements for military success.

Where does international responsibility end and interference in a state's internal affairs start, and where does international law fit into such humanitarian crusades? Many will argue that the use of external force against a sovereign state violates accepted legal norms and conventions. This is despite the fact that in some cases such force may be the only viable option that is likely to halt extreme and deliberate human rights abuses. Forcible action may only have limited success or perhaps the use of force in this manner will only result in short term cessation of hostilities. In the end, those on the receiving end of brutal treatment at the hands of belligerents will judge whether the familiar arguments of short term verses medium term verses longer term 'success' has any real meaning.

Concern over possible interventionist casualties and the economic costs of intervention are important objections. Even if intervention could be seen to be a

moral requirement, and it is technically feasible to undertake such an operation, people will still question the rationality of sending their sons and daughters into a potentially lethal conflict environment to try to fix somebody else's mess. The costs in materiel and personnel for forcible humanitarian intervention will be substantial.

The moral acceptability of using force to try to resolve international conflicts is problematic. If a civil and caring society professes concern about human rights then it is difficult to argue that some sort of obligation does not exist to do something effective to address clear and repeated gross abuses of human rights.

The question of whether the use of force is politically viable is very important. Even a clear moral imperative that could realistically be backed up by the use of military force will degenerate into procrastination and inaction if the international community cannot construct a rational political framework for a response to extreme human rights abuse. Humanitarian responsibility, the active pursuit of justice, disarming belligerents, repatriating displaced persons and rebuilding civil infrastructures are all essential elements of such a political construct.

Any suggestion that we should send our citizens to some far flung corner of the globe on a military crusade to save the oppressed gets short shrift in real-life domestic and political arenas. There is very little political mileage in such suggestions.

Objections

An underlying assumption made by those who support the concept of unilateral forcible humanitarian intervention is that in some cases it may be the only way to

halt massive human rights violations. The problem is that the record of post-cold war intervention does not lend much support to the overall proposition that the use of force will promote humanitarian values.

The most common argument against the use of military force for humanitarian reasons is that it does not do what it sets out to do. That is, it cannot alleviate an already desperate humanitarian situation: in fact it will probably make it worse.

Others say that force itself does not work.

To dismiss the use of force on the basis that it can only make things worse for oppressed peoples means that allied entry into World War II to stop the spread of fascism in Germany, Italy and elsewhere should not have occurred. Allied entry into WW II was not primarily for humanitarian reasons, but this does not mean that humanitarian issues did not exist. Very few people seriously argue that Nazi attempts to exterminate the Jews should not have been stopped. Stopping Nazis exterminating Jews could not have occurred without force (Kagan 1995, 336).

There are four key players in humanitarian affairs. These are; the onlookers, potential or active interventionists, those being abused, and those doing the abusing. Humanitarian attention must be focussed on the oppressed because they are doing most of the dying and the suffering. Currently, the onlookers, and occasionally the interventionists have the loudest voices regarding what they think about the humanitarian value of the use of force. The interventionists have the added difficulty of trying to stay alive themselves.

Statements such as "The use of force cannot (or can) promote humanitarian values" are generalised in nature. A generalised response is that sometimes force may promote humanitarian values and sometimes it will not. If there is a real chance that force will promote such values, and other options either do not work or will not work, then force should be used (International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies 1997). If it is likely that the use of force will not alleviate the suffering of the abused, or that an even greater humanitarian disaster will result from the use of force, then it must not be used.

There is not, nor will there ever be, an iron clad guarantee that military intervention will be successful either militarily or from a humanitarian perspective. There is also no guarantee that diplomacy, mediation, economic sanctions, threats and pleas by the UN or waving banners and placards in the streets will be successful either (Winkler 1999, 133-155). The lack of such guarantees does not mean that diplomacy or mediation should be rejected. Neither should forcible intervention be rejected on these grounds alone.

If the argument revolves primarily around the use of external force being more dangerous for the abused and for interventionists, and therefore it is less likely to succeed than non-violent means of intervention, then this line of argument must be challenged. It is true that the use of force is dangerous, but this does not automatically mean that it is less likely to succeed. What makes any sort of intervention more likely to succeed is a willingness to totally commit to end the killing and the violence as soon as possible. Military intervention can do this

providing all sides understand that retribution for extreme human rights abuses will be swift and robust.

Botched diplomacy and ineffectual mediation are usually not seriously analysed as being direct contributors to significant numbers of deaths during humanitarian crises. As time ticks away around mediation tables, and yet another round of talks begins, the atrocities continue. It is naive to think that just because diplomacy and mediation is going on, determined belligerents will suspend their genocidal activities. History repeatedly shows that this simply does not occur.

It is technically feasible for military intervention to be successful and to have good humanitarian outcomes providing such an engagement is conducted with speed, vigour and determination. Elliot Abrams (1999, 18) argues that it is crucial that intervention is militarily realistic and achievable in the first place. If one or more of these elements is absent then military intervention will cause more suffering and death than it tries to stop. Under these circumstances intervention will not be successful and it must not proceed.

Interventionists must maximise and concentrate their use of force to be militarily successful. They must have the resources and the will to assert military superiority over an opponent. An opponent or the opponents must be disarmed after conflict. These are simple military maxims as identified during the early 1800s by the military strategist Carl Von Clausewitz (1984, 80-89) and others. If interventionists apply less than the maximum use of concentrated force against an opponent this provides a

military advantage to the opposition with predictable outcomes. One predictable outcome is a protracted and bloody military campaign.

The timing of military intervention is vital to success. Military engagement, whether for humanitarian purposes or for any other reason, is much more successful before opponents are fully dug in, before they have time to lay high explosives around critical civil infrastructure, and before they are able to round up and use their victims as human shields. Sooner is better than later because military success is enhanced from striking first and striking hard.

Just-war concepts support the idea that force should only be used as a last resort option, but this limits the effectiveness of military operations because it gives an opponent crucial time to prepare for an assault. Waiting until other humanitarian policies and strategies are exhausted and have failed often forfeits the opportunity to use force effectively.

The timing of a military response to counter severe human rights abuses is an emotive issue. Most people prefer to use non-violent means to resolve conflict and to apply all other strategies before the direct use of force is even contemplated (if it is contemplated at all). The stark military reality is that if a determined use of coercive force is only used as a last resort the outcome will most likely be many casualties on all sides.

In Rwanda, in a matter of weeks during April 1994, Hutus killed over 1 million defenceless Tutsis. For several months prior to this humanitarian disaster the UN and the international community were fully aware that a catastrophe was going to

befall this tiny African state. Nothing short of physically separating the conflicting sides would stop such a tragedy from occurring (Connaughton 63).

After much futile and prolonged deliberation by the UN (nobody wanted to take on the responsibility of military intervention in Rwanda) the French government sent its own interventionist forces into Rwanda in Operation Turquoise (Groenewold, Porter et al. 1997, 100-115). In May 1994, the UN finally authorised the tiny UN force (UNAMIR) in Rwanda to protect civilians.

Unfortunately there were too few troops available to actually carryout this mandate. It was too late anyway to save the more than one million Rwandans who had been killed the month before. Military intervention was not only far too late, it was intervention in name only by 2,330 poorly armed and ill prepared UN peacekeepers (Bellamy 1998, 107). The UN withdrew UNAMIR personnel from Rwanda in May 1996 (United Nations 1996).

The sooner is better than later rationale may be applied to East Timor in 1999. In 1975, East Timor was invaded by Indonesia resulting in massacres and famine that killed over 250,000 people: nearly one third of the population (*Terror in Timor* 1999). Twenty-four years later, in August 1999, after many more deaths and human rights abuses, the President of Indonesia B. J. Habibie announced that East Timor could participate in a vote for independence.

International observers, including Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, and others repeatedly warned that without a peacekeeping force to ensure security immediately prior to, during, and especially after the election, there was a very high

likelihood of even greater violence than in the past. Prior to the UN sponsored election, military sources from within East Timor predicted a bloodbath in East Timor if the vote for independence was successful. Anti-independence forces within East Timor openly intimidated the local population with the threat of torture and death if the vote was successful.

After the election, on the 4th of September 1999, it was announced that over eighty percent of the East Timorese had voted to secede from Indonesia. The militias, with tacit and sometimes direct support from elements within the Indonesia army, immediately began killing East Timorese (FOUR CORNERS Australian Television Program 18 October 1999). On the 15th of September 1999, the UN Security Council authorised an Australian-led force of 8,000 soldiers to enter East Timor to enforce the peace. At this time over 20,000 Indonesian regular army personnel with a further 25,000 armed militia were operating in East Timor.

Fortunately for this tiny Australian led military force, the Indonesian government began to withdraw its troops back to Jakarta due to strong international pressure. Had this not occurred not only would tens of thousands of east Timorese have been killed, but the peace enforcers would have been overwhelmed by Indonesian forces and the militias. Military intervention in East Timor by UN sanctioned troops was far too late and far too little.

There may be serious strategic disadvantages facing potential interventionists. For example, superior numbers of opposing military forces which cannot be offset by home team technological advantage, populations to be immediately slaughtered the

instant interventionists move in, human shields placed in front of opponent's military structures and so on. In these cases there is no military or moral point in sacrificing interventionists lives and the lives of the abused by intervening. Other means must immediately be found and applied to address situations where the use of military force is simply not possible without significant loss of life on all sides.

An important objection to the use of coercive force in humanitarian situations is that such action may cause interventionist casualties. The reality is that one must expect casualties to interventionists who are in lethal combat zones. Concentrating on casualty aversion to the exclusion of the achievement of military or humanitarian objectives severely restricts the effective use of coercive force to address man-made humanitarian crises. Karl Eikenberry (1996, 109-118) argues that since World War II, the Korean War and the Vietnam War, Western military planners have increasingly concentrated on risk aversion as a deliberate political and military strategy.

A significant problem for potential interventionists is to determine acceptable levels of risk. How many casualties should interventionist forces be prepared to accept? There is no simple answer to this question because a number of factors will influence what is and what is not considered acceptable regarding own side casualty numbers. For example, if intervention has a realistic chance of stopping humanitarian abuses then a higher level of interventionist casualties may be acceptable.

Other factors also come into play. If an interventionist's national interest is directly at stake then this will alter what is or what is not considered to be an acceptable

casualty rate. There is a more willing acceptance of casualties during conflict if there is a high level of domestic support for intervention. In the West, this level of support tends to drop significantly once the body bags start coming home. In democratic societies, politicians must weigh up the risks to their political futures if war casualties are seen by their constituents to be 'excessive' (Eikenberry 1996, 109-118)

The military perceives conflict casualties very differently to the public or the politicians. They are much more concerned about the logistics of battle losses and how this would impact on military objectives. Excessive human attrition during conflict may lose the war despite winning the battle. Battle casualties must be carefully weighed against the need to overcome opposition, to hold ground, to respond to counterattack and to continue the conflict in the future.

Then there is the overall problem of risk assessment. Possible interventionist casualty numbers is a prime consideration for politicians who are trying to decide whether or not to intervene in a humanitarian disaster situation in the first place. A final decision will most likely come down to how many casualties interventionist's would be prepared to accept rather than how many people are being abused in a conflict area.

An obsession with casualty aversion also sends the message to oppressive regimes around the globe that they need not fear accountability because those who could act will probably fail to act because they fear taking casualties (Dunlap 30-31 January 1997). Oppressors are often quite willing to accept high casualty numbers of their

own people in order to achieve their goals. During the Gulf war/s Saddam Hussein was counting on America's aversion to casualties.

To say that military intervention for humanitarian purposes is illegal assumes that a law (probably an international law) has been broken or is being violated. The fundamental question relating to the legality or otherwise of military intervention is as follows: "What right, according to international law, does the international community have to intervene across a sovereign state's borders to halt violations of human rights?"

According to Thomas Farer (1991, 200) the answer, in strictly legal terms, is none.

The principle of non-intervention is central to international law. Article 2(4) of the United Nations Charter identifies the legal and moral force of state boundaries.

Considerable opposition exists to any form of intervention at all. Since there are no provisions within the UN charter for peacekeeping operations, the legal basis for each operation is the mandate given to it (Jett 1999, 39).

The sovereignty of statehood is a cornerstone of international law and non-intervention expresses a correlative duty to respect sovereignty (Jackson 1993, 580-582). This means that humanitarian concerns take a back seat to the apparent rights and so-called legitimate interests of states. Most people concerned about human rights will disagree with the fundamental idea that states should have rights before the rights of individuals. Even if states had some rights in law these must be subservient to the rights of its citizens.

An important legal legacy of the Nuremberg trials was that for the first time individuals had a right to be treated with a minimum of civility by their own governments. This means that all governments have a correlative duty to uphold such a right. Military intervention for humanitarian purposes has a legal basis if its intent is to uphold such a right.

Early post cold-war era interventions (India in Bangladesh 1971, Tanzania against the excesses of Idi Amin in Uganda 1979, and Vietnam against Pol Pot in Cambodia 1979) which resulted in significant humanitarian benefits were not justified by intervention on humanitarian grounds. These actions were justified on the grounds of self-defence (Bull 1984, 97). Even on these grounds, all these actions were condemned by the international community because they broke the rule on cross border aggression.

There are no definitive legal statutes that establish the right of intervention and few modern precedents exist. Intervention in Kosovo and East Timor may be the two exceptions. Yet, absolute prohibitions against humanitarian intervention do not exist either.

What is important is how states and world leaders, who ultimately assume responsibility for authorising military action in the first place, interpret the various legal definitions of sovereignty, non-intervention and intervention. International law allows a legal right to intervene in the affairs of a sovereign state if non-intervention poses a threat to international peace and security. Such a right legally

justifies humanitarian intervention in Somalia, in Rwanda, the safe-havens for the Kurds in Iraq, and in the Balkans (Lyman 1997, 7).

There are two central reasons why the legal status of the protection of human rights is weak in international law. Firstly, the mass of treaties, conventions and protocols which relate to human rights deal not with rights but with vague ideas about 'duty' and moral value. Secondly, there are grave doubts about the implementation of such rights in law. The basic assumption being that a law means a rule that is actually capable of enforcement through institutions created for that purpose. There is no recognised international policeman to enforce international law and if a rule cannot be enforced then it has minimal status as a law.

The legalist paradigm concept as proposed by Michael Walzer (1995, 2) has been extended to specify circumstances in which humanitarian intervention could be legitimised. These are; when the state has virtually ceased to exist (Somalia); when the state engages in genocide or the mass expulsion of minorities and it conducts a deliberate reign of terror (Iraq under Saddam Hussein); and when a state is in a constant state of civil war in which no side has a reasonable chance of winning (Bosnia Herzegovina) (Walzer 1992, 101; Parekh 1993, 23-24).

During the NATO air campaign in Kosovo in 1999, NATO's decision to intervene using armed force did not have as clear a legal endorsement as its governments might have wished. Despite these limitations, it was far from being an unambiguous violation of international law either. There were two main legal arguments used to support the NATO action in Kosovo (Roberts 1999, 102-123). One

was based on UN Security Council resolutions and the other on an application of general international law.

UN Resolution 1199 of the 23rd of September 1998 demanded that Yugoslavia cease all action by the security forces affecting the civilian population. It directly referred to possible further action if measures demanded in the resolution were not taken.

Resolution 1203 of the 24th of October 1998 demanded that the Serbs comply with a number of key provisions of the accords concluded in Belgrade on 15th and 16th of October. These Resolutions also verified that the NATO Alliance had a direct standing and interest in the Kosovo issue.

Therefore, even if the UN Security Council was not able to follow these resolutions into Kosovo with a specific authority to use force, the Resolutions still provided a legal basis for military action by NATO. On the 26th of March 1999, two days after the bombing began, Russia sponsored a draft UN resolution calling for "an immediate cessation of the use of force against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia". Russia's stance was supported by two non-member states, India and Belarus. Only three member states (Russia, China and Namibia) voted in favour of this draft resolution, twelve voted against.

During the debate for the resolution, Slovenia made the key point that the Security Council does not have a legal monopoly on decision-making regarding the use of force. It has "the primary, but not exclusive, responsibility for maintaining international peace and security" (United Nations 1999, 2). This debate confirmed that the NATO action was not considered manifestly illegal.

Prior to military intervention in Kosovo, several NATO governments presented the argument that military intervention against another state could be justified in cases of overwhelming humanitarian necessity according to general international law. The central basis for such an argument is contained in the formal conventions of international law that, in conjunction with the UN Charter or Security Council resolutions, provides a legal platform for military intervention.

Sovereignty is not an absolute right, as many of its supporters claim. A. John Simmons (1999, 739-771) claims that it is a legal definition of a right that is contingent on the protection of citizens within such a state. If these citizens are grossly abused, then there is a legal basis for an external power or powers, under the auspices of the United Nations, to step in to stop the killing.

I shall not strictly try to define what people believe when they assert non-violence "works better" because this will vary according to the views and beliefs of those who make such a claim. Similar to the assertion that the use of force cannot promote humanitarian values, this is an implied objection.

There is no empirical evidence to suggest that non-violent intervention works better than anything else in the resolution of international conflicts. There is empirical evidence to suggest that genocide and other serious crimes against humanity have increased dramatically during the twentieth century. This is despite the fact that the majority of these conflicts were addressed (where they were addressed at all) by non-violent means. Trade embargos, mediation, conflict resolution strategies, peace

monitoring, UN Resolutions demanding that the killing stops and so on are non-violent means of humanitarian intervention.

Military intervention cannot be effective from a humanitarian perspective if we wait until 100,000 (or 10) people have been slaughtered before we intervene. We may be able to save some others from being killed but we will not be able to save any of the 100,000. Neither non-violent means nor violent means could be deemed to work better after people have died. The fact is that nothing worked to save those who are dead.

The timing of any interventionist strategy is critical so when people say that non-violence works better it is important to define what time frame we are talking about. I have previously argued that non-violent conflict resolution strategies are essential humanitarian tools that should be used up to the point when people are about to die. At this crucial point in time the use of force must be used to stop the killing from occurring in the first place.

Many will say that it is impossible to make such a judgement. How can one reasonably assess that people are about to die? How many people are we talking about, and what if some people do die but military intervention will result in many more dying? There are no definitive answers to any of these questions, but this does not mean that non-violence works better simply because the potentiality of using force in humanitarian affairs is unpredictable or dangerous or that it has not always proven to be successful. The reality is that if people start to die, or have already

died, non-violence is not working, never mind not working better than anything else.

The same could be said about the use of force. Both are not working if people die.

Most supporters of non-violent strategies fail to understand that many of the conflicts between different ethnic, tribal, religious, or ideological groups are not rational according to the accepted norms of civilised behaviour. They have great difficulty in accepting that many protagonists have a deep seated, quite irrational hatred against their opponents which has very little to do with the potentially fixable day to day problems between them.

Those who insist only on the use of non-violent strategies persist in the mistaken belief that if only protagonists could sit around a conference table to thrash out their differences then serious international conflicts can be resolved. The reality is that, although mediation and consultation may be occurring, the warring parties either ignore such efforts outright or they simply pay lip service to suggestions of how to resolve their differences. Then the killing continues. Attempts at mediation and consultation in these long standing tribal and ethnic wars have little effect. The mass killings simply go on.

Most conventional interventionist strategies are only as effective as the willingness of warring parties to respond to external diplomatic efforts to modify their behaviour.

If those perpetrating gross violations of human rights do not care about international opinion, then the international community needs more than diplomacy, good will and hope to halt the killing.

The view that we should not be meddling in the affairs of other states unless there is a direct benefit or identifiable threat to our own state's national interest traces its roots at least back to the pessimistic realism of Machiavelli in the 15th century. It repudiates even earlier Western perceptions of Judeo-Christian biblical morality, Hellenic idealism and the teachings of medieval churchmen such as Thomas Aquinas.

Machiavelli argued that you may have splendid moral goals but without sufficient power and the willingness to use it you will accomplish nothing. Power rather than morality was, and is today, the crux of national-interest thinking.

Medieval religious teachings proposed that human behaviour in the here-and-now was accountable in the afterlife. Humans had souls, therefore they could be held accountable to exacting standards of behaviour. States, on the other hand were artificial constructs. They have life only in this world. If a state is destroyed it has no afterlife. Therefore, states may take harsh measures to protect themselves and ensure their survival. States were seen to be amoral and a state can do things humans cannot.

This rationalisation of the place of humankind and the state in world affairs resulted in religious leaders, such as Thomas Aquinas, proposing theories of *Jus ad Bellum* – Just-cause – and *Jus in Bello* – Just-means during conflict. They argued that military action (which includes military intervention) was sometimes morally justifiable providing a range of criteria regarding aggression and response to aggression were met.

In the early 1800s, Carl von Clausewitz (1780-1831), the Prussian military strategist, contributed to national-interest thinking when he proposed that all state behaviour is motivated by its need to survive and prosper. He argued that to safeguard state interests the state must rationally decide to go to war. He said that there must be no other reason for going to war.

Hans Morgenthau (1904-1980), the father of Western Realism, combined the nationalistic views of Machiavelli and Clausewitz. Morgenthau (1984, 5) told Americans that they must arm then oppose first the Axis Powers and then the Soviet Union. This was not to be done out of any abstract love of liberty and justice but because the United States' most fundamental national interests were threatened.

Morgenthau was roundly criticised and denounced by some academics who preferred Woodrow Wilson's more idealistic world order approach. Wilson proposed that peaceful, co-operative behaviour should be the international norm. They resisted what they perceived as Germanic amorality, (Morgenthau was a German émigré) the idea that individual state interests should dominate international affairs. Morgenthau believed that he had an objective standard for the measurement of foreign policies that claimed to be for the national interest. He defined interest as power. That is, if the state acts to preserve and enhance its power then this was deemed to be a matter of national interest (Morgenthau 1984, 5).

The attraction in defining national interest in this way is that state foreign policy may then be judged on some sort of rational and empirical basis without the vexing question of values muddying the waters. It does not matter whether the national

values are Christianity, Islam or moon worshipping. The only rational judgement needs to be whether or not state power is being enhanced.

Supporters of national-interest thinking are essentially realists who will question the relevance of morality in state affairs in the first place, particularly when the state is under direct threat from external powers. Realists, who do not reject outright the place of morality in human behaviour, will argue that nothing could be more 'moral' than the interests of the state. Even seemingly immoral ends could be employed to support such overriding interests (Barcalow 1994, 338). Those who say that force should only be used in the national interest generally argue either that the plight of other citizens in other states is not a moral issue anyway or, if the concept of human moral obligation was not totally ruled out, stated citizens have a moral obligation to look after their own people first and foremost.

There is a range of possible responses to this fundamental position. Proponents of new world order thinking will say that state interests are being subsumed by global interests and that human connectivity is rapidly increasing in the modern age (McGrew 1992, 3). International travel, global communications and information flows are breaking down the tyrannies of distance and ignorance. Therefore, individual states can no longer assume anonymity in how they conduct their affairs (Henkin 824). Isolationism is out...globalism is in.

They say that world wide economic pressures increasingly determine national wealth. Environmental issues such as pollution of our atmosphere and our oceans, global warming, deforestation and the holes in the ozone layer are issues that impact

on *all* of humankind (Vogler 1992, 119-121). So, a total preoccupation with matters deemed only to be important if somebody's version of the national interest is directly threatened is at odds with the increasing connectivity of all human endeavour. The national interest is dependent on the interests of those beyond the nation being advanced.

They will probably say that the use of external military force is sometimes necessary in international affairs not because of some ethical imperative but because the use of force may be the only way to stop rogue states from creating chaos and disruption in defiance of this new world order (Vogler 1992, 128-129). There is a direct and mutual benefit for all states to be living and working in harmony together. Those who would deliberately disrupt such processes must be stopped for the greater utility of all.

Moralists who attempt to counter the powerful national interest arguments have a number of important challenges to overcome. This is because firstly, rationalists will simply reject the notion that morality has anything to do with the behaviour of states in conflict in the first place. Secondly, by pushing the line that states should consider military intervention against other states on humanitarian grounds alone, one must still confront the morality of condoning the use of force.

Another problem for opponents to the national interest view is in pinning down exactly what somebody else's perception of the national interest actually is.

Morgenthau saw two levels of national interest, the vital and the secondary (Morgenthau 1962, 191). The vital concerns the very existence of the state whereas

the secondary (some use the term marginal) are somewhat removed from immediate border security issues and represent no threat to sovereignty (Hillen 1996, 1).

Others talk about national interest issues being temporary or permanent, specific or general, and complementary or conflicting, or some combination of these (Wolfers 1959, 191). One could try to argue that forcible humanitarian intervention is necessary because conflict in another state is somehow not good for regional trade issues, or that there is a danger of the conflict spreading and involving other states. The problem with this approach is twofold.

Firstly, and most importantly, if one argues that humanity has a primary moral conscience then to simply put this aside for the sake of justifying intervention for some other reason devalues the idea that human beings have a moral obligation to care for each other in the first place. Either there is a moral imperative for humanitarian intervention or there is not. Moralists must not degrade their position just because it is difficult to convince non-believers that such a moral position exists. Doing so is a morally inadequate response.

Secondly, the problem with trying to convince people to intervene in another state's affairs because of some real or imagined threat to their national interest is that the next time such conflict occurs (and there will always be a next time) such artificial imperatives to intervene may not be present. Regional trade may not be disrupted, the conflict may be totally confined with a particular state and non-moral imperatives to intervene may simply not exist.

The reality of contemporary civil conflict is that massive human suffering is usually involved, but this rarely poses a direct threat to the strategic interests of most other states. Most of these conflicts are intrastate rather than interstate affairs. The aim must be to stop the dying and the suffering because it is morally wrong not to do so. This is important because otherwise the imperative for action is severely limited to whether or not some contrived national interest is at risk.

A moral objection to the use of force is not only about practical issues such as whether alternatives to force work better or if peace-building, peace-enhancement/encouragement initiatives should be used in lieu of force. It is also about whether the use of force itself is morally acceptable. Those who believe that using force is morally wrong abhor violence. However, this does not necessarily mean that those who use force love violence.

The objection that using force is morally wrong is difficult to counter in isolation. It does not matter how one attempts to rationalise the use of force. All arguments would be neutralised by a simple statement of belief that using force is wrong. This is further complicated by a belief that strategies other than force somehow must have better humanitarian outcomes just because force is not used.

The use of force itself is not intrinsically morally wrong or right. It depends on why and how such force is used, and it depends on whether human welfare and utility is enhanced by such activity. The objection that using force is always morally wrong ignores the moral ramifications of not using force when force, and force alone, could reasonably be expected to stop serious abuse.

The fundamental idea that only non-violent means are morally appropriate to address humanitarian issues ignores outcomes. How can non-violent humanitarian intervention be morally acceptable when it cannot stop the abuse? Persisting with ineffectual strategies to combat some of the worst humanitarian abuses occurring around the globe today is morally wrong. Any meaningful objection to the use of force must consider the ramifications of not using force where other alternatives do not or will not work.

Most people will express abhorrence about the use of force but the uncomfortable reality is that sometimes force is the only response that determined belligerents understand and will respond to. Opponents to the use of force will say that all non-violent measures cannot possibly have been tried. That is, if non-violent measures were properly initiated and implemented with adequate support systems, the right approach taken, things tried for long enough and so on surely there would be no need to use force.

In the end the response to the claim that using force is morally wrong under all circumstances comes down to presenting enough appalling examples of extreme human rights abuses to convince people that at least a moral obligation to directly act does exist at some point in time. Then one would need to show that all non-violent means have been tried and failed, and that intervention will not cause more problems than it tries to solve. For some people only then may the use of directed force be considered to be a morally viable option.

A significant part of the moral objection to the use of force includes a philosophy of non-violence or pacifism. The term 'pacifism' has fallen into disfavour because it implies passivity when faced with aggression (Goldstein 1996, 132). A philosophy of non-violence on the other hand, as espoused by Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Jr., emphasised that one must be active in seeking to prevent violence, to resolve conflicts without violence and to confront injustices (Goldstein 1996, 133). For consistency in this section, I do not use the term pacifism in its most literal or narrow sense. When I say pacifism I mean a fundamental philosophy of non-violence. Committed pacifists believe that conflict and violence are immoral, inhumane, unjust, impractical and wasteful. My primary focus is on the pacifist idea that the use of force is immoral.

Pacifism is about a fundamental personal revulsion regarding the use of force and it is based on a unilateral commitment to refrain from using any forms of violence to achieve desired outcomes (Fotion and Elfstrom 1996, 1-4). Pacifists disagree with realists who claim that war and conflict is non-moral. They say that this is where ethics must be applied. They believe that physical conflict is morally wrong. Jan Narveson (1965, 2) argues that the problem is that pacifism is actually incoherent because it is self-contradictory in its fundamental intent. For example, how can one claim that all human life is precious and special, but then not defend a life if one is physically capable of doing so?

Abhorrence about the morality of using force is not restricted to pacifism. This is important because debates over whether or not the use of force is morally wrong or

right often degenerates into a 'hawks' and 'doves' standoff. The hawks are seen as the aggressors and warmongers: the doves as peace loving, anti-war supporters.

Many people are morally appalled at the use of force, particularly lethal force. This does not mean that they would not be prepared to (and do) use force because a particular circumstance has dictated that not using physical force will result either in their own death or in the deaths and suffering of large numbers of fellow human beings. There is little real difference between being morally appalled at what one must do in conflict and considering the act itself to be morally appalling. This causes significant psychological trauma for people who are unable to reconcile the need to use force and the outcomes of such an act (Grossman 1996, 75).

One cannot automatically assume that *all* moral objection against the use of force is just about personal values of non-violence, anti-war, anti-aggression; or that force itself is simply immoral, inhuman, and so on. This is because many people firmly believe that force is morally wrong, yet they do not agree at all with the idea that only non-violent means should be used against determined and intractable belligerents. To them, the use of force may be abhorrent but if this was the only way to stop atrocities from occurring then it would be even more abhorrent not to use force.

This may appear contradictory. How can one say that using force is morally wrong, yet at the same time reject the fundamental values of non-violence? The answer is that human behaviour is not confined to either/or moral choices.

Many people do not consider that the use of force is morally wrong under all, or even many, circumstances but this does not mean that they spend their lives trying to kill other human beings. These people will probably have few moral qualms about reacting violently if their family is threatened or if they find themselves as interventionists at the other end of the globe trying to stop some belligerent conducting atrocities on other human beings. Again, this does not mean that they have no moral restraints to killing other human beings.

Most people who have been directly involved in life threatening conflict are not war mongers who believe that it is morally acceptable to use force under any circumstance. The reality is that by circumstance or design they find themselves in a conflict situation and they do what they must to survive in a lethal environment. In the case of military intervention for humanitarian purposes, they do what they must in order to stop the genocide and the suffering from continuing endlessly on.

Conversely, many people who claim to be ardent pacifists relent and accept the need for military intervention when faced with the stark realities of a deliberate regime of terror, torture, and mass slaughter in places such as Rwanda, Somalia, or Bosnia Herzegovina (Mackinnon 1995, 412). This does not mean that they have rejected their fundamental opposition to violence. It means that they have accepted the fact that not acting immediately to stop the killing will result in an even greater disaster than the use of force in the first place.

If no workable alternative to the use of force is available, and the suffering and the killing simply continue on, then it is immoral not to use force. The international

community claims outrage at the conduct of belligerents, so it has at least some moral responsibility to protect those being abused.

To argue that the use of force is absolutely wrong under all circumstances, no form of violence is ever justified and violence is always morally wrong is an extreme position. There are times when the deliberate use of force is not only morally the right thing to do but it would be morally wrong not to use force to stop an even greater evil from occurring.

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