Just War Theory

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For centuries, the Just War Theory has been used for justification for acts of war against other nations. The Just war Theory is a set of principles designed to regulate the conduct of warfare, which could be grouped together as a distinctive approach to the ethics of war, pacifism, and realism. These principles have been used as a guide in the decision on whether to go to war or not. This theory’s roots can be traced back to Roman times, but like all things its meaning has evolved over time in order to adapt to ever changing world. The true factor in it all is justifying a war ethically and morally. Over the course of this paper we will discuss the four most important tenets of the Just War Theory, the ethical/moral justification for each tenant, and how the use of these tenets justifies the use of force by the United States in the invasion of Iraq.

**Just War Tenets**

The *Just Cause* tenet is the most important tenet of the Just War Theory. “The

Term “Just Cause” refers to ‘a limited set of goals, called a just cause, that would justify starting a war’” (Steinhoff, 2014). The Just Cause tenet can be defined as rights violation (or at least an immoralact); and in the second sense of the term it refers to the aim of defending against, rectifying,or punishing said rights violation (Steinhoff, 2014). For example, if innocent people are threatened by an aggressor, it makes perfect sense to say that the attacked have a just cause to resort to a war on the grounds of self-defense. If acts of aggression are taken against your people, it is morally just to defend your people. The second important Just War Theory tenet we will discuss is *Right Intention*. This tenet kind of is in the same realm as the *Just Cause* tenet. “The right intention condition, or the criterion of right intention, overlaps to a largeextent with the just cause condition, in that the latter says that a resort to war is legitimate only if it is undertaken with sufficient just cause, while the former, at least on itstraditional interpretation,says that a resort to war is legitimate only if it is undertakenfor the sake of such a cause” (Janzen, 2016).I will interrupt this tenet as basically the motive. Tenet number three is *proportionality*. This tenet can be described as the methods and means of force that inflict greater suffering than warranted by military. “The requirement of proportionally relates to the costs and benefits of waging a war” (Calhoun, 2002). This tenet speaks to those who are attacked, because in some way and form they must account for some of the fault on which they where attacked. This attack must hurt them so much that in force them to warrant the use of force in response. Finally, we will discuss tenet number four is *legitimate authority*. “The legitimate authority is a Just War Theory that a leader’s proclamation that a war is accepted as true by subordinates” (Calhoun, 2002). This concept is entirely unproblematic, because leaders of established nations are legitimate authorities, while leaders of terrorists’ groups are illegitimate.

**Ethical Justification**