

MILITARY ETHICS AND STRATEGY

Senior Commanders, Moral Values, and Cultural Perspectives

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Senior military officers have an important role to play in deciding how a state views the place and role of military force in statecraft. The use of armed force is a most difficult form of government policy. Not only are the political outcomes of warfare unpredictable, but also the ambiguity and complexity of modern conflict can easily reinforce national prejudices and self-deception.¹ Despite the well-established history of theorizing about the use of force in international politics, the study of security issues has been made more complex by the increase in forms of violence that do not fit conventionally understood categories.² This means that the development of effective strategy, which has always been a difficult and contentious enterprise, is becoming even more arduous.

In this chapter, I explore the importance of ethics education for senior military officers with responsibilities at the strategic level of government. One problem, as I see it, is that senior commanders might demand “ethics” from their soldiers but then they are themselves primarily informed by a “morally skeptical viewpoint” (in the form of political realism). I argue that ethics are more than a matter of personal behavior alone: the ethical position of an armed service is a matter of the collective responsibility of the people who constitute it, and senior military officers, having authority to give the orders, have a particularly important role. First, I discuss the continued prominence of a neorealist mindset in strategic thinking. Neorealist theory assumes that ethics is a largely irrelevant concern for strategic decision-makers. In contrast, I argue that consideration of moral values should be at the center of strategic theory and practice. Then, in the second section, I explore the “professional ethics” of senior military officers in order to develop an appreciation of the shared values and expectations regarding required conduct within any professional military service. I argue that senior military leaders should be concerned with what it means to be “good” and that this concept of the good can, and should, be applied across cultures and national boundaries. In the final section, I examine armed conflict and briefly discuss the moral reasoning involved to justify deliberate killing and destruction. I conclude that senior military officers require an understanding of sound moral reasoning to implement effective strategy.

I. Addressing a Neorealist Mindset

In this first section, I examine the way that discussions about norms and values, as a response to neorealism, have recently manifested in security studies scholarship. It would be better to recognize that moral values are at the center of strategic theory and practice rather than maintaining that strategy is fundamentally a self-interested rational process somehow separate from political and moral values.

1. *The Prominence of Neorealism*

Over the last few decades, reference to values has been considered problematic for understanding and explaining international politics. This is largely due to neorealism's dominance as the theoretical paradigm of choice. Kenneth Waltz's *Theory of International Politics* (1979) is the most important exposition of neorealism. In it, Waltz argues that states' actions are explained by their rational response to forces that operate at the systems level, and he recast the tenets of classical political realism using a positivist methodology.

Political realism argues that international politics will always be a ruthless and dangerous business. Despite the occasional peaceful and cooperative period, political realists hold that great powers cannot help but be suspicious of each other and will be forced to compete for power. They claim that they are simply facing the reality of thousands of years of human conflict. Although often criticized for having an unnecessarily bleak view of humanity, political realists respond that they are simply being intellectually honest about the reality of international politics and the inevitability of future conflict.³ In other words, political realism adopts an "amoral" viewpoint: it is skeptical about the worth of ethics.

Although neorealism is a species of political realism, it is distinct from the classical view because it adopts a systems approach to explaining the ugliness of world politics. The essence of neorealism is materialism.⁴ That is, the positivist (or naturalist) methodology of neorealism more directly reflects the received model of the natural sciences and, since it is exclusively concerned with measurable causes and effects, favors material variables such as the distribution of power for understanding international politics. In this way, neorealist theorists are more likely to rule out the possibility that cultural and ideational variables—such as moral values—can explain political behavior. Its pervasiveness and influence in the late 1970s and early 1980s effectively stripped international relations of normative commitments.

2. *Norms and Moral Values*

In more recent scholarship, however, an increasing reference to "moral values" reflects an emerging concern with "norms" in the study of international politics and security. In contrast with neorealism, the concern with norms aims to resurrect E. H. Carr's maxim that "Political science is the science not only of what *is*, but of what *ought* to be."⁵ Normative contestation is in large part what politics is all about; it is about competing moral values and understandings of what is good, desirable, and appropriate in our collective communal life.⁶ Although it acknowledges the importance of material structures, a concern with norms in international relations is generally characterized by an approach that gives priority to cultural factors because international actors act on the basis of the meanings that they assign to such factors. Norms and moral values, so this approach to international relations theory suggests, is an evaluative aspect of culture and identity, analytical concepts that theorists are finding increasingly useful alternatives to traditional notions such as power and geography.⁷

Despite the many references by strategists to Karl von Clausewitz's notion that the use of military force should always be viewed as a means in the pursuit of a political end, the significance of moral values for security is an issue that is frequently overlooked.⁸ Even where the political objectives and context of strategy is recognized, it is considered a distraction that "erodes the cold rationality of the strategic process."⁹

But value preferences, political ends, and strategy are linked.¹⁰ Strategic and political cultures (and their institutions) are interdependent, and the function of a nation's military is closely related to political views about the use of force. Any country that ignores its own political history, social values, and ideology is unlikely to develop an effective strategy.¹¹ The choice of a strategy involves a decision about which values to pursue. By eschewing disciplined discussion of values, realist policy science disarmed itself from consideration of the strategic question: that of the political objectives at stake.¹²

In many cases, culture shapes a strategic actor's interests or preferences in ways that contradict the logic of the strategic environment or prevent cooperation when it is clearly beneficial.¹³ There exists within a state (or like politically relevant group) a distinctive and lasting set of beliefs, values, and habits regarding the threat and use of force, which have their roots in such fundamental influences as geopolitical setting, history, and political culture. These beliefs, values, and habits constitute a strategic culture that persists over time, and exerts some influence on the formation and execution of strategy.¹⁴ States have different predominant sets of strategic preferences that are rooted in the "early" or "formative" military experiences of the state or its predecessor, and are influenced to some degree by the philosophical, political, cultural, and cognitive characteristics of the state and state elites as these develop through time.¹⁵

In short, rather than pretending that strategy is a rational process somehow separate from politics, it would be better to recognize that values are at the center of strategic theory and practice.

II. Personal and Professional Values

In this next section, I discuss the link between values and strategy by focusing on the personal and professional values of senior military leaders. In particular, I note the tension caused by disagreements over whether certain moral values are always culture-specific or can be broadly agreed in some cases. I argue that in the high politics of strategic decision-making, there should be a concern that senior military leaders are "good."

1. Good Leadership

First, we need to establish what a "good leader" is. According to Joanne Ciulla, a good leader is one who is both competent and ethical.¹⁶ Certainly, a good leader is one who is competent. That is, someone who is good at achieving the ends of the organization. We can judge good leaders according to whether or not they facilitate the successful pursuit of the proper goals of the organization they manage. In contrast, bad leaders impede or undermine the successful pursuit of the proper goals of the organization they manage.¹⁷ But good leadership should be understood not only in the sense of being technically competent, but also in the sense of being unselfishly motivated to pursue a common purpose.

This aspect of good leadership is a reference to determining what is morally right or wrong. Goodness or justice in the peculiar circumstance of war is about resorting to force and conducting hostilities in accordance with certain rules, but the significance of moral values extends further than that. The exercise of leadership in the military profession calls for personal virtues that are seldom exhibited in civilian life, and the identity and purpose of warriors in general is largely derived from military ethics.

2. Different Cultural Perspectives

But one might have a number of objections to considering what is ethically good. It might be argued that nobody can really know what is ethically good. After all, so this thinking goes, we have no objective reference points on which to judge right and wrong. Additionally, even if we can know something about what is good, it might be argued that it is too complex to say for sure. It is simpler and more predictable to assume that people are self-interested rational actors. Or perhaps it is arrogant to assume that our cultural ideas of what is good are better than the idea of good we find in other cultures.

The notion that moral values are (at least largely) determined by culture is one that resonates with senior military officers, particularly when considering strategic questions.¹⁸ Can countries cooperate on security issues? In dictatorships, one assumes the government dictates values—to what extent is this similar in democratic societies? Are our interests shaped by our values or is it murkier than that? Perhaps our interests are not as close to our values as they should be? Is the concept of values in international relations becoming more important to the discourse on security relationships? What is the great values-based success story at the international level? Is there one?

These are good questions that correctly recognize the different understandings of moral good we can observe between cultures. I do not dispute the truth of the observation. The theory that moral values are to some extent relative to different cultures is a form of thinking known as relativism. But it is important, at this point, to make a distinction between cultural relativism and ethical relativism. Ethical relativism (or moral skepticism) is the notion that all values, including moral values, are only cultural. There are no universal values. The attraction of ethical relativism is that it seemingly resolves the difficulty of finding an overall theory of ethics. It appears to make ethics easy: everything is simply a matter of opinion.

Cultural relativism, in contrast, is the factual claim that cultural practices can only be understood relative to that particular culture. The existence of cultural relativism does not preclude an approach to ethics based on truth claims. P. C. Lo, for example, argues that the Chinese and Western traditions of just war can communicate with each other meaningfully. The recovery of ancient Chinese just war ethics, he suggests, can enrich the global moral discourse on war and peace and, he hopes, provide one further step toward finding and formulating “a cross-cultural consensus on rules of war.”¹⁹

Of course, Chinese perspectives on war are different to the Western understanding. Lo compares the ancient Chinese traditions with the just war ethics of the Chinese Seven Military Classics and concludes that from the Chinese perspective, there is no moral presumption against war per se. Statesmen and military strategists are duty-bound to resort to war when necessary so they would not consider war inherently immoral.²⁰ But even if we agree with this view, it does not rule out agreement on fundamental moral principles such as the presumption against killing, which I discuss in the final section.

3. Problems with Moral Skepticism

If we assume that everybody is coming at what is good from different perspectives, we can assume that view is also a “theory” of what is good (that is, the view from nowhere does not exist). And there remain considerable theoretical and practical problems in choosing this approach to determining what is morally good. First, it tends to ignore the importance we place on shared humanity. We do, in fact, agree on many moral issues. Most of us think that there are right and wrong answers in ethics. For example, most would agree that it is morally wrong to set a child on fire for the mere pleasure of watching him burn. Is there any reasonable

person who seriously doubts the truth of this claim? An ethical relativist, however, does not have grounds to condemn anything.

Second, the conclusion advanced by the ethical relativist argument does not by necessity follow from its premise. Ethical relativism concludes that there is no objective truth in morality (what really is the case) from the premise that different cultures have different moral codes (what people believe). So what it is saying is that what really is the case (what is morally good) follows unproblematically from what people believe (approved of in the agent's society). This is not necessarily true. For example, if meat eating is approved of in our society, then ethical relativism claims that meat eating is morally good. But surely even in a society that mostly approves of meat eating, the moral status of meat eating can still be disputed.²¹ The moral question is not settled by a culture's approval or disapproval.

Third, it denies the possibility of moral progress (for example, slavery and colonialism). If it is true that right and wrong can only be judged within a culture, then we have no way of effectively judging the moral transformations throughout history. For example, we might argue that society is morally better off without the "blood sports" and gladiatorial contests that were, at times, normative during periods of the Roman Empire. But from the perspective of ethical relativism, we could not say that it was wrong for ancient Roman culture to force enslaved people to kill each other for entertainment. And we could only say that it is wrong now because most people today disapprove of it, but only while they disapprove of it.

Fourth, it is incoherent in the sense that suggesting there are no moral values is to demand that tolerance be accepted as the universal moral value. Tolerance is an acknowledgement that we have no right to interfere with other autonomous individuals' actions, unless they are hurting others. People have a right to be wrong, and tolerance is a way of expressing our respect for their autonomy. But if we accept that people have a right to this type of moral autonomy, then we should not choose to refrain from all moral judgments outside our own culture. To do so, as is advocated by ethical relativism, is more likely to be disrespectful than tolerant. This is because we can too easily dismiss the objective moral perspectives of the other culture in preference for our own.

Finally, how do we identify the culture to which moral norms belong? The ethical relativist argument relies on defining morality in terms of a culture's norms, but how do we determine where to draw the boundaries of that culture, and who are its members? Even if we manage to identify a single culture, and its members, then there still exists a variety of moral perspectives within a single culture. Furthermore, it is normal for individuals to be members of several different cultures at once. So how do we decide which culture's norms should be preferred?

In short, various kinds of ethical relativism have been advanced as alternatives to universal concepts in ethics, but they often fail because they do not explain how reasons can be advanced and arguments used to change ethical positions. If we base all our decisions just on what we already happen to believe or on what our society has historically accepted, then we cannot explain how we come to change our ethical views or how progress is made. It becomes impossible to engage in productive criticism when deciding which options may be better or worse.

4. *Overlapping Consensus*

Even if there is no single answer to a moral dilemma, there are certainly some answers that will be wrong, and some answers that are more right than others. What is needed is a framework of principles or values, supported by justifying reasons that we endorse through a process of rational argument. Otherwise, we can become simply bound by tradition, without any means to question whether some (or all) of our traditions may be bad (or no longer relevant).

On the other hand, it is now also widely accepted that the Enlightenment idea that everything can and should be a matter of pure rationality is also limited. Communities rely upon traditions and established institutions. This produces stability and predictability in social interactions, and adapts a system of government or law to the particular form of life of a people. We also rely upon things other than rationality for our own moral judgments: things such as emotional insight; personal relationships; long-term commitments; and religious faith and other metaphysical beliefs that cannot be tested by formal logic. One's approach to ethics should allow for an appropriate balancing of critical rationality with other important values such as emotion and culture.

As an example, the American philosopher John Rawls proposed one way to achieve this balance. Writing primarily in the context of political philosophy, and the design of modern institutions, he proposed what he called the "overlapping consensus." Rawls argued that every person, regardless of personal beliefs or culture, still needs to protect their own capacity to pursue the form of life that seems right to them. We each need to be left alone by others, to enjoy security and to be safe, to have access to economic opportunity, and to have things such as healthcare and education so that we can pursue our own life goals and interests. If we had to sit down and strike a bargain with others, we would, he argues, agree to respect the ways of life of others if they would agree to respect ours, and would provide in common whatever was needed to give everyone an acceptable and equal level of self-respect, autonomy, opportunity, and security.²²

The idea of an overlapping consensus provides a basis for a conversation about what the state is for that allows us to be critical of existing institutions, and provides a common ground that avoids cultural specificity. It also delivers a very clear conception of what the law and legal institutions should aim to deliver. This consensus is meant to be found in public discourse about our basic legal, political, and economic institutions, and emerges where people from diverse backgrounds discover mutual basic interests they need to protect and promote within the context of cultural and moral difference.

III. The Ethics of Armed Conflict

This final section examines the specific context of armed conflict, where the political commitment to valuing both individual rights and upholding state duties is tested. Of particular moral concern is the deliberate killing and destruction that go with armed conflict. And the central moral consideration in war is not just the taking of human life, but the likelihood of taking many lives, especially those who are innocent.

1. Moral Reasoning and Killing in Self-Defense

First of all, most persons tend to agree that deliberate killing is *prima facie* wrong. That is, there exists an important moral presumption against killing. All things being equal, most of us believe that killing a human is wrong. We recognize that to kill someone is to destroy something of considerable moral value, a human life. Ultimately, if we agree with the claim that it is wrong to kill another human, then we believe there is a basic right not to be killed by another person. To overcome this presumption, there needs to be a very strong justification that changes its moral status from an action (or intention) that is wrong to one that is neutral or right. In the absence of any discernable and sufficient moral reasons, the deliberate killing of human beings should be judged as a serious moral wrong.

It is generally agreed that self-defense is one clear example of a strong justification for killing. Put another way, the strongest moral justification for killing a person is in cases where one person is forced to defend himself against someone who attempts to kill him. In a case of self-defense, one is morally justified in killing an attacker when it is necessary to prevent one's own death at the hands of the attacker. Similarly, we are justified in killing someone to defend the life of a third person who is being attacked.

This rights-based moral justification for killing in self-defense is grounded in the idea that a victim of aggression has a basic right to life. That is, all human beings have a right not to be killed by an unjust aggressor. The defender is permitted to kill the attacker because she is entitled to protect her life from the unjust aggression that threatens to kill her. Since it is a human life that is at stake, the defender is permitted to take the life of the deadly attacker. The protection of the innocent person's life is the goal of self-defense.

Furthermore, some argue that there is an obligation to intervene when it is necessary to prevent an innocent person from being killed. This is because, without our intervention, an innocent person will otherwise die. This is especially the case when the rescuer is a member of the police or military. Such professions take on special responsibilities (on behalf of the state) to protect innocent persons.

But some people argue that killing is always morally wrong. Pacifists, in particular, assume that the use of violence is *never* justified. Pacifism is the view that the use of physical force against another human being is unconditionally wrong, and can never be made right by a justifying principle such as self-defense. It might be that a person has a right to defend himself, but this right does not extend to the use of deliberate violence against an attacker. Ultimately, the pacifist renounces the moral right to kill proportionately in self-defense, believing that nonviolence has a hidden power to transform conflict.²³ While both the soldier and the pacifist share in common a willingness to die for their values, the pacifist refuses to kill for them. If necessary, the pacifist accepts the path of suffering and death.²⁴

But an important problem with the nonviolent view of killing in self-defense is that we end up accusing the victim of an unjust attack of acting immorally if she attempts to protect herself. At best, she might be excused for killing another person in self-defense but we can never conclude that a defender has done the right thing since the details of the case are irrelevant to our moral judgment on the defender. There can only be degrees of acting wrongfully. This view is grossly unjust when we consider incidents where a person is the victim of a murderous attack that is clearly brutal and unprovoked.

For example, in a case in New Delhi, India, a group of men attacked a young law student, Jyoti Singh Mandey, and raped and murdered her. It would be a harsh judgment to conclude that an innocent victim such as Jyoti would be doing something wrong by killing her attackers in self-defense if that option was available to her.²⁵ Therefore, it is incorrect to say that in every case of killing in self-defense, we should conclude that the defender has done something wrong.

In addition, the nonviolent view incorrectly condemns a third party for using forceful intervention to protect the life of a victim of an unjust attack. It might be permissible for a person to sacrifice his own life when faced with an unjust attack but this does not then mean he is permitted to allow the sacrifice of another life. In Jyoti's case, her friend, Awindra Pandey, fought the assailants and consequently received a broken leg.²⁶ Yet the nonviolent view of self-defense argues that Awindra should not have physically confronted the men.

Ultimately, advocates of the nonviolent approach to self-defense allow gross violations of individuals' basic rights for the benefit of their violators, in the hope that this will create a better overall result. But it is not clear how stepping back and allowing unjust attacks will then lead to just outcomes or a better society. Their assumption is that the use of violence in response

to violence will always produce more violence, since it is all part of the same problem. But it seems just as likely that allowing unjust violence will reinforce the use of more unjust violence. The better approach is to distinguish between just violence and unjust violence.

2. Moral Reasoning and Killing for Self-preservation

Moving in the other direction, the self-preservation view also makes the assumption that moral judgments about killing in self-defense are not problematic per se.²⁷ Self-preservationists argue that an individual is *always* justified in killing if his own life (and not merely the life of another) is at stake.

The self-preservationist (or Hobbesian) view of self-defense is the opposite of the nonviolent view. It makes the assumption that a person is *always* justified in using lethal force if it is necessary to preserve her life. Self-preservation is simply an act (or set of actions) intended to prevent or reduce harm to a person from a deadly threat.²⁸ The most important notion promoted by this perspective is the belief that survival is the only human interest that matters. This view might be referred to as the Hobbesian approach to killing in self-defense because self-preservation (or the rational avoidance of death) plays such a central role in Hobbes's political theory.²⁹ Hobbes states that:

The Right of Nature . . . is the Liberty each man hath, to use his own power, as he will himself, for the preservation of his own Nature; that is to say, of his own Life; and consequently, of doing any thing, which in his own Judgement, and Reason, hee shall conceive to be the aptest means thereunto.³⁰

In this respect, Hobbes maintains that self-defense is an inalienable right that is grounded in one's rational concern with his own self-preservation.³¹

Although an act of self-defense is a subset of self-preservation, we can (and should) distinguish them from one another. First of all, self-defense, like self-preservation, maintains the same condition of an act that intends to prevent or reduce harm to one's self from a deadly threat. But acts of self-defense are "those acts of self-preservation which presuppose an immediate threat from an agent who intends . . . to kill or seriously injure you, and which themselves consist of immediate counter-attacks directed at that agent and at no-one else."³²

Importantly, self-defense does seem to constitute a legitimating moral principle that justifies an act (or series of actions) of self-preservation. And there are a number of reasons why we should be careful to make this distinction and reject the view that one's life being at stake is sufficient justification for killing. First, in situations where lives are at stake, most of us agree that there are limits on the actions one can take to preserve lives. A common example in ethics is the doctor who has the opportunity to save the lives of five sick patients by killing and removing the organs of one healthy man. Most of us would agree that the preservation of the five lives in this case does not justify killing the healthy man.

A second problem with the self-preservationist view is its failure to prohibit harm to innocent bystanders in situations of mortal danger. We might imagine a situation where one person (Meg) is shooting at a second person (Sam) and the only way Sam can save his own life is by pushing a third person (Rory), an innocent bystander who happens to be within reach, into the line of fire. Most of us would agree that Sam's sacrifice of Rory in this way is impermissible, and should not be justified on the basis that it is an act of self-preservation by Sam.

A third problem with the self-preservationist account of killing in self-defense is the concern that it reduces morality in conflict to brute force. Not just anything goes in self-defense. We

cannot simply say (as Hobbes essentially does) that “all bets are off when you will otherwise die,” and thus that the premise “A will otherwise die” is sufficient for the conclusion that A may kill B. If we take this approach to killing in self-defense, then moral justification would simply be a matter of power and strength.³³

In short, one’s life being threatened is a *necessary* but *not* sufficient condition to justify killing in self-defense: there needs to be something more to make an act of self-preservation count as justified killing in self-defense.

3. The Just War Tradition

In the specific context of armed conflict, the political commitment to valuing both individual rights and enacting state duties makes the situation even more complicated. War, whether it is conceived as a threat to security or as a pathway to security, occasions everyone it touches to ask what values matter most, why they matter, and whether or how some other values might need to be subordinated for the sake of security. The conventional account of justified killing in war (which is known as the just war tradition) gives combatants special permissions for killing enemy combatants.³⁴ By “moral exceptionalism,” I simply mean the exceptional duties and permissions we grant soldiers in active theaters of war to use lethal force.³⁵ The just war tradition attempts to explain the “rightness” or “wrongness” of the decision to go to war (*jus ad bellum*) and the way in which a war is conducted (*jus in bello*).³⁶

The just war tradition agrees with the nonviolent view that war is a terrible thing, but, rather than concluding that war is the main problem, instead presumes the problem is injustice. It holds that in some circumstances, war is preferable to the injustice that results without it. The purpose of just war is to create a just peace. Hence, military victory is pointless unless it can be transformed into the right type of political success, which can only be hampered by ignoring the normative restraints of conflict.³⁷

Augustine (AD 354–430), one of the historical architects of the tradition, argued that not all wars are wrong, and that some wars can be ethically justified. In particular, Augustine emphasized the idea of war only being just if it is being fought with the right intention, suggesting that the evil in war was not so much the deaths that it caused, but the desire to harm and the lust to dominate. Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274) centuries later used the authority of Augustine’s arguments in an attempt to define the conditions under which a war could be just. Later, the classical jurists laid the foundations for international law, based on natural law. Hugo Grotius developed these ideas outside such an exclusively Christian tradition by placing them within a more legalistic framework. The just war tradition assumed more importance after the Peace of Westphalia in 1648, which is usually seen as the birth of the era of the modern nation-state and the beginning of the modern system of international diplomatic relations.

What we in the present conventionally understand as the just war tradition at its most basic level, however, is the thinking reflected in Michael Walzer’s book *Just and Unjust Wars*, and the humanitarian ideals and protections enshrined in international law, particularly in the Geneva Conventions. Walzer’s approach is largely a response to the hegemony of neorealism in international relations theory (as well as to the Vietnam War), and he builds his just war theory on the notion that states (much like individuals) have a right of self-defense, which he refers to as the “domestic analogy.” The Geneva Conventions understand the laws of armed conflict as “a compromise based on a balance between military necessity (that is, those measures essential to attain the goals of war) and the requirements of humanity.”³⁸ According to Michael Gross, for example, humanitarian reasoning (or humanitarianism) guides combatants in their treatment of one another and of noncombatants (including soldiers who are no longer a threat). It infuses

the law of armed conflict (LOAC) and international humanitarian law (IHL), and is enshrined in the 1949 Geneva Conventions and the 1977 Protocols (I and II) to the Geneva Conventions.³⁹

IV. Conclusion

The rhetoric of national strategy might be the language of national interests, rational self-interest, and competition. But senior military officers working in the area of high levels of government decision-making must still attend to the role of ethics, political values, and global cooperation to implement effective strategy (very much as PLA Professor Shang Wei concludes in her chapter, on the basis of her analysis of the “political realist” Sun Tzu).

The consequences of this recognition are threefold. *First*, senior military officers should seek to apply ethical reasoning at the strategic level. *Second*, military ethicists should seek to engage the tenets of political realism, which was Michael Walzer’s project. *Third*, we should reject the notion that moral truth claims are incommensurate with cultural understanding.

Notes

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18. These questions were in response to my March 2014 lecture on "Values and Security" to the Centre for Defense and Strategic Studies (CDSS) at the Australian Defense College (ADC), Canberra. The CDSS is the senior educational institution of the Australian Defense Force (ADF). It delivers educational programs in strategic defense policy and planning, leadership and management, and security issues of global, regional, and national importance. The CDSS includes senior civilians who are working for the Australian government. It also includes military officers from other countries, especially the Asia-Pacific. The CDSS is senior officer education with a focus on the Asia-Pacific and it is particularly concerned with the "strategic perspective."
19. Ping-Cheung Lo, "The art of war corpus and Chinese just war ethics past and present," *Journal of Religious Ethics* 40, no. 3 (2012): 436. Henrik Syse, "Afterword: Ethics across borders," in *The Ethics of War in Asian Civilizations: A Comparative Perspective*, Ed. Torkel Brekke (London and New York: Routledge, 2006): 202.
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21. Andrew Alexandra and Seumas Miller, *Ethics in Practice: Moral Theory and the Professions* (Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 2009): 25.
22. J. Rawls, *Political Liberalism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993): 181.
23. Alastair McIntosh, "A nonviolent challenge to conflict," in *Ethics, Law and Military Operations*, Ed. David Whetham (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010): 46.
24. *Ibid.*
25. Hugo Gye and Suzannah Hills, "'She's as guilty as her rapists': Fury as Indian guru blames tragic student, 23, for the vicious gang attack which killed her," *Mail Online*, www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2258422/Fury-Indian-guru-Asaram-Bapu-blames-Delhi-rape-victim-vicious-gang-attack-killed-her.html.
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30. Thomas Hobbes, "Leviathan," in *Hobbes: Leviathan, Revised Student Edition*, Ed. Richard Tuck (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996): 91.
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34. For a discussion on just war theory and the ethics of killing in war, see: Michael Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars: A Moral Argument with Historical Illustrations*, 4th ed. (New York: Basic Books, 2006); Jeff McMahan, *Killing in War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009); David Rodin, *War and Self-Defense* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003); Brian Orend, *The Morality of War* (Ontario: Broadview Press, 2006); Fritz Allhoff, Nicholas G. Evans, and Adam Henschke, *Routledge Handbook of Ethics and War: Just War Theory in the 21st Century* (London: Taylor & Francis, 2013).
35. For more on exceptionalism, see: Andrew Fiala, "A critique of exceptions: Torture, terrorism, and the lesser evil argument," *International Journal of Applied Philosophy* 20, no. 1 (2005); Allhoff, *Terrorism, Ticking Time-Bombs, and Torture: A Philosophical Analysis*: esp. Chapter 3; Jonathan H. Marks, "What counts in counterterrorism," *Columbia Human Rights Law Review* 37, no. 3 (2005).
36. David Whetham, "The just war tradition: A pragmatic compromise," in *Ethics, Law and Military Operations*, Ed. David Whetham (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011).
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38. Gross, *Moral Dilemmas of Modern War: Torture, Assassination, and Blackmail in an Age of Asymmetric Conflict*: 24–25.
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