

crimination. In discussing them here, we shall apply them to the question of *jus ad bellum* as well as *jus in bello*; for today it becomes increasingly difficult to make a decision to use any kind of armed force, however limited initially in intention and in the destructive power of the weapons employed, without facing at least the possibility of escalation to broader, or even total, war and to the use of weapons of horrendous destructive potential. This is especially the case when adversaries are "superpowers," as the council clearly envisioned:

"Indeed, if the kind of weapons now stocked in the arsenals of the great powers were to be employed to the fullest, the result would be the almost complete reciprocal slaughter of one side by the other, not to speak of the widespread devastation that would follow in the world and the deadly aftereffects resulting from the use of such weapons." (39)

It should not be thought, of course, that massive slaughter and destruction would result only from the extensive use of nuclear weapons. We recall with horror the carpet and incendiary bombings of World War II, the deaths of hundreds of thousands in various regions of the world through "conventional" arms, the unspeakable use of gas and other forms of chemical warfare, the destruction of homes and of crops, the utter suffering war has wrought during the centuries before and the decades since the use of the "atom bomb." Nevertheless, every honest person must recognize that, especially given the proliferation of modern scientific weapons, we now face possibilities which are appalling to contemplate. Today, as never before, we must ask not merely *what* will happen but *what may* happen, especially if major powers embark on war. Pope John Paul II has repeatedly pleaded that world leaders confront this reality:

"(I)n view of the difference between classical warfare and nuclear or bacteriological war—a difference so to speak of nature—and in view of the scandal of the arms race seen against the background of the needs of the Third World, this right (of defense), which is very real in principle, only underlines the urgency of world society to equip itself with effective means of negotiation. In this way the nuclear terror that haunts our time can encourage us to enrich our common heritage with a very simple discovery that is within our reach, namely that war is the most barbarous and least effective way of resolving conflicts." (40)

The Pontifical Academy of Sciences reaffirmed the Holy Father's theme in its November 1981 "Statement on the Consequences of Nuclear War." Then, in a meeting convoked by the Pontifical Academy, representatives of the National Academies of Science from throughout the world issued a "Declaration on the Prevention of Nuclear War" which specified the meaning of Pope John Paul II's statement that modern warfare differs by nature from previous forms of war. The scientists said:

"Throughout its history humanity has been confronted with war, but since 1945 the nature of warfare has changed so profoundly that the future of the human race, of generations yet unborn, is imperiled.... For the first time it is possible to cause damage on such a catastrophic scale as to wipe out a large part of civilization and to endanger its very survival. The large-scale use of such weapons could trigger major and irreversible ecological and genetic changes whose limits cannot be predicted." (41)

And earlier, with such thoughts plainly in mind, the council had made its own "the condemnation of total war already pronounced by recent popes." (42) This condemnation is demanded by the principles of proportionality and discrimination. Response to aggression must not exceed the nature of the aggression. To destroy civilization as we know it by waging a "total war" as today it *could* be waged would be a monstrously disproportionate response to aggression on the part of any nation.

Moreover, the lives of innocent persons may never be taken directly, regardless of the purpose alleged for doing so. To wage truly "total" war is by definition to take huge numbers of innocent lives. Just response to aggression must be discriminate; it must be directed against unjust aggressors, not against innocent people caught up in a war not of their making. The council therefore issued its memorable declaration:

"Any act of war aimed indiscriminately at the destruction of entire cities or of extensive areas along with their population is a crime against God and man himself. It merits unequivocal and unhesitating condemnation." (43)

When confronting choices among specific military options, the question asked by proportionality is: once we take into account not only the military advantages that will be achieved by using this means, but also all the harms reasonably expected to follow from using it, can its use still be justified? We know, of course, that no end can justify means evil in themselves, such as the executing of hostages or the targeting of non-combatants. Nonetheless, even if the means adopted is not evil in itself, it is necessary to take into account the probable harms that will result from using it and the justice of accepting those harms. It is of the utmost importance in assessing harms and the justice of accepting them to think about the poor and the helpless, for they are usually the ones who have the least to gain and the

most to lose when war's violence touches their lives.

In terms of the arms race, if the *real* end in view is legitimate defense against unjust aggression and the means to this end are not evil in themselves, we must still examine the question of proportionality concerning attendant evils. Do the exorbitant costs, the general climate of insecurity generated, the possibility of accidental detonation of highly destructive weapons, the danger of error and miscalculation that could provoke retaliation and war—do such evils or others attendant upon and indirectly deriving from the arms race make the arms race itself a disproportionate response to aggression? Pope John Paul II is very clear in his insistence that the exercise of the right and duty of a people to protect their existence and freedom is contingent on the use of proportionate means. (44)

Finally, another set of questions concerns the interpretation of the principle of discrimination: The principle prohibits directly intended attacks on non-combatants and non-military targets. It raises a series of questions about the term "intentional," the category of "non-combatant" and the meaning of "military."

These questions merit the debate occurring with increasing frequency today. We encourage such debate, for concise and definitive answers still appear to be wanting. Mobilization of forces in modern war includes not only the military, but to a significant degree the political, economic and social sectors. It is not always easy to determine who is directly involved in a "war effort" or to what degree. Plainly, though, not even by the broadest definition can one rationally consider combatants entire classes of human beings such as schoolchildren, hospital patients, the elderly, the ill, the average industrial worker producing goods not directly related to military purposes, farmers, and many others. They may never be directly attacked.

Direct attacks on military targets involve similar complexities. Which targets are "military" ones and which are not? To what degree, for instance, does the use (by either revolutionaries or regular military forces) of a village or housing in a civilian populated area invite attack? What of a munitions factory in the heart of a city? Who is directly responsible for the deaths of non-combatants should the attack be carried out? To revert to the question raised earlier, how many deaths of non-combatants are "tolerable" as a result of indirect attacks—attacks directed against combat forces and military targets, which nevertheless kill non-combatants at the same time?

These two principles in all their complexity must be applied to the range of weapons—conventional, nuclear, biological and chemical—with which nations are armed today.

#### 4. The Value of Non-violence

Moved by the example of Jesus' life and by his teaching, some Christians have from the earliest days of the church committed themselves to a non-violent lifestyle. (45) Some understood the Gospel of Jesus to prohibit all killing. Some affirmed the use of prayer and other spiritual methods as means of responding to enmity and hostility.

In the middle of the second century St. Justin proclaimed to his pagan readers that Isaiah's prophecy about turning swords into ploughshares and spears into sickles had been fulfilled as a consequence of Christ's coming:

"And we who delighted in war, in the slaughter of one another, and in every other kind of inequity have in every part of the world converted our weapons into implements of peace—our swords into ploughshares, our spears into farmer's tools—and we cultivate piety, justice, brotherly charity, faith and hope, which we derive from the Father through the crucified Savior." (46)

Writing in the third century, St. Cyprian of Carthage struck a similar note when he indicated that the Christians of his day did not fight against their enemies. He himself regarded their conduct as proper:

"They do not even fight against those who are attacking since it is not granted to the innocent to kill even the aggressor, but promptly to deliver up their souls and blood that since so much malice and cruelty are rampant in the world they may more quickly withdraw from the malicious and the cruel." (47)

Some of the early Christian opposition to military service was a response to the idolatrous practices which prevailed in the Roman army. Another powerful motive was the fact that army service involved preparation for fighting and killing. We see this in the case of St. Martin of Tours during the fourth century, who renounced his soldierly profession with the explanation: "Hitherto I have served you as a soldier. Allow me now to become a soldier of God...I am a soldier of Christ. It is not lawful for me to fight." (48)

In the centuries between the fourth century and our own day, the theme of Christian non-violence and Christian pacifism has echoed and re-echoed, sometimes more strongly, sometimes more faintly. One of the great non-violent figures in those centuries was St. Francis of Assisi. Besides making personal efforts on behalf of reconciliation and peace, Francis stipulated that

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By the nature of their presentation of this subject the bishops give an important new emphasis to non-violence as a valid option for today's Catholics.

The bishops begin by indicating that from the earliest days of the Church, some Christians have regarded Jesus' life and teaching as calling for non-violence. They cite examples of saints whose writings and lives attest to the presence of this conviction.

Since that time Christian non-violence has echoed and re-echoed in the life of the Church. The bishops state that, in today's world, growing numbers of Catholics are attracted to it.

Part of the explanation for this renewed interest in nonviolence is that the 20th century has been blessed with the lives of such persons as Mohandas Gandhi, Dorothy Day, and Martin Luther King, Jr. The bishops also believe that this renewed emphasis upon non-violence is one of the fruits of the second Vatican Council.

In fact, because of the importance of Vatican II teachings in this area, the pastoral letter actually quotes three passages from the Council documents. One of them, a passage calling upon governments to enact laws protecting the rights of conscientious objectors, is cited in full and then expanded upon. The bishops add that the laws should protect those who are conscientious objectors to specific wars as well as those who oppose every war.

In presenting the nonviolent approach the bishops explain that those who follow this option are not passive about injustice. Rather they seek to overcome injustice through nonviolent methods.

The bishops also explain that the non-violent approach helps to complement and support the just-war approach. In fact, both approaches tend to converge when the subject is nuclear war. Catholics who follow the nonviolent approach will strongly oppose such war, but so will those Catholics who follow the just-war approach.