

2. Morality in Warfare

Iran has accused the United States and Israel of conducting the deadly missile attack on the school in Iran's south on the first day of the war

1.Introduction

1. Morality in war addresses whether ethical principles can regulate conduct during armed conflict and how far states and actors can be held accountable.
2. While war involves violence and coercion, ethical frameworks attempt to reconcile military necessity with humanitarian values.

2.Just War Theory- Ethical Framework

1. Just War Theory provides a structured moral framework to evaluate when and how war can be justified.
2. It evolved from classical philosophy and was later refined by theological and modern ethical thought.

Jus ad bellum (Justice of War Initiation)

1. War must have a just cause such as self-defence or protection against aggression.
2. It must be declared by legitimate authority and used as a last resort after exhausting peaceful options.
3. There must be a reasonable chance of success and proportionality between means and ends.

Jus in bello (Justice in Conduct of War)

1. Combatants must distinguish between military targets and civilians.
2. Use of force must be proportionate and unnecessary suffering must be avoided.
3. Ethical conduct must be maintained even during hostilities.

Jus post bellum (Justice After War)

1. Peace settlements must be fair and not punitive.
2. Reconstruction and reconciliation should aim at long-term stability.
3. Accountability for war crimes is essential for justice.

3.Key Moral Issues in War

Civilian Protection

1. Modern warfare increasingly affects civilian populations due to urban conflicts and advanced weaponry.
2. Collateral damage raises ethical dilemmas regarding proportionality and necessity.

Weapons of Mass Destruction

1. Use of nuclear, chemical, or biological weapons raises questions of indiscriminate destruction and long-term harm.
2. Historical events like the atomic bombings highlight tensions between military objectives and humanitarian consequences.

Treatment of Prisoners

1. Prisoners of war are entitled to humane treatment, dignity, and protection from torture.
2. Violations undermine international norms and ethical legitimacy.

Preemptive vs Preventive War

1. Preemptive war may be justified when an imminent threat exists.
2. Preventive war is ethically contentious as it is based on speculative future threats.

4.Competing Ethical Perspectives

Pacifism

1. Pacifism rejects war entirely as immoral regardless of circumstances.
2. It emphasises non-violence, dialogue, and peaceful conflict resolution.
3. Thinkers like Mahatma Gandhi advocated moral resistance over armed conflict.

Realism

1. Realism prioritises national interest, power, and survival over ethical considerations.
2. It views international politics as anarchic where moral norms have limited applicability.
3. Ethical behaviour is often subordinated to strategic necessity.

5.Role of International Law in Regulating War

Legal Constraints on Use of Force

1. International law permits use of force primarily in self-defence or with authorisation from the United Nations Security Council.
2. This framework seeks to prevent arbitrary or aggressive wars.

Geneva Conventions (1949)

1. These conventions form the foundation of International Humanitarian Law.
2. They protect wounded soldiers, prisoners of war, and civilians.
3. They prohibit torture, inhumane treatment, and targeting of non-combatants.

Additional Protocols (1977 and 2005)

1. These expand protections to internal conflicts and modern warfare scenarios.
2. They reinforce the principle of distinction between civilians and combatants.
3. They regulate means and methods of warfare.

Accountability Mechanisms

1. Institutions like the International Criminal Court prosecute war crimes and crimes against humanity.
2. This promotes deterrence and reinforces global justice norms.

6.Contemporary Challenges

1. Asymmetric warfare and terrorism blur the line between combatants and civilians.
2. Technological advancements such as drones and cyber warfare raise new ethical questions.
3. Enforcement of international law remains weak due to geopolitical interests and power imbalances.

Conclusion

1. Morality in war seeks to impose ethical limits on violence, ensuring that even in conflict, human dignity is preserved.
2. While war may sometimes be unavoidable, adherence to ethical principles and international law is essential to minimise suffering.
3. Strengthening global institutions and ethical norms remains crucial for achieving a more humane conduct of warfare.

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