THE PRICE OF PEACE

Lively political and public debates on war and morality have been a feature of the post-Cold War world. *The Price of Peace* argues that a re-examination of the just war tradition is therefore required. The authors suggest that, despite fluctuations and transformations in international politics, the just war tradition continues to be relevant. However, they argue that it needs to be reworked to respond to the new challenges to international security represented by the end of the Cold War and the impact of terrorism. With an interdisciplinary and transatlantic approach, this volume provides a dialogue between theological, political, military and public actors. By articulating what a reconstituted just war tradition might mean in practice, it also aims to assist policy-makers and citizens in dealing with the ethical dilemmas of war.

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THE PRICE OF PEACE

Just War in the Twenty-First Century

Edited by

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FOREWORD

RICHARD DANNATT

Successive generations in the twentieth century confronted the prospect of war as an ugly but inevitable characteristic of their times. The tone was set by the Boer War, became harsher in the First World War, more universal in the Second World War and took on the potential for total destruction in the Cold War. But then, despite what many saw as the aberration of the first Gulf War in 1990–1, there appeared to be the prospect of an era when swords could indeed be beaten into ploughshares, peace dividends taken and a belief that the likelihood of war – hot or cold, declared or undeclared – had receded. However, 9/11 shattered the last vestiges of that dream. But on reflection, the audit trail to the contemporary security situation had already been marked out.

Although the collapse of the Berlin Wall was the headline event that signalled a switch from the classic focus on Defence to an increasing emphasis on Security, the use of force to achieve political ends did not cease but merely began to change. With certain exceptions in sub-Saharan Africa and in the Middle East, the prospect and incidence of inter-state war sharply declined, while wars amongst the people became a hallmark of the last decade of the twentieth century and on into the first decade of the twenty-first. Moral consciences, pricked by the ubiquity of the international media, have led to a marked increase in military interventions predominantly under the multinational banners of institutions such as the United Nations, the European Union and NATO or within the construct of ad hoc 'coalitions of the willing'. This has certainly been the experience of the British armed forces and also of the armed forces of many Western and former Eastern bloc industrialised nations who have chosen to apply their residual military capabilities not against each other but in support of the less fortunate. The swords have not become ploughshares but in an innovative way more akin to pruning hooks; they are being used to try to contribute to prosperity and stability and not merely to threaten or destroy. If there has been a 'revolution in military affairs' in

recent times it is as much about the ways that armed forces are used as about the capabilities available to them.

But an acceptance of the moral responsibility to intervene does not itself provide a solution. Thousands died at Srebrenica and tens, probably hundreds, of thousands died in Rwanda because the military means were not made available in sufficient quantities to support the political intent. 'Never again' was the reaction, and this response has led to a growing acceptance of the responsibility to protect human rights wherever they are threatened. This book is therefore timely as it seeks to re-examine, from first principles, the ethical context of the use of force in the current security climate. Responsible policy-makers and military commanders need the mutual confidence that what they set out to do remains not only legal, but morally and ethically sound.

It is not for me to speak for policy-makers; but from the perspective of the military commander these ethical issues are personal and urgent. Responsibility for a plan or a series of operations can never be delegated. Activity can be delegated to subordinates but never responsibility. Both I and General Sir Rupert Smith, who also addressed the authors' conference at Church House when this book was being shaped, have had first-hand experience of operations in Bosnia, Kosovo and Northern Ireland and know that whereas physical courage is a basic requirement for a soldier – and Private Johnson Beharry VC comes to mind – it is the moral courage to do the right thing that is the harder challenge. A salutary and negative example is that of Major-General Radislav Krstic, the Bosnian Serb Commander of the Drina Corps whose troops carried out the Srebrenica massacres in 1995. I gave evidence at his trial before the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia in The Hague, and by the end of that trial, I believe the prosecution knew, the court knew and even he probably knew that his major failing was not to refuse to carry out the instructions given to him by his superiors which inevitably led to the death of some 8,000 Muslim men and boys. Nuremberg should have taught him that his defence was not a defence. I repeat: responsibility can never be delegated; and seen from where I stand, the moral dimension is highly personal.

If, therefore, the moral dimension to the use of force is of increasing importance in the contemporary security environment then so too is the premium placed on intellectual preparation to take part in modern, post-industrial warfare. A book such as this will contribute significantly to this process, mirroring in part the greater emphasis placed within the British

Army, and the British armed forces generally, on a proper doctrinal understanding of the application of military force.

Until the closing years of the Cold War, the British Army had no formally articulated military doctrine – instead, the basis of belief and conduct was largely rooted in past practice: the army was popularly held to be pretty efficient at preparing for the last war, not too bad at a preparing for the current one but not that good at looking ahead! But in the last fifteen years thought has moved on. Without dwelling unduly on history, in the last decade of the Cold War there was a growing realisation that there had to be an alternative to the cataclysmic nuclear options and more time, thought and resources were put into developing conventional battlefield concepts. Within the British Army, General, then later Field Marshal, Sir Nigel Bagnall led the intellectual charge which culminated in the first comprehensive written doctrine which in turn provided the rationale for an enhanced equipment programme and a new approach to training and war fighting. At the heart of this approach was a deliberate focus on the operational level of war – the level between the strategic and the tactical – the level at which Generalship is exercised and all activity is orchestrated within a single campaign plan.

And this linkage between political intent and the application of force on the ground has served the military well. In each new situation the attempt has been made to plan events beginning with a vision of the end state, identifying the effects that are required to achieve it and working back from there. In parallel to this renewed focus on a doctrinal approach to the application of force has been an intellectual struggle to broaden the debate so as to embrace the challenges of peace-keeping as distinct from war fighting. But heroic attempts during the mid-1990s against the illogical background of the conflicts in the Balkans failed to square the circle and could not provide neat definitions for alternate scenarios. The reality of the early months of the second Gulf War in 2003 showed the unity of all military operations with simultaneous but different activities taking place in adjacent parts of the battlefield, or even city blocks – war fighting, humanitarian relief and peace support operations – the genesis of the so-called 'Three-Block War'.

Such a description of contemporary operations masks the underlying challenges for the development of the physical means of modern military force. The extent to which any nation can join a 'Revolution in Military Affairs' is ultimately enabled or constrained by the size of the

national budget devoted to defence. Successive British governments have set their priorities, challenging defence to be both effective and efficient, and to regard operations with allies and coalition partners as the norm. That said, a small deployment such as that to Sierra Leone in 2000 demonstrated that modest but timely action can bring disproportionate benefit, especially when linked to speedy strategic and operational level decision making. However, the norm will be multinational action often led by the United States, who are forging ahead on all technological fronts. In Britain we accept that we will never fight 'as' the Americans, but we do recognise the requirement to fight 'with' the Americans, and recent experience shows that this is perfectly possible. However, we are all agreed that future warfare will increasingly be intelligence- and information-led, an orchestration of specific effects aligned to specific purposes, and all brought together on a network basis. The day of the 'Big Battalions' is not over, but the synchronisation of the precise use of force is most likely to ensure that our professional skills are turned to our advantage and our conventional mass – still needed in some manpower-intensive circumstances – does not become our Achilles' heel.

But whatever the means of war, the just war questions remain, promoting a contemporary re-examination of just cause, just conduct and the establishment of a just peace – and at the same time there is the realisation that the cast list of key players has also been expanded. The classic understanding of the inter-play between the strategic, operational and tactical levels of war placed greater emphasis and responsibility on those at the upper end of the process. This is not exclusively so today, as the actions of a corporal or a pilot apparently conducting tactical activity can have profound operational and strategic consequences. Thus, the requirement for moral and ethical understanding becomes more pressing and widespread as the effect of the actions of the 'strategic' corporal or pilot might be as easily visible to the international media as the actions of the general or the politician. Educating the 'strategic' corporal and pilot to understand his moral responsibilities is now a key challenge for the military leadership.

In past generations it was assumed that young men and women coming into the armed forces would have absorbed an understanding of the values and standards required by the military from their family or from within their wider community. Such a presumption today cannot be made. When a political decision is reached to send a military force on a discretionary intervention there is a conscious or subconscious

acceptance that in deploying to a less fortunate part of the world, we do so having publicly adopted a position on the moral high ground. However, when officers or soldiers act in a way contrary to our traditional values and standards and fail to respect the human rights of those they have gone to help, then we risk falling from the high ground to the valley, often in a very public way. The challenge now for the military leadership is to educate and train our young people of today – each one a potential individual decision-maker – so that all concerned understand the rationale behind our core values of selfless commitment, courage, discipline, integrity, loyalty and respect for others, and apply these values to their conduct.

Without an individual moral understanding from all concerned within a military endeavour, from policy-maker to private soldier, then the outcome will be in doubt in both war and peace. But where we get it wrong, when there are lapses in behaviour and conduct, then they must be confronted. Investigation must be thorough. Well-informed decisions must be taken about possible prosecutions and timely disposal throughout the judicial system must follow. Those in the chain of command, from top to bottom, have a duty to support all individuals for whom they are responsible throughout this process; but ultimately individuals must accept responsibility for their own actions. The peculiar conditions and atmosphere of military operations underline why it is imperative that potential offences on operations are tried within a military criminal judicial system according to the burden of civil, military and international law – itself a more rigorous criteria than in civilian life.

But individual moral responsibility and understanding are not sufficient of themselves unless the corporate or collective moral understanding is sound too. Napoleon observed in his day that the moral is to the physical as three is to one, and in so doing I believe he was commenting both individually and collectively: the cause must be just, and be understood to be just, in order to gain this beneficial multiplier effect that leads to overall success. In the dark days of 1940 the physical odds against Britain were alarmingly high, and in the more sobering moments of the Cold War the military balance was tilted away most unfavourably; but ultimately fascism and communism were defeated. The Second World War and the Cold War were fundamentally moral conflicts – clashes of ideas – 'the difference between truth and lies that makes people commit their best energies and risk their lives and safety in resisting oppression and deceit'. Those were the words of the Archbishop of Canterbury, the

Rt Revd Rowan Williams, in his address at the service in Westminster Abbey on Sunday 10 July 2005 to mark the sixtieth anniversary of the end of the Second World War. It is ironic that the moral challenge to this generation had come to the streets of London only three days before on what we know popularly as 7/7. But Archbishop Rowan Williams also referred to 'the passion that was generated during the darkest days of the War, a passion to see human dignity vindicated after an age of insult and disfigurement. That passion will have been rekindled in recent days.' It is perhaps a sad but inevitable comment on the history of humankind that successive generations must confront the clash 'between truth and lies', but it is most timely that the Church of England Archbishops' Council and the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales set up their conference and this resultant book entitled *The Price of Peace: Just War in the Twenty-First Century*.[1] I am glad that the contributors have not ducked the difficult issues.

My original invitation to take part in the conference and subsequently the invitation to write this foreword came from the late Major-General the Reverend Ian Durie, tragically killed in a car crash in Romania just a few weeks before the conference. He had commanded the British Artillery in the First Gulf War, subsequently been ordained and at the time of his death was visiting Romania to promote spiritual and moral understanding within their army. Of this conference, to which he had intended to contribute, he expressed his hope to try to 'bring a much better understanding of this critical subject – the theology of just war and its relevance today – to help the Church to speak prophetically into this crucial area'.

Ian Durie felt passionately about the need for a contemporary understanding of what just war permitted and constrained. But at the heart of the matter – the Centre of Gravity, as the military call it – are people. War has traditionally been fought between people, now increasingly it is fought amongst people, but ultimately it is fought by people. The conceptual dimension of war has constantly changed, the physical means of war have become ever-deadlier, but the moral component of war – people – has remained as the central element. What people think they can achieve by war, how people conduct themselves in war and how people set about restoring peace – it is our response to these questions that ultimately defines our humanity.

General Sir Richard Dannatt KCB CBE MC ADC Gen
Chief of The General Staff

[1] Archbishop Rowan Williams, sermon in Westminster Abbey, Sunday, 10 July 2005.

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