

An Epitaph for the Cold War

Brian Wicker

*Just Deterrence*¹, by the 'Pembroke Group'—a 'distinguished group of civil servants, servicemen, service chaplains, theologians and academics' to quote the blurb—claims to be about 'Morality and Deterrence into the Twenty-First Century'. Actually it is about the morality of nuclear deterrence as practised by NATO and the Warsaw Pact. Inevitably, therefore, the book has the character of an epitaph. Of course the corpse of East-West deterrence is still twitching. Nevertheless, old-style deterrence is to all intents and purposes defunct. As Saddam has shown, new-style deterrence is about something very different. Today the question Hugh Beach's contribution poses is all too relevant: could anything be worse than a war?

Just Deterrence is not a great book, like Michael Walzer's *Just and Unjust Wars*, or Finnis, Grisez and Boyle's *Morality and Realism*. For reasons beyond the editors' control, it is not a strikingly apt intervention as was Walter Stein's *Nuclear Weapons and Christian Conscience* in 1961, but neither is it perniciously muddle-headed, like Michael Novak's *Moral Clarity in the Nuclear Age*. Like *Ethics and Nuclear Deterrence* edited by Geoffrey Goodwin in 1982, (with which it has much in common, including certain authors) it has some very closely argued chapters, and others which are certainly stimulating if, in the end unacceptable; together with yet others which are, to my mind, badly wrong. As an epitaph, it is well worth scrutinising closely as we peer at what is written for our edification on the gravestone of the Cold War.

One piece of argumentation is so central to the case presented by all the contributors, that it needs immediate attention. This is that choosing to kill the innocent, for the sake of a greater good, may be a licit policy to adopt, *provided* that the amount of such killing is kept within strictly proportionate limits. Here the 'just war' criterion of 'discrimination', which forbids the killing of non-combatants, merges with the criterion of proportionality, which requires that the harm done be proportional to the good achieved, in such a way that the former is, in effect, 'trumped' by the latter. The justification for this move is sometimes said to be that the discrimination criterion for justifiable war came late into the tradition, and was for a long time less prominent than proportionality. It may be so. But one thing at least is clear; in the modern Catholic tradition, there is no doubt that choosing to kill the innocent for the sake of some postulated good is never licit. To this extent, the argument of

this book is not reconcilable with Catholic teaching.

John Roper's opening paper, on *Political Developments and Just Deterrence* raises the question as to whether nuclear weapons are any longer relevant to European security. In concluding that they are—at a minimum level—he bases his claim on 'the unique war-preventing capability' of nuclear weapons. It cannot be said too often that this is a claim not based on anything beyond pure theory. Of course it is a highly plausible theory. It may be true. But we have bitter experience of many wars that have not been prevented by nuclear weapons, and of none that have. Furthermore, it is hard to see what role nuclear weapons could play within the 'new' Europe of rival nationalisms and revived tribal hatreds. We can speculate on what might (disastrously happen if, in the course of the USSR's disintegration, the various Soviet republics each got hold of the nuclear arsenals on their own soil. Then perhaps we could see a re-emergence of deterrence theory: old textbooks by Herman Kahn, Thomas Schelling and Albert Wohlstetter might need to be dusted down, by the respective defence ministers of the Ukraine, Russia or Kazakhstan. But one hopes that Mr Gorbachev has a plan to avoid such a nightmare. Short of this, where would nuclear deterrence fit into the solution of conflicts between (say) Croatia and Serbia, Bohemia and Slovakia, Romania and Hungary? The fact is that pleas to keep nuclear weapons in order to deter war in Europe, are based on residual fears about possible Soviet aggression and on nothing else (I am excluding for the moment the so-called 'out of area' question). True, there is a residual problem of getting rid of the Soviet nuclear arsenal, just as there is a problem about getting rid of white elephants like the British Trident or the French 'force de frappe'. But these are the twitchings of the corpse.

Malcolm McCall, asking 'when and why nuclear deterrence is just?' finds himself in a logical jam for reasons my comments on Roper may have suggested. Because nuclear war itself is 'inconceivable as an option', he writes, 'deterrence is the only possible right policy'. But then deterrence is possible only as long as nuclear war is a conceivable option! So much is agreed by all who have understood that nuclear deterrence cannot long last as mere bluff. This being so, the rest of McCall's argument might seem redundant. But the interest of his paper is the case he makes for saying, not just that deterrence is necessary, but that for this very reason, we must find a way of showing that it is a positively good thing.

McCall's heart is in the right place: on the side of peace with justice. And as his final contribution shows, he sees that this is a theological, not just a moral matter. God's justice and peace are not the same as ours. McCall's argument is that, just as (in Aquinas's terms) a justifiable war must be conducted with a right intention, namely the establishment of peace and justice, so too must 'just deterrence'. The intention behind deterrence must 'go beyond simply aiming to prevent war, if deterrence is to be just', for justice is far more than the mere absence of war.

Deterrence policy needs to be defensive, not offensive or aggressive. 'Deterrence policies which inhibit genuine understanding—even a degree of reconciliation—between East and West cannot be counted as part of Just Deterrence'. Yet, as McCall admits, 'credible deterrence requires the development of war-fighting strategies and tactics'. He tries to extricate himself from this paradox by insisting that 'when the other nation's perception is of an aggressive rather than defensive posture on one's own side, then no longer is the effectiveness of deterrence enhanced'. (p. 14) But plainly this will not do, except as a plea for raising the nuclear threshold, and strengthening conventional non-provocative forces. It does not solve the problem of the need for an ultimate, and necessarily offensive, nuclear threat.

General Sir Hugh Beach provides two essays, which together constitute a single argument. The question posed is: what if deterrence fails? Could there then be any justification for embarking on nuclear war?

After a crisp dismissal of four sophistical arguments which dodge the central issue, Beach goes on to argue that we need to reinvoke, and think through, the 'just war' tradition. But the *jus in bello* criteria of discrimination and proportionality trouble him. He makes one valuable point about proportionality at the outset: namely that it requires not merely that the total costs of the war must be proportional to the good achieved, but also that 'the damage resulting from any operation must be proportional to the ends sought'. This point about 'target' or operational proportionality was first made, to my knowledge, by Walter Stein; but it is interesting to see it repeated here, by a Royal Engineer officer who was involved in operations during World War II. Nevertheless, at this point Beach's argument becomes dubious in that he proposes a 'merger' between the discrimination and proportionality principles. Perhaps Just War doctrine would allow the use of nuclear weapons against military targets provided that collateral unintended damage to nonmilitary people and things were held down to a proportional level. But of course, in so far as such casualties are not intended, and are only 'collateral', i.e. 'side effects', the point is straightforward 'double effect' theory. But are they only collateral? Or are they part of what we have chosen, and as such our responsibility?

Instead of answering this question directly, Beach now asks himself, apparently with some puzzlement, why if proportionality is so crucial, do so few people attempt to do the necessary sums? It is a good question; and it is certainly true that while much ink has been spilled in general discussion of the principle of proportionality, most attempts to do the necessary sums peter out in hopeless disagreement, as current arguments about the justice of the 'military option' in the Gulf illustrate. The very fact that there is no consensus about the results of what, in theory, ought to be an objective calculation, should give us pause. Is the very notion of a proportionality calculation in deterrence senseless, because it requires a

measurement of costs and benefits between incommensurables? Well, Beach himself admits that there is a problem about who is qualified 'to evaluate the goodness of the values to be defended (against) the evils of the regimes that would supervene if they were not, and the damage to be anticipated in the act of defending them'. At one point he gives the game away by admitting that we are here dealing with 'essentially incommensurate entities'. Yet, if the task of making the comparison is not attempted 'the whole exercise fails'. Somehow, then, the impossible has to be attempted.

He begins with an obvious point. One basic 'value' to be defended is that our land should not be overrun by foreigners. But while this is a very important political value, it is not enough. Would it be so terrible to be forced into a political position like that of (say) Finland, in order to avoid the evils of war? Indeed, given what we know of modern war, could anything be worse? Beach reminds us of the plight of the Jews at Masada in AD 73; of the Thirty Years War of 1618—48; and the Paraguayan war of 1865—70. He finds a counter example, however, in the Second World War, which showed that 'tens of megadeaths need not be a disproportionate price to pay, if it is the only way of stopping in its tracks a regime as evil, arrogant and aggressive as that which staged the Holocaust'.

However, the relevance of hindsight is limited in discussing the morality of deterrence, because deterrence has to do with hypothetical actions, the consequences of which cannot be known, or even predicted with any certainty. To cope with this difficulty, Beach considers some plausible future scenarios. The first is envisaged in General Hackett's *The Third World War August 1985*. This involves a 'city-swapping' strategic nuclear exchange, in which the damage wrought on Minsk by NATO, in retaliation for a strike on Birmingham, turns out many times worse than that done in the original attack, but still ends the war. Beach concludes that, even though both attacks were indiscriminate, the Minsk retaliation 'saved many lives and incalculable suffering' (i.e. lives lost, and suffering that would have been caused if the war had gone on longer) and 'would be an instance where the issue of discrimination could be subsumed into the argument from proportion'. (p. 39) This argument is essentially the same as that mounted by Leonard Cheshire in justification of the Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombs, and endorsed by Hockaday.

Beach then considers deterrence at the tactical level. Can we use the proportionality criterion to determine the justice or otherwise of the policy of Flexible Response? After a trenchant and informative, if familiar critique of this policy, he concludes that raising the nuclear threshold is morally imperative. Yet the required proportionality calculation, even as between commensurables in deterrence, is still not successfully done. This is because the morality of nuclear deterrence necessarily hinges on conditional intentions—not dealt with directly in Beach's argument. It is in Hockaday's contribution that we find the

fullest treatment of this question.

For Hockaday, unlike McCall, nuclear deterrence is an evil; even though it may be the right policy to adopt. This is because he distinguishes what is positively 'good' from what, in the prevailing circumstances, appears to be 'right'. Deterrence is justifiable because it is the lesser of two evils.

To establish itself as the lesser of two evils, nuclear deterrence has to surmount two main hurdles. The first requires the deterrer to show that he has only evil courses to choose from; for on no other terms is it ever morally licit to choose to perform an evil act. Secondly, we must never claim that we are forced to do an evil thing because otherwise somebody else will do an even more evil thing. Deterrence is often defended by claiming that we have to threaten the adversary with nuclear destruction, since otherwise he will enslave us. But choosing an evil course of action for these reasons is simply choosing to do evil in order that good may come.

Hockaday clearly appreciates the force of these limits and tries seriously to work within them. Yet I do not think he fully succeeds, because, like other members of the Pembroke group, he seems to hover between two different positions, at different points in his argument. On the one hand, he tries hard to show that deterrence does not necessarily entail *any* breaking of the discrimination criterion by harbouring an *intention* to cause non-combatant deaths. He points out that this is part of the purpose of talking, as the British Government does, of targetting 'key aspects of the Soviet state power'. Since these targets do not necessarily include population centres, it is argued that the deterrer is not necessarily guilty of intending to do something plainly illicit. On the other hand, he argues elsewhere, especially with regard to Hiroshima and Nagasaki, that even granted that the attacks were indiscriminate, and designed to kill civilians, they were justified because the number of Japanese casualties, especially the civilian casualties, weighed against a much larger number of commensurate deaths, which would have been caused if the only possible alternative—namely a full scale invasion—had been necessary. Here, he argues, there was a genuine case of a decision-maker having to choose the lesser of two evils.

This looks like a powerful argument. But how relevant is it to the morality of *deterrence* i.e. a policy which necessarily has to look towards the future rather than the past? The fact—if it be a fact—that the Japanese would not have surrendered until the evidence of the atomic bomb's awesome power had been thrust under their noses, though doubtless of great interest to the historian, is irrelevant to the morality of deterrence. For whether or not an *action already done*, such as Truman's, done for morally inadequate reasons,² may be somewhat redeemed from its badness by the later discovery of other reasons which, if known at that time, would have justified it, a *policy for future actions*, which is based on morally dubious premisses, cannot be redeemed from

its dubiousness as a policy by the later discovery of justifying reasons for actions done under that policy, even if those same reasons, if known at the time, would have justified the actions.

Consider the case of some men arrested by the police on suspicion of having planted a bomb. Suppose it is subsequently established beyond reasonable doubt that they did indeed plant that bomb. We may then say in hindsight that what the police did, i.e. arrest the men, was justifiable, even though we also subsequently discover that the ground on which they acted at the time was no more than a determination to arrest somebody or other. But now: suppose the police then adopt a policy for deterring similar attacks in the future, simply in order to reassure the public: namely a policy of threatening indiscriminately to arrest anyone who appears them to be acting suspiciously. Is this deterrent policy morally licit just because its consequences turn out to be justified in those cases when the suspicions turn out afterwards to have been correct? On the contrary, we surely want to insist that it is an intrinsically unjust policy to propose arresting people without evidence, simply in order to reassure the public.

We now come to the more fundamental question of deterrent intentions. Hockaday begins by noting that in her study of *Intention*, Elizabeth Anscombe emphasises the importance of asking two separate questions, namely 'If you are acting intentionally, what is it that you are intentionally doing?' and 'Why are you doing what you are doing?' Part of Hockaday's defence of deterrence is that the answer the nuclear deterrer gives to the second of these questions is not 'in order to use my military capability', but 'in order to prevent war' or 'in order to dissuade N from attacking me'. This is a crucial point in his defence of Just Deterrence, for it is the basis of his attempted refutation of the charge, pressed with particular precision and force by Finnis and his colleagues, that the intention to attack civilians is a necessary feature of any nuclear deterrence policy that could be reasonably sure to deter.

But Hockaday's fundamental difficulty has to do with another question Anscombe raises, namely: 'is there any description which is *the* description of an intentional action...?' The context of her question is a concrete example, in which a man is working a hand-pump, pumping water into a cistern which supplies the drinking water of a house. The people in the house are Nazis planning genocide; and somebody who knows this has managed (unbeknownst to the pumper) to put a cumulative poison into the water the man is pumping. Now let us ask: What is this man i.e., the pumper, doing? What is the description of his action, given that the intentional action occurs? Anscombe wonders first of all whether we have to say that what he is doing consists of at least four different actions: namely A: moving his arm up and down; B: operating the pump; C: replenishing the water supply; and D: poisoning the inhabitants of the house. But this seems absurd. Rather, 'the four descriptions form a series A - B - C - D, in which each description is

introduced as dependent on the previous ones, though independent of the following one'. Thus, although B is not just another description of what is also described by A, the only action that B consists in is A. Similarly with C and D. Although 'more circumstances are required for A to be B than for A to be just A ... the only distinct action that is in question is this one, A'. In other words, given certain circumstances, the pumper's moving his arm up and down just *is* 'operating the pump', and similarly in the complex circumstances described, moving his arm up and down just *is*: 'poisoning the inhabitants'. To describe the action as 'poisoning the inhabitants' is correct, and this description then so to speak 'swallows up' the others; but of course without in any way cancelling them out, or rendering them any less intentional at their own level. In other words, the intention which 'swallows up' the rest is not the only intention in the series: it is merely the intention which is treated as the end. Of course, to speak of 'poisoning the inhabitants' as intentional requires us to consider it as the responsibility of the person who laid the poison, rather than of the pumper, who does not know of its presence in the water.

Let us apply this analysis to nuclear deterrence. A Polaris submarine is prowling in the Irish Sea, on the orders of the British Government. Is there such a thing as *the* description of what it is doing? Well A: it is keeping its men in training. But it is doing so with a view to B: getting ready to fire its weapons. That is, in certain circumstances, e.g. a sufficient degree of international tension, keeping the men in training just *is* B: getting ready to fire the weapons. Again, given further conditions (e.g. a belief in a Soviet aim of dominating Europe) getting ready to fire the weapons just *is* C: maintaining a certain military posture with the intention of deterring aggression. Finally, given yet further conditions (e.g. that deterrence works) then 'maintaining a certain military posture ...' just *is* D: deterring the Soviet Union from aggression. Let us suppose too that the submarine, in its prowling, is sinking an Irish fishing boat, by snarling its periscope in the fishermen's nets. Clearly sinking the fishing boat is not part of our series A — D, even though it is a true description of what the submarine is doing.

Now, if we ask the submarine commander why he is prowling, he will be likely to say 'maintaining a certain military posture with the intention of deterring aggression', this being the final or end-term intention with which he is prowling: the intention which 'swallows up' the rest of the series A — D. He is unlikely to say 'in order to sink Irish fishing boats'—unless of course, he has a private set of intentions of his own which he has not disclosed to the Ministry of Defence (perhaps he has a personal grudge against the Irish). But equally he is unlikely to say 'getting ready to fire his weapons', even though this action may be part of the series A — D, not because this answer is in any way untrue, or irrelevant but because it might be morally or politically or militarily embarrassing to have to say so.

Now the above analysis has some important implications for Hockaday's argument, which seems to be that a government committed to nuclear deterrence, even though it 'may have formed a conditional intention to commit in certain circumstances an act which it knows will involve the destruction of non-combatants' does not have the 'here-and-now intentions and dispositions' to kill non-combatants. This is because '*it is intentionally maintaining a certain military posture with the intention of deterring aggression*'. (p. 60) Here Hockaday's account of what the government is doing appears as *the* description of what it is doing. But, as we have seen, there is no such thing as *the* description of what the government is doing: there is necessarily a whole series of such descriptions, none of which cancels out the rest. While one true answer is 'in order to deter aggression', it is not *the* answer. A more complete account might have to include: 'to destroy Moscow'—for Moscow may be in the selected target list. And this description will be true even though the submarine commander does not know the list, just as the pump operator may truly be said to be poisoning the inhabitants even though he does not know that the water has been poisoned. The mere fact that one true answer to 'what is the submarine doing?' is 'maintaining a certain military posture with a view to deterring aggression' by no means ensures that there is no 'murderous will' to destroy non-combatants involved in what the government is doing.

Hockaday seems to recognise this in the other half of his argument, which boils down to the claim that deterrence is justifiable provided that 'while virtually bound to breach the principle of discrimination to some degree, (it) would do so only to an extent that can be justified under the principle of proportion'. This is what I meant earlier by the proportionality rule being allowed to 'trump' the discrimination rule. Even if we admitted with Hockaday that deterrence may not entail any here and now intention of breaching the discrimination rule, it does require what David Fisher, in *Morality and the Bomb*, called 'consent' to killing innocent non-combatants. Such consent has its own moral implications. It might imply, for example, as Kenny has suggested, a criminally reckless disregard for human life.

The crucial claim is that in certain exceptional circumstances, choosing to kill some innocents may be licit because proportionate to the great benefits achieved. This is the claim made by the Pembroke Group about Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Therefore a *policy* which envisages the possibility of choosing to go for such deliberate killing may in certain limited circumstances itself be licit. But saying this ignores the point made above about the police. Beyond that, it is difficult to deal rationally with the claim because the division of view about it—the division between 'absolutists' and 'consequentialists'—is so basic that there seems little room for discussion. If the absolutist is right, then the consequentialist is wrong (and vice versa).

Nevertheless two things may be said. The first is that choosing to kill

the innocent seems to be so fundamental a case of injustice that it has the character of entering into the very concept of justice itself. What on earth can we mean by justice if choosing to kill the innocent is permissible under it? Is this not a paradigm case? Secondly, whatever some people may privately believe, it is at any rate the clear and authoritative teaching of the Catholic Church that such killing is never permissible under any circumstances whatever. Here is a point at which Church teaching comes into conflict with deterrence requirements in such a way that only by logically fallacious arguments, practical admission of incoherence, or by resort to desperate makeshifts like talking of 'emergency ethics' or an 'ethics of distress' to paper over cracks that genuine ethics are unable to fill, can the two appear to be compatible.³

After a crisp paper by David Fisher, which I have no space to discuss, David Brown's contribution, on *Authority and Deterrence*, raises an expectation that it will help us to decide which authority to follow: government or church. Its opening paragraphs reinforce our expectation, by speaking of a need for 'an explanation ... for the apparent contradiction of placing this (submarine) Captain, a moral being, in a position where he might be required to obey orders and fire ballistic nuclear weapons without question at distant targets'—especially since 'the necessary security constraints are likely to mean that he has little, if any, idea of the targets selected ... nor any ability to judge the particular consequences of their discharge'.

Brown is a senior naval officer. In the past he has been a member of the Portsmouth Diocesan Synod. He should be in a good position to discuss this conflict between moral authorities. It is therefore doubly disappointing to find that he does not do so. This is because he simply ignores the authority of the church as a moral teacher altogether. The very possibility that the church might properly claim a supranational authority to teach a doctrine about deterrence that would put the Captain in a position where he would either have to obey the church or the government, but could not do both, never arises within the argument. This is partly because Brown sees the role of the church as simply 'complementary' to that of the civil government. The latter has the job of 'establishing a stable framework for society', while the church's job is the complementary one of 'extending His kingdom where ultimate peace, righteousness and justice will be found'. (p. 97) Being complementary in this way, church and state seem unable to come into conflict: both are acting under the authority of God.

Underlying all this is a residual Lutheranism. In a situation where the state is unconstrained by any supranational institution, let alone a church which has a divine commission to 'teach all nations', we must put our trust in the legitimacy and integrity of the state. Not only does the church as a supranational source of moral authority have no place in the argument: neither for that matter does the United Nations. The

sovereign state system is a 'universal phenomenon' and it seems there is no place within this system for any supranational authority, even in terms of international law. Consider Brown's Captain, then, facing the dilemma in which a government acts militarily against the express prohibition of the Security Council. In such a case, there would be a breach of the first criterion of justifiable war, namely legitimate authority. Would such a government have then lost its 'moral integrity' to such an extent that the Captain would be right, or even obliged to disobey it? Well, once he has assured himself that the state is acting, broadly speaking, in a just and 'righteous' fashion, he is obliged to obey its commands—provided only that he can be certain that these really are the State's commands. Despite having an 'unarguable moral need to be briefed' on government's 'general targeting policy' he is still right to let his missiles off, even though (as we have seen) he cannot know where they are going, or what their effects will be. If he has Chevaline in his arsenal, he may well find himself hitting Moscow. The fact that letting them off could, in certain circumstances, constitute what the Second Vatican Council called 'a crime against God and man which merits unhesitating and unequivocal condemnation' apparently need not enter into his calculations. (Governmental integrity includes a moral insurance policy sufficient to cover him against this contingency.) This remains so despite the fact that such things as 'a sense of mercy to the weak, the victim and the underprivileged' are said to be necessary elements in any government's claim to moral integrity.

Brown confines his viewpoint to that of the officer class. People in 'positions of responsibility' may challenge suggestions made at the planning stage, but 'when it comes to the action, there will be many actions when there can be no quibble'. This may make good operational sense, but where does it leave the conscience of the ordinary serviceman? The submarine Captain, as we have seen, has an unarguable right to be briefed on government's targeting policy: but what of the ordinary ratings without whose willing co-operation the Captain cannot destroy Moscow, or even fire his missiles? Do they too have a right to be briefed? Should the Captain brief them—and give them the chance to refuse if conscience demands? Or are their consciences to be held 'in commission', to use a phrase of Peter Geach's, even when those of their officers are given some rights?

Brown discusses the discrimination criterion only in the context of when it might be obligatory to override it. If we are faced with a Lenin or a Stalin, he argues, it may be right to trump to discrimination with proportionality. 'If a Lenin, Stalin or their successors liquidated tens of millions of innocent people within their domain, how many lives could have been sacrificed, morally, to avert such an eventuality?' he asks. He does not give a numerical answer. For him, the point is that 'upholding the world order by defence and deterrence, even being willing to consider using nuclear weapons if the enemy insists, has the higher priority for

moral beings in terms of righteousness'. Two points are worth noting about this argument. The first is that the virtual certainty that a ny use of nuclear weapons would itself cause huge numbers of innocent people to be killed *by the (failed) deterrent*, does not enter into his moral calculus. They are presumably not his responsibility since he claims that the level of the deterrent's response is primarily determined by the aggressor. Secondly, the notion of sacrifice here is peculiarly repugnant. This comes out if we rephrase his question thus: 'How many innocent people would have to be *killed*, morally, to avert such an eventuality?' The question is the same: only the notion of sacrifice has been removed. What then is the function of 'sacrifice' in Brown's argument? A large number of human victims are to be sacrificially killed in order to avert a calamity. Are we not here back in a pagan world of human sacrifice as a means of placating some superior power?

Brown opened his argument, rightly, with the observation that the nuclear debate is part of a 'spiritual battlefield' involving profound forces of good and evil. But in the end, the just war criteria which attempt to contain the evil have to go hang. Targetting policy ought to comply with them: but that only means that in *normal circumstances* 'target selection ... *aims* to conform to these principles'. (p. 95, my italics). In abnormal ones, a 'righteous' government might have to breach them for the sake of a higher principle. This 'higher principle' turns out to be a threat to 'statehood' itself. That is to say, while it might be disproportionate to breach the just war criteria if defence of one state alone were endangered, a threat to the statehood principle itself might yet permit such action as being proportionate to this greater evil. Here is the one point at which the proportionality criterion is brought seriously into play. But, more importantly, it is ultimately the concept of unqualified state sovereignty which justifies breaching the very principles which make talk of a 'just deterrent' intelligible at all. In the end only by thus identifying the will of 'the nations' with that of God, can deterrence be proved just. For an argument which rests so heavily upon Biblical, especially Prophetic sources, to end with such reverence for 'the nations' seems extraordinary.

The last two chapters may be discussed more briefly. Oliver Ramsbotham and Leonard Cheshire consider *Deterrence and International Justice in the Nuclear Age*. Their paper is the most forward-looking of all. Indeed, with respect to the Gulf crisis, it is prophetic in ways that the two authors may not have foreseen. It raises the important question of how to deal with international injustices given that, with the global prevalence of deterrence, war is no longer available as a means of solving them. The relevance of their discussion to the present Gulf crisis is all too apparent. 'Competing interests and ideologies would not ... be removed; deep-lying grievances and unfulfilled aspirations would remain; regimes, however unjust, would at least be protected from outside military intervention in support of

domestic opposition; frontiers, however contentious, would be frozen and the status quo confirmed, with the powerful in possession of the field'. The injustice of the global North-South divide preoccupies the paper, but the more immediate issues in the Gulf make its argument all the more apposite. 'In a politically unstable world, deterrent restraints may well themselves be used by unscrupulous or desperate regimes in a potentially lethal game of bluff and counter-bluff for high political stakes.'

What is the answer? Politically it has to lie in the relatively new field of confidence-building, tension-reducing measures etc. Beyond this, deterrence must be seen as only a transitional phase leading to a time when mass-destruction weapons are no longer needed. (This is essentially what Pope John Paul II has been saying ever since his 1982 message to the UN, and what the Vatican Nuncio to the UN, Archbishop Martino has recently translated into a call now for a radical review of the whole concept of nuclear deterrence, leading (for example) to encouragement of a comprehensive ban on nuclear testing—a concept whose time has come, but the need for which the old-style deterrers, like the US, UK and France, have not yet managed to grasp).

Politically, Ramsbotham and Cheshire look, again prophetically in the Gulf context, to a time when 'the hope may be that political and economic pressures and the influence of international opinion will modify the regime from within'. Perhaps the logic of our time dictates the end of the dominance of the sovereign state (David Brown and Margaret Thatcher please note!) and its replacement by 'a more varied system of civil communities and international structures'. For 'security in the nuclear age rests on global interdependence' as well as on changing our own hearts.

Malcolm McCall's final contribution rounds the book off with some theological reflections on the Biblical concepts of justice and peace—which amount to the same thing. He recognises, in a way that Brown does not, that a clash of loyalties, as between church and state, is possible; though part of his solution *seems* to evade this problem, by insisting that the 'direct thrust' of the New Testament is towards the individual alone: 'Have you been brought back into a right relationship with God, through Christ Jesus?' is a *personal* question, he insists. But he also echoes *Gaudium et Spes* in saying that 'indiscriminate threatening of a potential aggressor's main population centres with extermination, as a deliberate policy, can only be considered immoral', and claims that he knows, from personal experience, that military planners are deeply affected by such considerations (General Dugan, late of the US airforce, notwithstanding).

Just Deterrence does not succeed in its main aim, of showing how the moral incoherence of nuclear deterrence can be overcome. But luckily it appears at a moment when perhaps the effort is no longer relevant. The problems with which it deals are no longer those which face

us. Today's dilemma—I write in late November 1990, with the CFE Treaty in the bag and the CSCE declaration on the newspapers—is one of justifying (or refusing to justify) conventional war in the Gulf, not of deterring nuclear and conventional war in Europe. Beyond the immediate predicament created by Saddam will come new problems, of maintaining security in a Europe torn by emergent nationalisms, and ancient racial hatreds, with economic ruin in the East, and spiritual ruin in the West; and in a Middle East racked by conflicts fuelled by largely European armaments. The attempt to deter war will doubtless be appropriate to these contexts: but it is extremely unlikely that the sort of deterrence analysed in this book will be of much use in them. *Just Deterrence* is an epitaph for a grand idea which was so unstable, both logically and militarily that it could not last. East-West nuclear deterrence, just or otherwise, belongs to the tragic past, to history. Unfortunately, however, as T.S. Eliot said, there is only a limited value in the knowledge derived from experience, for 'we are only undeceived of that which, deceiving, could no longer harm'.

- 1 *Just Deterrence: Morality and Deterrence into the Twenty-First Century* edited by Malcolm McCall and Oliver Ramsbotham. Brassay's (UK), 1990. pp. xv + 146. £19.95.
- 2 The Pembroke Group do not appear to have noticed the much discussed work of Gar Alperowitz, whose *Atomic Diplomacy* was reprinted in 1985 in an expanded edition, taking account of newly available documents not accessible when it first appeared in 1965. Alperowitz studied American policy in the last months of World War II. He showed that Truman's decision to drop the bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki had nothing to do with calculations of likely casualties following an invasion of Japan, or comparing these with the casualties likely to follow the use of the bomb. It had everything to do with Byrnes's diplomatic strategy for containing the Soviet Union in the post-war world. Rightly or wrongly, Truman's advisers, civilian and military, were united in telling him that an invasion would not be needed to get the Japanese to surrender, and he did not disagree with them. He did not drop the bomb with the intention of avoiding a costly invasion of the Japanese mainland. While this point is left on one side in *Just Deterrence*, Leonard Cheshire's book *The Light of Many Suns*, which also ignores Alperowitz's work, is frequently quoted in support of their case by the Pembroke Group. Cheshire argues that the Japanese Emperor could never have persuaded the military to surrender without the destruction wrought at Hiroshima and Nagasaki. This may be true, but does not weaken Alperowitz's case.
- 3 The terms 'ethics of distress' and 'emergency ethics' were used by the French and German bishops respectively in their pastoral letters on peace issued in 1983. An argument for the practical incoherence of the position eventually adopted by the American bishops, in their 1983 pastoral letter *The Challenge of Peace*, was expounded by Michael Quinlan (a Pembroke Group member) in *Theological Studies* Vol 48 (1987) pp. 3—24. As to logically fallacious arguments, see James Cameron's review of Michael Novak's *Moral Clarity in the Nuclear Age in Nuclear Catholics and Other Essays*, Grand Rapids, 1989.