The genesis of this book lies in a March 2005 symposium on the 'Just War in the Twenty-First Century' and the context for the encounter was the 2003 Iraq War, a conflict that helped to crystallise in the most acute way the recurring moral, political, legal and military tensions that are involved in the recourse to and conduct of war. Historically, the framework used most frequently to explore these issues has been the just war tradition and the symposium aimed to facilitate a transatlantic dialogue involving a diverse range of participants on the ethics of war and peace with a view to investigating and renewing that tradition as part of a broader public conversation.

The starting point of the symposium, as well as of this book, is the premise that the just war tradition remains an indispensable framework for analysing global order, peace and security. In our view, it is critical to see just war thinking as a dynamic tradition for reflecting on the nature of international society rather than as a set of prescriptions to be rigidly applied to crises, a sort of checklist that can be ticked or crossed. Even more fundamental to the volume is the belief that conflict tragically remains an inextricable part of both intra- and inter-state relations. Therefore, trying to understand such a fundamental phenomenon is itself a moral obligation and the just war remains the best way to do so. Allied to this is the sense that moral reflection and action must remain at the heart of politics and that a properly understood just war tradition can play a significant role in shaping public discourse about the values and ends of political communities. Thus, properly understood the tradition becomes,

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1 The other element within the Christian tradition is pacifism. Perhaps the foremost British thinker within that strand was the late Sydney D. Bailey. See, for example, War and Conscience in the Nuclear Age (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1987). One of his legacies remains the continuing work of the Council on Christian Approaches to Defence and Disarmament, which he helped to found and to which several of the contributors to this volume belong.
above all, an exercise in practical wisdom about the nature of international society and fundamental questions such as intervention. Yet war remains what it has always been, 'a defeat for humanity' in the words of Pope John Paul II, and just war thinking should never be seen as an attempt to moralise war with the intention of making it easier to fight. Nor can the tradition answer the interlinked security questions that face us about the environmental crisis, disease and poverty and the corresponding moral imperative to realise objectives such as the Millennium Development Goals or more effective conflict prevention. However, focusing on war explicitly allows us to address what remains a fundamental aspect of the human experience and using just war thinking allows, in Bryan Hehir’s words, for ‘a two–dimensional ethic’ that addresses both policy-makers and the conscience of individual citizens.2

It is arguable that the just war tradition underwent a narrowing during the Cold War that deformed its utility as a guide to action. The overwhelming shadow of the US–Soviet confrontation understandably shaped the very grammar of our moral language in a way that focused almost exclusively on nuclear weapons. Yet, with the ending of the Cold War and the emergence of radically different threats, the tradition needs to be re-examined. We asked the contributors to this volume to explore whether or not the just war tradition continues to be relevant given the changing nature of international relations. If it is relevant, how can the tradition be reworked in order to provide a framework for practical reflection? The continuing need for dialogue between political and public actors was evident in the fierce debate over the 2003 Iraq War. The symposium sought to encourage such a dialogue by providing a space in which theologians, political and military analysts could consider how a re-energised just war tradition might assist policy-makers and the wider public to grapple better with the moral and political dilemmas of war.

Because that fundamental shift has occurred in the structure of conflicts, away from inter-state ‘industrial warfare’ to something as yet to be determined, there is an even greater need to explore the relationship between moral theory and practice. In view of this, the book takes an interdisciplinary approach in the belief that the insights from one discipline and culture should usefully contribute to and further the debate in

another. Such an interdisciplinary approach has been central to the long
development of the just war tradition as a body of moral reflection, rooted
in Christian theology and natural law, that has evolved through a dialogue
between secular and religious sources. That conversation between diverse
and competing actors, whether theologians, military commanders or
politicians, means that the tradition represents more than just a set of
moral assumptions or ideals. Participants within this dialogue have
always sought to shape and maintain the tradition to give it renewed
meaning when faced with new security challenges. This dialogue has
shaped methods of statecraft and rules of military engagement while still
providing guidance to conscientious individuals grappling with the
terrible moral dilemmas posed by war.

In its simplest form, the tradition argues for certain conditions and
criteria to be met before any military action occurs. It has two thematic
branches, classically denoted by the terms *jus ad bellum* and *jus in bello*. *Jus
ad bellum* as generally understood today consists of seven principles,
which need to be met to justify the resort to war. They include that war
must have a *just cause*, be waged by a *proper authority* and with a *right
intention*, be undertaken only if there is *reasonable chance of success* and if
the total good outweighs the total evil expected (i.e. overall *proportion-
ality*). It must also be used as a *last resort* and be waged in the *pursuit of
peace*. In contrast, *jus in bello* is defined by two concerns: *discrimination*,
or avoiding intentional harm to non-combatants, and *proportionality of
means*, which implies using such force as is essential to achieve an objec-
tive that is itself necessary.

The history of just war thinking suggests that these criteria will atrophy
if they are not reworked and then applied afresh in the unprecedented
context of the contemporary international environment. One recent
example of this reworking is that provided by the philosopher Michael
Walzer. *Arguing about War* revisits many of the arguments that Walzer
made some thirty years previously in *Just and Unjust Wars*.3 Faced with
the sheer number of recent horrors such as Rwanda, Kosovo and the
Sudan, he finds himself defending the right to intervention, a right that
he previously opposed. This in turn leads him to sanction long-term

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Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars: A Moral Argument with Historical Illustrations* (New York:
military occupations in the form of protectorates and trusteeships. Taken together, these shifts result in Walzer questioning whether the just war tradition needs to be expanded to include a third branch, namely *jus post bellum*, to help address many of the issues that have arisen in post-conflict situations like East Timor and Iraq.

Walzer’s efforts are reflective of a wider uncertainty as to what constitutes a just war in the twenty-first century, as witnessed, for example, by the work of Michael Ignatieff. The traditional image of a country’s armed services constituting a war-fighting machine designed and equipped to achieve a decisive military victory on the battlefield in order to ‘solve’ the original political problem that necessitated the military deployment in the first place sits oddly with post-Cold War reality. It is difficult now to identify not only the battlefield but also who or what is the ‘enemy’. Military force is more often than not employed ‘in the presence of civilians, against civilians’, and most importantly ‘in defence of civilians’. Using military force to resolve an international political dispute has increasingly given way to the aim of creating by force the conditions in which peace might be restored and then maintained by non-military means. This is a prolonged and painful process, as, for example, in Bosnia, which takes years, involving political and military skills and equipment quite distinct from those required in the past.

If, as General Sir Rupert Smith argues, the end of the Cold War made obsolete the dominant industrial model of warfare, and with it the industrial army that underpinned it, then it is necessary to rethink what constitutes a justified war, even if war in the conventional sense perhaps no longer exists. The shift from heavy industrial warfare, characteristic of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, to war amongst the people poses several distinct challenges that need to be resolved as part of a public conversation if military force is to have any moral basis.

Most public and political debate regarding military matters is restricted either to contesting defence budgets or to debating the legality of a particular use of force. These debates are an important part of any

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functioning democracy. They provide a mechanism for executive accountability and civilian control of the military. However, as in other fields of public policy, such encounters seem fragmented and episodic and informed by a cost–benefit culture of positivism that is proving to be increasingly inadequate. In this context, Christians can play a significant role in expanding the dimensions of that public conversation so that fundamental moral questions about ends and means feature more prominently.

The aim of this volume is to explore the continuing validity of the just war tradition, and to examine the ways in which it should be updated to take account of the new security environment. In so doing, the volume aims to help stimulate a wider and more inclusive debate than has perhaps existed in this area, without endorsing any one of the diverse and often provocative opinions expressed. It is concerned rather with the relationship between theory and practice, with the intention of providing a robust way in which to think and speak about war in the modern world. Running through this book is the question: ‘How can we make the just war tradition both relevant and accessible to today’s moral and political challenges?’

The book is structured around four themes and concludes with a set of reflections. In addition to analysing the merits of the just war tradition as a decision-making model, it examines each of the classical elements of the just war tradition (jus ad bellum and jus in bello). Crucially, it also considers what Walzer calls jus post bellum. The intention is to move beyond recognising that the just war tradition needs rethinking to articulating some of the features of what a reconstituted just war tradition might mean in practice. This book avoids deliberately the quest for consensus. Indeed, several of the contributors disagree sharply about vital contemporary issues, such as the Iraq War. Yet every chapter stands as a contribution to a wider discussion in which each discipline finds its own voice in conversation with others.

A framework for ethical decision making

An important contribution to that debate came on the eve of the 1999 Kosovo War. Tony Blair’s speech to the Chicago Economic Club on 22 April 1999 drew heavily on just war criteria to provide a ‘Doctrine of the International Community’ that could assist governments in identifying
the circumstances in which they should become involved in other people’s conflicts. Similarly, both the *Responsibility to Protect*, a document commissioned by the Canadian Government, following the Kosovo War, and a report by a UN High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change, following the 2003 Iraq War, affirmed the continuing importance of the just war tradition by using its criteria to frame their deliberations regarding the legitimate use of military force. The concepts of the just war thus form part of our public grammar, but how have governments and international institutions used them? How relevant is a tradition, first developed some twelve hundred years ago, in offering criteria for deciding how new security issues can be appropriately dealt with? Does the use of these criteria suggest that there is a transatlantic consensus as to what the just war tradition means in theory and practice?

In the opening chapter, George Weigel analyses whether a developed just war tradition is evident in the 2002 US National Security Strategy. This is a controversial issue not least because many commentators see this document as providing the ideological framework for the 2003 Iraq War. Weigel acknowledges that the language of the 2002 US National Security Strategy sits uneasily with European sensitivities. However, Weigel argues that when re-read from the perspective of a retrieved and developed just war tradition, a tradition that allows for the morally legitimate first use of armed force, it is an appropriate attempt to respond to the new international reality. Central to Weigel’s analysis is the argument that the concept of just cause as defence against aggression already underway, enshrined in the UN Charter’s willingness to sanction only the second use of armed force, is inadequate in a world in which rogue regimes or terrorist networks possess or seek to possess weapons of mass destruction (WMD). In certain circumstances, he argues, it might be both necessary and legitimate to use force as a first rather than a last resort, even if the UN does not sanction such action. Weigel admits that while the document addresses the new *ad bellum* issues, it falls short of providing sufficient clarity as to how *post bellum* questions should be resolved.

William Wallace accepts that, unlike their US counterparts, European governments have not yet succeeded in defining the geopolitical context within which they wish to deploy force. As a result, the rules of engagement are more often than not determined at a national rather than a European level. Projecting the argument onto the United States has circumvented to some extent European debates about just war. This has
left Europe free to criticise the moral justification for US actions, without necessarily recognising that European governments cannot avoid, at some stage, addressing these issues themselves. Wallace illustrates that events since the end of the Cold War, most notably in the Balkans and more recently in Afghanistan and Iraq, have forced European governments along a painful learning process in containing conflict and in post-conflict reconstruction. All major European states have contributed troops to the Balkans, Afghanistan or Iraq, but the majority have contributed to post-conflict operations rather than to the initial stages of military intervention. According to Wallace, Europe must develop the skills and capabilities to move beyond civilian nation-building exercises to active military enforcement operations. He recognises, however, that such a move remains difficult given the absence of any Europe-wide public and political debate about strategic priorities and geopolitical interests.

The contributors in chapters 4 and 5 examine the impact of just war thinking upon the churches’ understanding of the use of military force as a tool of statecraft. How have British and American churches used or rejected the just war tradition at times of international crisis? Why are some within the churches increasingly disenchanted with this tradition? What factors have contributed to this situation and how should Christians respond? How can the churches revitalise what has been their dominant way of understanding, judging and limiting violence? Are there alternative ways of analysing conflict that would supplant the just war framework?

Nigel Biggar’s controversial analysis of the various statements and reports issued by churches following the end of the Cold War argues that whilst the language of just war features prominently, the moral reasoning that binds the tradition together is noticeably absent. Many within the churches do not deny that a justified war is possible, but they do often raise the bar so high that no conflict could ever qualify. Biggar attributes this to broader cultural influences: the suspicion of ‘power’, post-imperial Western self-loathing and a belief that something as terrible as war must be avoided at all costs. In Biggar’s analysis, the repudiation of the just war corpus takes one of several forms of ‘anti-Americanism’. Biggar argues that the just war tradition is capable of further development to respond to international public life, but he mourns the fact that many within the churches, like most of civil society, seem reluctant to participate in such an agenda-setting exercise.
Much of Biggar’s analysis mirrors James Turner Johnson’s consider-
ation of American churches. Johnson shows that, with the exception of the evangelical Protestant churches, American churches have for the most part interpreted just war thinking as assuming a presumption against using military force rather than seeing it as a legitimate tool of statecraft that has utility in maintaining and restoring peace and order. Johnson suggests that this reflects the emergence of a form of functional pacifism within the churches that owes its origins to the nuclear debates of the 1970s and the Civil Rights movement of the 1960s. Catholic and mainstream Protestant churches began identifying themselves less and less as an integral part of the existing social and political order and more and more in opposition to the state and to society. The public moral leadership role that these churches had traditionally played in such policy debates has increasingly been assumed by evangelical Protestant churches.

**Responding justly to new threats**

International security has fundamentally changed since the end of the Cold War. New security threats have emerged (such as mass-terroristm, ‘rogue regimes’ and proliferation of weapons of mass destruction) that affect the way states view the use of force as an instrument of foreign policy. Ideas about preventative war and regime change have added another layer of complexity to the conduct of international relations. The use of force by some Western governments resembles a form of police action more than a traditional model of warfare. International law has been slow to adjust to this new security environment with the result that state practice can appear at odds with the UN Charter. This discrepancy is deeply problematic because it has eroded the international consensus as to when it is right and proper to use force. If the old rules governing state behaviour no longer seem particularly relevant, it is far from clear what the new rules are, or even who should draft or enforce them.

From a *jus ad bellum* perspective, the emergence of new security threats challenges the 1945 consensus, as enshrined in the UN Charter, that military force should only be used in self-defence. This consensus was a reaction to the horrors of the First and Second World Wars and reflected a significant narrowing in the just war understanding of what constituted just cause. Prior to the political transformations in Europe following the treaties of Westphalia just war jurists, such as Hugo Grotius, recognised
the state’s right to use force to inflict punishment on those that transgressed universal values. In the absence of clearly defined rules, and in a global environment that is now distinctively post-Westphalian, how helpful is it to revisit pre-Westphalian understandings of the just war tradition?

Redefining what just cause means has implications for the other *jus ad bellum* criteria, most notably last resort and competent authority. If classical just war thinking has at times sanctioned anticipatory self-defence and humanitarian intervention, it has been more reticent about the benefits of preventive and pre-emptive military action. If it is accepted that the nature of the contemporary threats requires early intervention, can the just war tradition provide insights into when such action is both necessary and legitimate? Alternatively, will such action always constitute a breach of the peace and therefore be open to abuse? Finally, if, under certain circumstances, it might be legitimate to resort to unilateral action, what are the boundaries of such action?

In chapter 6, David Fisher examines the moral and political dilemmas that arise when contemplating using military force for humanitarian purposes. Fisher argues that while the classical notion of just war always recognised that there existed a legitimate right to intervene in the internal affairs of another nation-state, this right was overtaken by developments in international law following Westphalia and the creation of the states’ system. He argues, however, that international law needs amendment to reflect the growing international moral consensus in favour of intervention where human rights are seriously under threat. He suggests that the just war tradition provides a robust framework to help determine when such an intervention is necessary, whilst also ensuring that this new-found right of intervention is not open to abuse. He concludes by underlining the urgent moral necessity for action to prevent tragedies such as the Rwandan genocide and the horrors now unfolding in Darfur.

Jean Bethke Elshtain’s analysis of the historical and ethical roots of the just war tradition leads her to reject vigorously the claim that just war thinking is applicable only to conflicts between states. She argues that while a just response to terrorism will not be narrowly and exclusively military, military means might be necessary where a legal–criminal paradigm is found wanting, such as when a terrorist organisation works from a failed or failing state. Controversially, she argues that the modern-day complexity of terrorism requires a flexible nuanced response that may at
times skirt the edges of law and restraint, but that just war thinking remains crucial if politics and ethics are not to diverge.

In the subsequent chapter, Paul Schulte argues that the presumption against the first use of force is no longer sustainable when a nexus of threats such as terrorism, ‘rogue regimes’ and weapons of mass destruction threaten world order. Schulte lists a number of defining characteristics of what constitutes a rogue regime that helps to ward against cultural demonisation, although he recognises that the term remains problematic. Despite the threat posed by rogue regimes, only a handful of states can undertake regime change. Such states, he believes, will make a decision on a case-by-case basis and the overriding ethics in such decisions will invariably be prudential, requiring a significant dosage of moral luck. Using a utilitarian analysis, Schulte provides a provisional schema that might help to ensure that those states that do respond with military action without international authorisation can ensure that their actions more closely approximate ‘wars of enforcement’, that is, military interventions intended to reinforce world-ordering principles.

The brief overview of the above chapters points to a willingness amongst many of the contributors to assume that moral outrage can and should act as driver for the formation of new laws by either treaty or custom. Taken to the extreme this can lead to the conclusion that in the absence of clearly defined legal rules it is legitimate, even necessary, to fall back on natural law. In chapter 9, Franklin Berman examines in closer detail the correlation between compliance and enforcement, which is fundamental to the functioning of any legal system. Berman argues that the question ‘Is there a right of intervention?’ is misleading because it confuses the ‘right holder’ and the ‘obligee’. If the question is reframed as ‘Who is entitled to intervene?’ a more fruitful discussion can be had as to the question of values (justice, welfare and peace) and agency in the international law context. This discussion leads him to the formidable combination of obstacles that confront the construction of a viable legal regime of ethical intervention.

**Fighting wars justly**

Changes in international security have accompanied a revolution in military affairs. The emergence of network centric warfare and effects-based warfare has given rise to such language as the ‘intelligent battlefield’