Iraq: Our Responsibility and the Future

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WITH STUDY GUIDE

Approved by the 216th General Assembly (2004)
Richmond, Virginia

Developed By
The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP)
A Ministry of the General Assembly Council

You may find this document at:
www.pcusa.org/oga/publications/iraq-responsibility.pdf

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To: Pastors of Churches and Clerks of Sessions Where There is No Installed Pastor, Stated Clerks and Executives of Presbyteries and Synods, and the Libraries of the Theological Seminaries

Dear Friends:

The 216th General Assembly (2004) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), in reliance upon God under the guidance of the Holy Spirit and in exercise of its responsibility to witness to the Lordship of Jesus Christ in every dimension of life, has approved this resolution on "Iraq: Our Responsibility and the Future." It is presented for the guidance and edification of the whole Christian Church and the society to which it ministers. This report will determine procedures and program for the ministry divisions and staff of the General Assembly and its Council. It is recommended for consideration and study by other governing bodies (sessions, presbyteries, and synods). This report is commended to the free Christian conscience of all congregations and the members of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) for prayerful study, dialogue, and action.

The military action taken against Iraq is examined in light of just war principles and other principles of conscience. Among other things, the resolution reaffirms our solidarity with Iraqi Christians and their churches, calls for pastoral support for U.S. military personnel and their families and recognizes the constructive role of many military officers and soldiers serving in Iraq. It also encourages continued prayer for peace and stability in Iraq, condemns in the strongest possible terms torture and abuse of prisoners, and calls for a mission plan to respond to the needs and concerns of our brothers and sisters in Iraq. Acknowledging the moral cloud surrounding the military invasion of Iraq, the resolution affirms the United States bears a legal and moral burden for the reconstruction of Iraq, working with the international community.

The assembly also encourages the use of the study developed for last year's study document *Iraq and Beyond* that is available by calling 1-800-524-2612 and requesting PDS order #68-600-03-005. The study can also be accessed as follows: www.pcusa.org/iraq/gastatements, click on iraqbeyond.pdf. This study and action guide is designed for personal and class use in the hope that we may all become more aware of our call to be God's people in our daily lives and work.

Yours in Christ,

Clifton Kirkpatrick
Stated Clerk of the General Assembly

Table of Contents

Resolution and Recommendations

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) recommends that the 216th General Assembly (2004) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) approve the following resolution with recommendations and receive the background rationale to be included in the *Minutes*:

Iraq: Our Responsibility and the Future

The invasion of Iraq by the United States and those countries belonging to the "coalition of the willing" and the ensuing conflict have created diverse opinions, strongly held, as to whether or not this has been a justified action.

There are many different points of view within the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) about war as a moral issue. They include those who believe that war in all circumstances is contrary to the teachings of Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace. Others feel that resort to arms is a necessary measure to be taken in certain situations when there are gross violations of human rights or where there is an imminent threat to the life and health of all or part of the human community. Both of these positions are supported by the social teaching of our church.

Opposition to the military action against Iraq based on just war principles and other principles of conscience, while not unanimous among Presbyterians, has been sufficiently widespread to indicate much concern. From the beginning, it has been the judgment of many church leaders, both in the United States and elsewhere, that an invasion of Iraq has been unwise, immoral, and illegal. The 216th General Assembly (2004) concurs with this judgment. That judgment has also been evident in widespread public feeling in numerous countries, including countries long friendly to the United States.

Presbyterians affirm, "God alone is Lord of the conscience." Every member of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is both entitled, and called upon, to consider this matter prayerfully and lovingly. Every Presbyterian, however, is also called upon to treat those with whom they disagree with respect. We deplore the actions of those who regard persons with positions different from their own as being unpatriotic or un-Christian.

Moreover, the military action taken against Iraq is not directly or necessarily connected to the effort to deal with the threat of terrorism. It raises different issues and must be assessed using different moral considerations.

Despite the moral cloud surrounding the military invasion of Iraq and growing concern about the loss of life on both sides of the conflict, there is widespread agreement that the United States bears a legal and moral burden for the reconstruction of Iraq. Many people feel this burden can only be carried out properly and successfully through full cooperation with the international community, especially the United Nations. The complexities and difficulties in the road ahead must not be the occasion for indecision or for seeking simplistic solutions in the momentous task of nation building. Acknowledging the moral perplexity caused by Operation Iraqi Freedom, the 216th General Assembly (2004) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) does the following:

1. Affirms the Reformed principle that "God alone is Lord of the conscience," and that in evaluating U.S. actions in Iraq every Presbyterian has the right to arrive at their own judgment, even if, after prayerful consideration, that places them in opposition to the position of the General Assembly.

2. Reaffirms the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)'s solidarity with Iraqi Christians, especially the Presbyterian churches of Iraq, with whom we have had a strong bond of partnership for more than a century and a half, as they make their witness in their own society to the faithfulness of God and as they seek to have a significant role in the rebuilding and progress of their own country.

3. Calls for pastoral support at every level of the church's life for U.S. military personnel and their families who suffer pain and loss as a result of this military action, and expresses compassion for Iraqis who are also the victims of this conflict.

4. Recognizes that many who are called to arms in this military action are responding out of conviction and others out of obedience to duty, or both, but all of whom do so at great sacrifice, both in their personal and family lives and also in relation to vocational responsibilities at home. The General Assembly further recognizes that there are many military officers and soldiers serving in Iraq who, out of convictions rooted in their faith, are engaged in various constructive activities of social service, such as rehabilitating hospitals and rebuilding schools.

5. Urges the United States government to move speedily to restore sovereignty to Iraq, to internationalize the reconstruction efforts without penalty to those nations that chose not to endorse the U.S.-led invasion, and to recognize the United Nations as the body most suitable to facilitate the transition

to peace, freedom, and participatory governance in Iraq. We commend the administration for its recent efforts to work through the United Nations to help the Iraqi people take charge of their own political destiny and urge the United States to recognize that the United Nations should play the leading role in helping the transition to Iraqi self-rule. In light of the transfer of power from the representatives of the United States Government to the Interim Governing Council in Iraq, we urge that further steps be taken to internationalize the reconstruction efforts and to help the people of Iraq to take charge of their own political destiny. Meanwhile, we continue in prayer for peace and stability in that country.

6. Suggests that the United Nations, with more than fifty years of experience of peace-building in more than 170 countries, play a lead role in the recruiting and training of persons who have special skills in establishing the rule of law—police, judges, court staff, and correction officers—to establish peace and stability in Iraq and other areas of the world striving to build post-conflict stability and order. The deployment of military personnel for this purpose should be avoided as much as possible as it places additional burden, responsibility, and need for training that stretches the current forces beyond their expertise.

7. Condemns in the strongest possible terms torture and abuse of prisoners held any place in the world, in United States government, military, or civilian custody, and we oppose any continuation of this practice. As a church in the United States, we acknowledge and repent of our complicity in the culture leading to such acts, confess our collective sinfulness that is at the root of this practice, and ask God's forgiveness.

8. Calls attention to the need to understand and take into account the role that religion plays in the cultural and political affairs of nations, particularly those with large Muslim populations, and encourages Presbyterians to reaffirm their commitment to peacemaking in Iraq through dialogue and engagement in their community.

9. Supports the people of Iraq on a long-term basis in rebuilding their government and nation without prejudice to any ethnic and religious group and urge the United States government to provide assistance to Iraq in the long-term rebuilding efforts, including working for relief of foreign debt.

10. Commends the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly for his strong leadership in representing policies of the General Assembly and brothers and sisters in the church at large, and for his leadership among world religious leaders in calling for interfaith cooperation to address the crisis created by this action for relations between Christians and Muslims.

11. Expresses deep regret over the failure of the current administration, prior to military action, to meet with religious leaders seeking to offer a full explanation of the basis for their opposition to an invasion of Iraq, and the subsequent unwillingness of the administration to meet with those leaders to discuss the role the churches might play in creating a free and prosperous future for Iraq.

12. Approves the report as a whole for churchwide study and implementation (noting that the study developed for Iraq and Beyond, approved by 215th General Assembly (2003), has continuing usefulness for the church: PDS order # 68-600-03-005).

13. Directs the Office of the General Assembly to publish the resolution (with recommendations and background rationale) and place the document as a whole on the PC(USA)'s Website, sending a copy to the presbytery and synod resource centers, the libraries of the theological seminaries, making available a copy for each requesting session or middle governing body, and directs the Stated Clerk to notify the entire church of the availability of this paper on the Website.

14. Due to the immense sacrifice of our partner churches in Iraq, calls on the PC(USA) to give sacrificially to the real needs of our brothers and sisters in Christ. We call on the General Assembly Council (GAC) to immediately develop and promote a coordinated effort to highlight the Extra Commitment Opportunity titled, "Iraq — The Peace Fund for Solidarity with the Churches" (E051722).

15. Calls on the GAC to research and dialogue with our partner churches in Iraq in order to present at the 217th General Assembly (2006) a plan for the use of personnel (mission co-workers, mission volunteers, etc) and other resources that responds to the needs and concerns of our brothers and sisters in Iraq.

Rationale

In approving the study document "Iraq and Beyond," the 215th General Assembly (2003) requested the task force making a study of Violence, Religion, and Terrorism to examine the moral issues raised by military action against Iraq. Following the announcement that the combat phase of "Operation Iraqi Freedom" was concluded, the United States and other coalition forces have occupied Iraq seeking to oversee the restoration of services and promoting the establishment of a democratic government. They have found themselves increasingly confronting hostile actions by unidentified groups bent on expelling the United States from Iraqi soil. In a certain sense, Iraq has now become a major theater for terrorist activity. While President Bush has heralded the action in Iraq as something that has reduced the threat of terrorist action against the continental United States, the people of Iraq are not necessarily more secure.

While the invasion and occupation of Iraq have been linked to the effort to combat terrorism by the rhetoric of its advocates, military operations launched against a sovereign state on the basis that it might pose a danger to international stability must be analyzed separately and differently from efforts to stop disruptive violence as carried on by terrorists. The moral issues that surround these two different activities are not the same, nor can the basis for supporting one be carried over as a matter of course to legitimize the other. Because these two matters cannot be conflated, the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy is addressing this issue in separate discussions. One background paper and set of recommendations deals with terrorism and religiously related violence; this paper and the recommendations that go with it deal with the use of armed force against Iraq as an instance of preemptive intervention.

Reviewing the Background of the Iraq War

Most present day military action involves crossing the boundaries of other countries in order to accomplish some particular objective. Military activity can be utilized to intervene under a variety of possible conditions, each of which presents it own particular issues.

Humanitarian Intervention

So-called humanitarian intervention crosses national boundaries in order to either alleviate suffering or establish some sort of stability in situations of great turmoil. This kind of intervention has only developed quite recently and support for it has been slowly forthcoming since it usually involves some overriding of complete national autonomy.

A number of interventions for humanitarian purposes have been undertaken over the last decade. Examples include Somalia (1992), Haiti (1994), Bosnia-Herzegovina (1995), Kosovo (1999), and Liberia (2003). All were approved by the Security Council of the United Nations or by a regional alliance of several countries. Many were undertaken at the invitation of or with the consent of the countries involved. Those interventions that have been successful do not attract public attention as much as those that do not succeed either because they are ill-conceived, not supported, or because the parties originally involved broke their commitments. Although the effectiveness of humanitarian intervention has to be considered on a case-by-case basis, such intervention has not been widely deemed to raise fundamental moral objections, although some do object to these actions on the grounds that they involve the use of military force in undertakings that might be done more appropriately by civilian agencies.

Remedial Intervention

Another kind of intervention deploys military forces within the boundaries of other nations for the purpose of combating groups whose behavior is threatening. Intervention that seeks to deal with unrest, disturbances, and threatening actions in other countries might be called remedial intervention—though no term to designate it has the prevalent usage that the term humanitarian intervention has. Sometimes the presence of the military in such nations occurs with the approval of the regimes involved, although this has not always been obtained. For instance, in the case of the pursuit of Al Qaeda in Afghanistan, the alliance between Al Qaeda and the Taliban was understood as a threat to the government in those countries as well as to the world. The United States intervened to support the Northern Alliance in its effort to destroy Al Qaeda. This action was generally supported by the international community and the United Nations.

Actions taken by the United States in dealing with the drug problem in Colombia may be another example of this kind of intervention. However, these actions also demonstrate the potential problems that can attend such efforts, for keeping the task of interdicting drugs separate from taking sides in the civil war has not been entirely feasible.

Strategic Intervention

A third form of intervention is illustrated by the effort of the United States to remove the regime of Saddam Hussein in Iraq. Although often called a war rather than an

intervention, this action was taken to remove a head of state and his supporters, not to destroy the Iraqi people (except insofar as some of them supported the head of state). The aim has been to change the ruling regime in Iraq, not to bring its people to submission. Moreover, this action never contemplated bringing Saddam Hussein to a surrender in which he changed his policies yet remained in power. Although this form of intervention has more aggressive features than the two types of intervention mentioned above, it does not have the same intentions as wars fought to subjugate or destroy another nation in its entirety.

Clearly the moral considerations required to legitimize a particular instance of intervention change as one moves from one type of intervention to another. The burden of proof required for humanitarian intervention is less demanding than that required for remedial intervention. The burden of proof required when invited to intervene in domestic conflicts is not as high as that required when intervention is undertaken to remove an unacceptable regime. As one moves from humanitarian intervention to strategic intervention, the burden of proof becomes higher and higher. Moreover, the possibility of disagreement about the wisdom or legitimacy of such action is increasingly likely.

Historically, military action has been undertaken on the sole authority of individual nation-states. Such sovereign entities have long assumed that while they may gather allies for their cause, they are entitled to decide unilaterally what actions they will take. This state of affairs has been gradually changing as efforts have developed to hold the behavior of individual nations up to the standards of international law and to the collective scrutiny of the international community working through the United Nations. It is now common to undertake military action at the behest or with the approval of international bodies. Efforts to provide international warrant for military action have emerged only with considerable uncertainty as to their effectiveness and considerable disagreement as to their legitimacy. Having international sanction for military action has been considered by many groups to be an important safeguard against illegitimate interventions by individual nations. Many religious bodies have emphasized this view in their thinking about world affairs. But others, especially those in the United States now referred to as neoconservatives, have opposed subjugating the sovereignty of our nation to international judgments. We are living in a situation in which the sovereignty of individual nations continues to be regarded by many as complete and autonomous, yet a situation in which many look to the international community as the proper place for the adjudication of reasons for taking military action. This dichotomy constitutes one of the underlying reasons for deep disagreements about the legitimacy of operations like those taken against Iraq.

The action taken in Iraq has also raised an issue regarding what should be done about terrorism. If terrorism is a form of aggression either instigated or aided by the rulers of nation-states, then efforts to combat it can be based on a model of war, which leads to regarding whole countries as responsible for terrorism and attacks upon the ruling regimes of those countries as called for. If, however, terrorism is a crime—as it is often characterized in the documents of the United Nations—then a more focused method of bringing terrorists to justice must be employed in order to deal with the small and unofficial groups that are responsible for it. The second type of intervention—one that assists other governments in efforts to suppress wrongdoing—becomes appropriate and the third type of intervention is rendered problematic.

Three interrelated reasons were advanced for taking action against Iraq when it was ruled by Saddam Hussein: (1) its regime was unacceptably brutal and showed little respect for the human rights of its citizens; (2) it was considered contemptuous of a international mandate calling for it to cease and desist from pursuing plans to create so-called weapons of mass destruction (that is, nuclear, chemical, and biological munitions); and (3) it offered no assurance it would refuse to support terrorists. None of these factors, however, were new developments with the events of September 11, 2001, although the second and third were alleged to acquire new urgency at that time. The brutality of its leader was long-standing and did not constitute a factor directly related to the spread of terrorism. Iraq's effort to create weapons of mass destruction was being scrutinized by renewed inspections carried out under the direction of the United Nations and there was considerable doubt as to whether or not Iraq actually had such weapons. Iraq was not the only nation that could be suspected of supporting terrorists and the alleged link between its regime and that of terrorist organizations was never decisively demonstrated (and possibly could not have been). Iraq was not the only nation that posed problems for world order. It is not the only nation that has refused to conform to the mandates of the United Nations. Both Turkey and Israel, which the United States supports, have on occasion defied such mandates. The reason for singling out Iraq for aggressive intervention while not attacking other nations whose role in supporting terrorists was similarly—if not, indeed, even more—probable was never given definitive clarity. Moreover, questions have persisted as to whether the rationale provided for attacking this particular nation was based upon either the exaggeration or even misconstrual of evidence available from intelligence agencies regarding the extent to which Iraq had proceeded with the development of unacceptable weaponry. It can even be argued that Iraq complied, however reluctantly, with the international mandates placed upon it. Such questions

have gained additional importance following the military occupation of Iraq because the weapons of mass destruction have not (or not yet) been found, and the premise that Iraq intended to use them has never been proven.

The impulse for taking military action against Iraq was very likely an outgrowth of a new policy regarding the use of American military power—a policy that advocates using military action to remove potential threats to peace and international stability before they escalate into imminent dangers. This policy, calling for preemptive strikes, works against the posture of restraint that characterizes much traditional teaching about when resort to military action is warranted. The doctrine of preemptive strikes tends to impel decision makers toward military action rather than away from it. To hold that military action should be used to remove dangers before they become major threats is to prompt policymakers to search out such dangers and deal with them as soon as possible. It inclines toward rather than discourages strategic interventions.

The Debate Over the Military Action in Iraq

Before the military action in Iraq was undertaken, several groups expressed reservations about its wisdom or possible efficacy. Early on, some of these doubts came from military experts—though those still on active service soon muzzled their views. Senator Robert Byrd of West Virginia attacked the administration's motives for the Iraq war on the floor of the Senate in May 2003. He argued that the reasons for the war were built on lies. Many international affairs experts, regional specialists, and international lawyers also expressed reservations about the intended action. Doubts about the legitimacy of this action were also raised by several nations, such as France and Germany, with a long history of friendship with the United States. Their opposition seriously strained their relationships with our administration.

The problems raised by the intended action against Iraq were aired at length in the Security Council of the United Nations in late 2002 and early 2003. As the Bush administration vacillated between wanting to go it alone and wanting the approval of the international community, it presented the Security Council with a clear proposal to be either accepted or rejected, rather than as a matter for the community of nations to resolve through consultation and deliberation. The signal was clearly given that a rejection of the American agenda would be ignored and the action taken anyway. The result was that a "coalition of the willing" was co-opted by the Americans despite strong opposition from many other nations.

Opposition to the projected action against Iraq was also expressed by a wide range of Protestant, Catholic, and Orthodox leaders in the United States, as well as Pope John Paul II. From August 2002 until February 2003 religious leaders appealed to President Bush multiple times citing opposition to preemptive military action, a fear of destabilizing the region, concern for the erosion of support for combating terrorism, and a desire to work within the structure of the United Nations. Leaders of the National Council of Churches of Christ, representing thirty-six denominations, called for restraint and a halt to the "rush to war." The Moderator and Stated Clerk of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) were consistent voices in the call for restraint along with the leaders of other so-called mainline churches. The appeals regularly asked for a meeting between the president or his national security advisor and leaders of the mainline churches.[1] Requests for such meetings were rejected by the administration.[2] For an overview of the opposition that came from religious bodies see Peter Steinfels, "Deaf Ears on Iraq," *The New York Times,* September 28, 2002.

The extent and emphatic tone of these religious leaders were unprecedented in recent history. By comparison, widespread opposition to the war in Vietnam arose only in the mid to late l960s, after the conflict was well underway, rather than as an effort to prevent military action in Southeast Asia from beginning. While the recent opposition to taking military action against Iraq represented a significant consensus among mainline religious leaders, that opposition appears to have had no impact on senior leaders in the Bush administration who repeatedly refused to meet with these religious leaders so they could present their concerns.

The religious leaders who opposed military operations in Iraq questioned the proposed action primarily on moral grounds. Some of those who expressed such opposition were leaders fundamentally committed to non-violence. Others used just-war teaching to substantiate their opposition. Such use is significant because it diverges from the way just-war teaching has been commonly used throughout much of western history. Historically, just-war teaching has tended to furnish the basis for supporting military operations, although during the twentieth century instances have become more frequent in which application of the criteria to specific cases has resulted in opposition to proposed military action.[3]

Granted, there was support from some religious leaders for the projected military action against Iraq. This high-profile support came from conservative religious leaders whose strength has emerged as a political factor since the Vietnam era. Some of that support took the form of enthusiastic endorsement of the administration's plans—even, unfortunately, of suggesting that the Muslim religion is inherently belligerent and therefore a proper target for restraining efforts. Much of the support of that genre came

very close to endorsement of a holy war, or crusade. But some of those who supported the planned attack on Iraq used just-war teaching to make their case.[4] They appealed to the same moral criteria as did the opponents of the action but came to quite divergent judgments as to their implications. One commentator has suggested that what has developed as a consequence are two kinds of just-war thinking—a justifying version and a restraining version.[5] This may suggest how indecisive just-war thinking may be in evaluating the legitimacy of particular conflicts.

The wisdom of taking military action against Iraq continues to be debated on pragmatic and policy grounds. Former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, writing after the initial hostilities had taken place, criticizes the linkage that was used to defend Operation Iraqi Freedom as a crucial part of the "war" against terrorism. She contends that the military action against Iraq has shifted attention away from Al Qaeda and other sources of terrorism and has focused attention and the relegation of resources on the nations designated as the so-called "axis of evil." Secretary Albright's analysis uses prudential considerations to make the case that the military action against Iraq was ill-advised and not essential to the effort to counter terrorism.[6]

The opposition from mainline religious bodies continues, as in a statement made by the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches in late August of 2003. The terms used in that statement include these words: "illegal," "immoral," and "ill-advised." The action is condemned as "a breach of the principles of the UN Charter." The Central Committee of the World Council of Churches brings together Christians from many countries and therefore is a significant barometer of the opinion of the leadership of the worldwide Christianity community, although many Christians in the United States disagree in good conscience.

Issues for the Community of Faith

The history so briefly sketched above raises a number of issues for communities of faith. The action taken in Iraq does not enjoy overwhelming approval. The responses to it not only show a rift between two approaches to world order in the society at large, but they evidence a division within Christianity itself between those who hope that religious faith can help to create world community and those who believe religious faith furnishes the warrant for moralistic efforts and even the unilateral use of military force to combat international malfeasance. How are Christians to be faithful in the face of this situation? Does any place remain for a significant social witness which policy makers will consider helpful and which is germane to the making of public policy, or must the vocation of Christians who find a particular military venture wrong be one of dissent and protest, of

noncooperation and/or withdrawal? Will Christianity become deeply divided, either on the parish level or in the higher echelons of denominational and ecumenical affairs, between those who emphasize peace and reconciliation as important means of advancing the well being of the human family and those who advocate vigorous efforts to deal punitively with those who threaten that well being? Will all the thinking that has been done since the Second World War about the importance of international efforts to build a peaceful world—thinking that seemed to be enjoying something of a reasonable consensus—simply become one side of a deeply polarizing division that results from policies that favor unilateral domination of others for the purposes of ensuring reliable order and safety?

With these questions in mind, let us explore some possibilities for thinking that can get beyond destructive polarization. Clearly there is a need for some rethinking and modification of just-war teaching. It is important to recall that the purpose of just-war theory is not to justify war but to make war next to impossible. Just-war theory is a theory of moral exception—an exception to the fundamental Christian stand to be peacemakers. In its practical application, the just-war theory at times does not seem to provide adequate guidance for determining when military action is, or is not, morally justified. Clearly, there is need for constant rethinking of the theory as it applies to particular cases. What, then, in light of the action taken in Iraq, can be said about just-war thinking and its significance for making moral judgments about particular conflicts?

Rethinking Just-War Teaching: Last Resort

One principle suggested by just-war theory is that military force should only be used as a last resort. The problem comes, not with the principle itself, but with judging when the conditions it sets up have been met. There is no doubt but that considerable effort had gone into making Iraq change behavior before it was decided to take action against it. For months a mandate of the United Nations forbidding Iraq to pursue the development of Weapons of Mass Destruction had been in place, and economic sanctions had been invoked in the effort to enforce the mandate. Moreover, much diplomatic activity had been made to seek a change in Iraq's behavior, including extensive use of inspections under the auspices of the United Nations. Both actions were aimed at bringing Iraq in line, requiring it to conform to certain expectations and demands felt to be warranted by the community of nations expressing its will through the United Nations. A judgment that these various efforts were of no avail was reached by the Bush administration. When the possibility of military action was contemplated, Iraq was given an ultimatum by the president of the United States (concurred in by the prime minister of

Great Britain) prior to the unleashing of force against it—but this was basically a unilateral threat rather than an expression of multinational opinion. All of these actions, in the eyes of those who favored taking military action, amounted to meeting the conditions necessary for "last resort." Those who opposed taking such military action reached different conclusions.

Many of these efforts presumed that Iraq would change only under duress. Economic sanctions are designed to produce duress. In fact, they create a good deal of hardship on the civilians of the nations against which they are imposed. Although sanctions do not involve the use of overt violence, they do use force and they do cause harm. Sanctions impact noncombatants adversely and raise some of the same moral issues as strategies in war that violate the just-war principle of noncombatant immunity. Several of the nations which President Bush identifies as constituting an axis of evil have all been subject to such sanctions and few have changed their behavior as a consequence. Although economic sanctions have possibly been useful in other situations, the imposition of sanctions by itself does not satisfy the necessary conditions for asserting that all efforts short of war to solve an international problem have been undertaken. "Last resort" can be claimed, not only when efforts based on duress have not resolved issues, but also when other efforts to resolve issues—such as diplomatic negotiations—have been employed to the fullest extent.

While the practical difficulties in satisfying the condition of last resort pose one kind of problem, the move to a policy of the preemptive strike formulated by the administration and used as the basis for the military action against Iraq creates a very different premise for guiding actions. This abrogates the very principle that undergirds just-war teaching rather than merely asserting those conditions have not been met. The idea of preemptive strike is the direct antithesis of last resort. Just-war teaching is founded on the premise that the use of military measures must be clearly restrained and carefully circumscribed. The idea of the preemptive strike is founded on the premise that the shrewdest and most calculating use of military measures is warranted—and the sooner the better. The touchstones are victory and success, not restraint and responsibility. All efforts to resolve differences or to bring about changes in the behavior and policies of nations that might be threats to peace are likely to be cast aside before even being tried. The idea of preemption counters everything for which just-war teaching stands and for which just-war theorists have been working to make that idea more significant in international relationships. It scuttles every possibility of moving further toward making just-war teaching an effective restraint on unwarranted international combat. If this crucial aspect of just-war teaching is abandoned, what is to prevent the other aspects of just-war teaching from being similarly discarded? The implications of this shift are enormous. Military force will become mainly a tool of domination, carried out with power and arrogance even if claiming to be in the interest of advancing world order. Those who believe just-war teaching has importance for international affairs should vehemently oppose the doctrine of preemption.

Rethinking Just-War Teaching: Just Cause

Fundamental to just-war thinking is the recognition that the use of military action must be for a just cause. For a cause to be just, a threat must be real and imminent and the party initiating military action must have been significantly wronged or acting in self-defense. Although the determination of what constitutes a just cause has traditionally been made by a party claiming just-war legitimation for its action, the determination of what constitutes just cause has been moving to the community of nations, now most visibly represented by the United Nations. The charter of the United Nations provides for the redress of grievances and for taking military action in self-defense. When action to redress grievances is contemplated, a nation is to present its case to the international body, or when action has been taken for purposes of immediate self-defense, the party involved is to report such action to that body as soon as possible. Such provisions are designed to give greater weight to the claim to have a just cause. Members of the United Nations are bound by treaty to let their use of military action be subject to such review.

Normally the possession, or attempt to possess, any particular kind of weapon (conventional or mass destructive) has not been considered a just cause for war—neither in international law, by moral consensus or in any decision of the United Nations. Neither has association with (or tacit support) of terrorist groups by an otherwise internationally recognized government been judged to provide a just cause to attack such a government. Finally, though most citizens of the United States and other democratic societies recognize the value of their form of government, the imposition of democracy on another sovereign nation has never been regarded as a just cause for taking military action. These alleged reasons for taking military action against Iraq (several of which have not been entirely substantiated) did not receive the endorsement of the community of nations. Unilaterally asserted to be the basis for just cause they fail. By using them to forge a coalition to take military action without the endorsement of the United Nations the United States has spurned its treaty obligations and is considered by many to have acted illegally.

Rethinking Just-War Teaching: Legitimate Authority

Another principle in just-war teaching is the rubric that requires the use of military action to be declared by a legitimate authority. This can be understood as a simplistic legal requirement that certain proper authorities must make the decision to go to war—as though it has to be done by the king and not a subordinate minister, by Congress and not by the president acting alone. That, however, is a narrow reading of the requirement. A significant historical intent of this requirement has been to prevent private insurrections from claiming moral warrant. The use of force by an individual or small group against the larger public order is always fraught with the possibility of creating chaos. The requirement of legitimate authority seeks to avoid that danger. Even so, this requirement does present some problems. Stringently applied, it can be used, for instance, to preclude the possibility of legitimate revolt against tyranny. But more broadly understood, it would indicate that a revolution can be considered just only if it is undertaken as the effort of a significant band of profoundly motivated persons concerned for justice who are bound in covenant to one another to seek a larger public good rather than their private advantage.

Thinking about what constitutes legitimate authority should be updated. That authority should be as broad as possible. The unilateral use of military force by a single nation today is likely to be as much a threat and repudiation of the common good as the private use of military force would have been when just-war thinking was first developed. Military action today, particularly when that action is an instrument of policy and involves other parts of the global community, should be considered legitimate only if sanctioned by the international community. The present channel for doing this is the United Nations. The Presbyterian church has been committed for many years to the construction of international legal organization and standards.

The United Nations and the charter, which is its framework, are vibrant evidence of this important movement toward international law. Yet this charter makes clear that international law was violated by the recent U.S.-led intervention in Iraq. A brief review of parts of Chapters 1, 6, and 7 indicates the steps that legally should have been taken in making a decision to intervene.

In Chapter 1, Article 3, all member states agree to "refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any other state." Article 24 of Chapter 6 of the charter states unequivocally that "Member States confer on the Security Council primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. In this chapter, the security council, not individual nation-states,

is given the responsibility to explore all peaceful means of dispute resolution, and is accorded the right to decide what kind of action should be taken in situations that threaten international peace and security.

Chapter 7, which deals with the use of force, reserves for the security council the power to determine: (1) when a breach of security has occurred; and (2) what measures to take to remedy the situation. While Article 42 of this chapter gives the security council the right to decide to use force against a state if a breach of security is found to exist, the subsequent articles give to this council the sole right to put together a coalition of forces, whose plans for the use of military force are, according to Article 46, to be made by the military staff command. All military actions to resolve a threat to peace are to be taken, according to Article 48, by the security council, not by member states.

The strongest case for the illegality of the actions taken in Iraq by the U.S.-led coalition can be made from the terms found in Article 51. Cited often by political leaders as allowing intervention as a form of "self-defense," the article nevertheless states firmly that measures taken by states in self-defense "shall not in any way affect the authority and responsibility of the Security Council." Since the action taken in invading Iraq did usurp the authority and responsibility of the council, and never received a motion of support by the council, it is clearly in violation of the rules carefully crafted by the community of states to ensure the safety of security of all other states.

Just as no individual is warranted in starting a war to advance a private agenda, under modern circumstances no single nation should be considered warranted in unilaterally starting a war to advance diplomatic or policy agendas, even if those agendas are well-intentioned. In the case of being attacked, any nation whose defensive military action was accorded the approval of the international community would have a moral advantage. The decision to launch Operation Iraqi Freedom was pursued with the clear indication it would take place regardless of the feelings and judgments of other nations. The agreement of other nations was solicited but not regarded as constituting a condition for proceeding. That action constitutes a serious erosion of the governing premise of just-war teaching that requires the use of military actions to be governed by the authority most concerned for the common good. When the issue is global in its dimensions, the only legitimate authority must be international in character. Some of the most serious problems associated with the action in Iraq stem from the fact that for all intents and purposes it was an action initiated and sustained by the United States acting in concert with its self-interested partner, the United Kingdom, and other smaller members of the so-called "coalition of the willing" but was not undertaken with full support from the world community.

Rethinking Just-War Teaching: The Matter of Success

Another criterion in just-war teaching is the provision that military action must have a reasonable chance of success. This is sometimes felt to be an almost opportunistic provision—which may well be the case if by success one has in mind only the question as to whether or not it is possible to subdue an opponent in battle. But success needs to be more broadly understood—not as mere victory in combat but as a constructive achievement in the aftermath. Regime wrecking does not automatically result in nation building, and in the case of Iraq success must be understood as involving both. This means that just-war teaching must come to be understood, not as applying merely to the outcome of the immediate military operation, but as including necessary and important responsibilities for creating new relationships and new political order following conflicts.

There are grounds for doubting whether the administration entered into the conflict in Iraq with this broad requirement of success in mind. It was overly quick to claim military operations had been successful even when conflict had not ended and obviously before the political situation in Iraq had been stabilized. Casualties continue to mount, and much disorder is evident. Iraq is now the location of random and unpredictable yet serious terrorist activity, which the presence of American occupying forces seem unable to prevent (if, indeed, American presence does not attract it). It is also apparent that rebuilding the country and leading it to democratic order is going to be a long and expensive undertaking. Although the administration showed little willingness to have its projected action stayed by opposition from other nations, it has now gone to other nations seeking their aid in the aftermath. If this reflects a genuine turning away from unilateralism, this move can be welcomed and should not be dismissed as merely self-serving. It is unfortunate that it arrives so late.

Rethinking Just-War Teaching: The Matter of Means

Just-war teaching offers guidance for the use of armed force as well as guidance as to when resort to war is justified. A just-war must be conducted in ways that can bring about constructive results–by means that are proportional to the evil required to achieve them. Moreover, noncombatants are not to be directly attacked.

As warfare has changed judgments as to what constitutes legitimate means have had to be recast with the aim of keeping the means under controlled restraint and as low as is consistent with the goal of subduing an enemy. Modern weaponry poses these issues in new ways. Instruments of mass destruction—whether chemical, biological, or nuclear—create the possibility of means that are lethal on such a massive scale as to be morally unacceptable. Massive air strikes against centers of population pose similar issues to only a somewhat lesser degree, especially when there may be military targets that cannot be isolated for separate destruction. Just-war thinking has waffled on the moral issues connected with the use of such strikes—not least because any blanket condemnation of air strikes would only encourage the placing of military targets in population centers as a way of granting them immunity.

Efforts to make the use of air strikes more discriminating and thus render them morally less problematic have made some progress. So called "smart bombs" may be preferable to massive obliteration. The use of intelligence to identify military targets so that they may be discretely attacked has possibilities of making military means morally less problematic. The extent to which these developments have been significant in the war in Iraq has been a matter of uncertainty. Clearly, civilian populations have been injured by the conduct of military operations–whether more than necessary is a matter of debate. Many people feel that in the case of the invasion of Iraq by the United States there was not enough known about the location of civilian populations or its government leaders to assure that aerial bombardment could be carried out justly. While great care was sometimes exercised to protect civilians there was not enough known to ensure that collateral damage would remain minimal. Particularly early in the war civilians were grievously hurt, wounded, and killed. Hence, some conclude it would have been better to refrain from this war than to have murdered civilians because of faulty intelligence. However, this is not a judgment that can be rendered with decisive certainty.

But we can speak with moral clarity about the matter of the treatment accorded prisoners of war. Not only just-war thinking but international agreements have been clear and explicit about how those who are incarcerated during a war are to be treated. Once unarmed, prisoners of war are protected by Article 17 if the Geneva Convention of 1949, which states:

> No physical or mental torture, nor any other form of coercion, may be inflicted on prisoners of war to secure from them information of any kind whatever. Prisoners of war who refuse to answer may not be threatened, insulted, or exposed to any unpleasant or disadvantageous treatment of any kind. http://www.unhchr.ch/html/menu3/b/91.htm

In light of this provision of international law it is possible to make the moral judgment that the treatment of those incarcerated in Iraq has been morally unacceptable.

An Overarching Consideration

Behind just-war teaching in a representative democracy lies a premise so fundamental that it is not even stated as a formal principle. It is assumed that any action proposed will be preceded by public debate and that the reasons advanced for taking those actions will have the substantive credibility required to meet the requirements of open scrutiny. This assumption is indispensable to the principle that the cause for which military action is taken must be legitimate. No cause can be just if it is based on deceptive, fabricated, distorted, or even insufficiently demonstrated considerations. The burden of proof needed for taking military action should be rigorous, excluding both deliberate misuse of information (lying) and the triumph of ideology over reality. The import of this premise increases enormously when military action is considered for preventive or preemptive reasons. Conjectural assertions about the likelihood of a threat, however plausible, are insufficient to satisfy this fundamental premise. To discover after military action has been taken that the reasons given for it were not warranted is to undercut the trust essential for viable international relations. Misperception becomes the functional equivalent of falsehood.

Beyond the question of just-war teaching and international law is the fundamental concern for truth telling as a moral obligation. In his January 2003 State of the Union address, President Bush repeatedly raised the specter of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) in the hands of Saddam Hussein and the threat the dictator posed to states in the Middle East. Later, in a dramatic briefing to the United Nations Security Council, Secretary of State Powell detailed in satellite imagery, communications intercepts, and human intelligence a story of WMD production, deception, and denial. Yet months after these assertions were cited as the just cause for invasion, no significant evidence of WMD production and secret storage has been uncovered.

As citizens and as people of faith we must raise appropriate questions in dealing with the "facts" so emphatically touted to justify military invasion. Has the nation been subject to the misshaping, distortion, and twisting of intelligence information to meet predetermined policy positions? Were senior officials so focused on "regime change" that all potential evidence was molded to support the argument for ousting Saddam?

On the Question of Democratization

It is possible to raise serious doubts as to whether or not the administration understands the full dimensions of the task of creating a democratic society in Iraq. Most of its emphasis has been on destroying those who engage in violence. Even the speech of the president delivered on September 6, 2003, although calling for the long-sustained effort to bring democracy to Iraq, was primarily concerned to strike down opposition and thwart terrorist threats. The speech gave almost no indication of what would be needed—other than to free Iraq from violent threats—to establish a democratic society. The assumption that democracy will automatically flow in when oppression is broken and threats are subdued is woefully naive. Success in battle is—at the most—only a first step. Democracy is a unique achievement that is possible only when a people come to understand covenant obligations to each other, the need to abide peacefully with orderly determination of majority wishes, and when its members are assured of at least minimal conditions of material well-being. We need to have a much wiser and more explicit realization of what must be done to bringing such conditions to Iraq than has been as yet forthcoming. Moreover, the role of voluntary associations must not be overlooked. These are important aspects of a viable democratic society; and unless their role is acknowledged and supported, the possibility of creating a free and functional society will be scant indeed. When American leaders suggest "We will stay the course," they should be prepared to indicate the complex and difficult actions beyond maintaining military superiority that are required to do that successfully.

Democracy is the government of the people, for the people, by the people, and it can be achieved under various models of governance (i.e., various constitutional, parliamentary or presidential systems). Democracy, therefore, is always open to the future and does not presume a priority that a nation will adopt one economic system or another. It would be a mistake to expect that a democratic Iraq would necessarily emerge as an economic ally of the U.S.—unless democracy means alignment with the U.S. regardless of the will of the Iraqi people (which is, obviously, a contradiction of terms).

It is significant that many of the opponents of the military operation in Iraq understand the need for, and are willing to support, efforts to rebuild the country and to prepare the way for it to embrace democracy. This may be an agenda that can garner the support of all groups and help to transcend the polarization that threatens to keep them divided. No previous position as to the wisdom of taking military action prevents acknowledging the immensity of the task of nation building, the sacrifice that will be necessary in order to come up with the needed resources, and the fact that only insofar as Iraq is brought into the community of nations without punitive and vindictive sanctions does such an undertaking have any chance of success.

Moreover, this undertaking must be planned and carried out by the United Nations on terms that are developed out of the corporate wisdom of all its members. The United Nations must not be used as a front for the pursuit of an agenda

developed only on the basis of the wishes of the United States—or even on the basis of the wishes of the "coalition of the willing." The result should not be expected to please everyone in all respects. Compromises may need to be made and working solutions pursued that do not conform entirely to idealistic hopes. Having been an agent of liberation of Iraq from the grips of a dictatorship does not provide the license to dictate how it will develop a more viable society in the future.

On the Role of Religion

Finally, any understanding of this issue must take into account the positive and negative roles that religion plays in the social process of a country like Iraq. It will take much sensitivity and thought to appreciate these factors. The place of religion in this situation is complex and cannot be ignored or treated superficially.

The diversity of religious expression in Iraq, including Sunni and Shia Muslims, Christians, and others, means that a variety of views are present in that country regarding the ways in which religion and public life should be related. The conflict between European-type modernization and Islamic traditions are not resolved and will not yield to easy accommodation. Listening to the complex and varied religious voices and positions in Iraq and encouraging the engagement of the religious communities there in constructing a politically viable future will be challenging and important work. The religious forces in Iraq are not agreed on a single vision for their country and are not likely to be co-opted to serve a specific political agenda, especially it if is imposed from the outside. The eventual cooperation of groups presently holding sharply contrasting views will be necessary for the success of any rebuilding effort.

One potentially dangerous approach, which would sow further discord and civil strife, would be one that supports the attempt to convert Iraqis to Western Christianity as a path to the resolution of the social issues facing Iraq and its people. We should be aware of those ministries from the United States and other countries that are now poised and ready to undertake just such a major effort in Iraq. Such an outreach carried out in a country, as torn and fragile as Iraq will be for some time, could easily introduce further instability and anti-Western violence.

To be successful in bringing a viable and stable situation to Iraq will require as much expertise, planning, and wisdom from Iraqi civil, intellectual and religious leaders, and from others of good will from the international community as has been utilized to undertake military operations. The task of nation building, or re-building, can only be accomplished at comparable risks, greater costs, and a higher competence than has been expended in regime destruction. The religious communities of Iraq have much to contribute to this process if it is to succeed. International religious communities, such as the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), may do well to support the work of our Christian partners and the many other responsible religious leaders of Iraq in this work.

Endnotes

1. The repeated appeals of international and American church leaders are available in the online archives of the Presbyterian News Service. See www.pcusa.rg/pcnews/archive.htm. Stories include "A Call to Stop the Rush to War," of August 20, 2002; "U.S. Church Leaders Urge Bush to Avoid Military Action Against Iraq," of September 12, 2002; "Clerk Urges Bush to Avoid 'Rush to War,'" of January 13, 2003; "46 Religious Leaders Ask Urgent Meeting with Bush on Iraq," of January 31, 2003; and "PC(USA), Church of Scotland Leaders Appeal to Bush, Blair for Peace," of February 6, 2003. For an additional overview of the opposition of religious bodies see Peter Steinfels, "Deaf Ears on Iraq," *The New York Times,* (September 28, 2002).

2. A group of 49 leaders representing 13 denominations and 5 organizations asked for a face-to-face meeting with the president in January of 2003. (www.ncccusa.org/news/03news4.html) Their request was not granted.

3. See Alan Geyer and Barbara G. Green, *Lines in the Sand: Justice and the Gulf War* (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1992).

4. See George Weigel, "Moral Clarity in a time of War," in *First Things* Number 129 (January 2003), 20–27.

5. See David P. Gushee, "Just War Divide: One Tradition, Two Views," in *The Christian Century,* Volume 119, Number 17 (August 14–27, 2002), 26–29.

6. See Madeliene K. Albright, "Bridges, Bombs, or Bluster?" in Foreign Affairs (Fall September 2003) pp. 3–19.

Study Guide: Suggestions for Discussion

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A Guide for the Reader and Leader

Introduction

The document entitled "Iraq and Beyond" was drawn up and approved when the military action by the United States against Iraq was in its early stages. This action was supported by countries belonging to "the coalition of the willing" but not endorsed by the Security Council of the United Nations. Much has subsequently happened. The regime of Saddam Hussein has been deposed and American forces (with some assistance from troops of other countries) have occupied Iraq. However, although the combat phase has been considered over, lives have continued to be lost, insecurity continues, and there is considerable uncertainty as to how Iraq will be helped to rebuild, perhaps even to improve, its infrastructures or how it will move toward becoming a democracy.

The political and moral issues raised by this series of developments raise profound issues about America's role in the world—especially how that role is to be shaped in relationship to the deliberations of other nations working through the United Nations. By taking military action in Iraq the United States set aside long held assumptions about what constitutes legitimate reasons for using military action and replaced them with new policies. Debate about these events persists in the country generally and in the Christian community. There is no common mind, either with the United States or in the world community about whether this military action was legitimate or wise or whether its consequences hold positive promise. There is much uncertainty and bewilderment in the public. The debate has not abated. Each new development seems to intensify the issues as much as to resolve them. Consequently, the study and discussion recommended by the General Assembly is needed as much now as when it was approved, if not more so.

Purpose

The purpose of these study suggestions is to prompt further thought about the issues raised by the military action in Iraq and to explore in greater depth how efforts to bring about a constructive outcome can be carried out. The document "Iraq and Beyond" does not presume to offer answers or to enunciate a "correct" stance on the issues it identified. It is a call for study rather than a prescription for advocacy. The study process it commends might eventually help the Church to discern its role in responding to the nation's effort to act responsibly in a dangerous and confusing situation. Such discernment may help, not only to deal more adequately with current challenges, but to avoid mistakes when dealing with new ones. Admittedly,

any such outcome is likely be modest and characterized by a continuing disagreement between persons of equally sincere convictions as to what is a prudent and productive way to respond to contemporary world affairs.

To the Leader

Many people feel strongly about the issues to be explored in these sessions. You will probably be working with a group of people who have come because of their interest and concern—who have chosen to engage in the exploration of these matters because they want to learn more about them. However, others may have come in order to champion a particular stance. The members of the group may or may not be ready to show respect for each other or to engage in mutually helpful dialogue. The issues posed by terrorist activity on our own country and elsewhere and by the various ways of attempting to respond to it—including the military action taken against Iraq—are among the most complex and vexing of any that have confronted our society in a very long time. We are having to deal with them when moral disagreements about many matters seem to defy resolution. No institutions in our society are immune from the disturbing impact of such disagreements, not even churches. Divisions between conservatives and liberals, between so-called right and so-called left, divide communities into sharply different camps and decisions about great issues are often made by very slim margins. To maintain a spirit of respect in such circumstances so that the various positions that people hold can be heard with courtesy and examined fairly is a major challenge.

Plan

The following proposals for furthering discussion focus around three areas of concern: These have been prepared with the assumption that in most cases exploring each of these issues will require one full session, suggesting the wisdom of taking three weeks (or three sessions spaced equally apart) to pursue the study. However, if for reasons of time it is necessary to compress the schedule, one of the questions might be selected from each area so that all three concerns could be discussed in a single session.

The first focus will use the action taken in Iraq as a way to examine the broader question, "Under what conditions is military action justified in an increasingly interconnected world?" The second will explore the question, "What can be done to deal with aggressive threats?" The third will look at the question, "How are political and social transformations made possible, particularly those which seek to extend freedom and justice?"

Session One: *Under What Conditions is Military Action Justified?*

First Area of Concern

A number of Christians are pacifists and hold that military action is never justified. In contrast, other Christians feel it is a religious obligation to employ military force against those who do wrong and to defeat them decisively (if not indeed annihilate those who persist in doing evil). Their outlook is similar to that of crusaders, although they now seldom designate themselves by that name.

Between the poles the dominant attitude, embodied in various formulations of the just war tradition, has been that the use of military measures should be a last resort, to be utilized only after all other means of dealing with a threat have been exhausted. Further, according to just war teaching, military action should be carried out with a restraint that protects noncombatants from intentional harm and employs only such carefully controlled force as is required to subdue an enemy. Much thinking about just war has been done in the last two or three decades as the conflicts in Korea, Vietnam, and Kuwait have been attended by controversy about whether or not the use of violence in each particular instance was warranted.

These different Christian attitudes toward the use of warfare probably stem from very profound differences in how Christians feel called to respond to wrongs they observe being done by others. Pacifists who feel military action is never justified either feel that nonresistance is called for, or that nonviolent forms of resistance are morally preferable and actually feasible. Those who feel military action is a legitimate and even holy calling feel that evil must be destroyed and that the use of force is a divinely approved way to accomplish that result. Those who feel that war should not normally be used but is sometimes necessary to deal with situations that yield to no other solution hold that military measures should be pursued only for the gravest of reasons and with careful restraint.

For Discussion

■ Which of the two positions (crusade or just war) that sanction the use of military force do you feel most nearly describes the grounds on which Operation Iraqi Freedom was launched? (In responding to this question pay particular attention to the rhetoric that has been used to legitimate this action.)

Second Area of Concern

There is another difference in thinking about the situations that seem to call for the use of military action. Are such means warranted only to repel actual attacks (as would be the case in resisting an invasion), or are military means warranted to forestall the development of threats (as would be the case in which they are used to destroy a brutal regime even if that regime was not actually engaging in aggressive behavior)?

According to the rhetoric that preceded each, the reasoning behind Operation Iraqi Freedom differs from that of Operation Desert Storm. The use of military power against Iraq in the first instance was to repel an invasion and that action was stopped when Saddam retreated to his own territory. Those reasons are quite different from the justifications that have been advanced for taking military action against Iraq in the second instance. In the case of Operation Iraqi Freedom, the reasons include a) the allegation its rulers were developing weapons of mass destruction; b) the fact Iraq could aid terrorists and gave no assurance it would not do so; and c) the brutality of Saddam Hussein should not be tolerated by the world community. Much debate has followed concerning the extent to which a) and b) are compelling (even debate as to whether or not they are correct). In the case of c), the debate has been less about whether or not it is true, but about whether or not military action should be used to change regimes if they are not taking aggressive actions against others.

For Discussion

■ Which of the three reasons for taking the recent military operation against Iraq do you believe was most important in gaining public support of the action?

■ Is the difference between Operation Desert Storm and Operation Iraqi Freedom morally significant?

Resources for this Section

Scripture passages with implications for these matters

■ I Kings 18:40-41

■ Ecclesiastes 3:3

- Matthew 5: 38-48 and 13:28-30

- Romans 12:14-21

Brief overviews of Christian positions

- The Churches' Center for Ethics and Public Policy. "Christians and War in the 21ˢᵗ Century," *Shalom Papers: A Journal of Theology and Public Policy* 5, n. 1 (2003).

- Long, Edward LeRoy, Jr. *War and Conscience in America* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1968).

More extensive treatments

- Ramsey, Paul, *The Just War: How Shall Modern War be Conducted Justly*? (Durham,NC: Duke University Press, 1961).

- Ramsey, Paul, *The Just War: Force and Political Responsibility* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1968).

- Winn, Albert Curry. *Ain't Gonna Study War No More: Biblical Ambiguity and the Abolition of War* (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1993).

- Yoder, John Howard. *When War is UnJust: Being Honest in Just-War Thinking* (Minneapolis: Augsburg: 1984).

Session Two: *What Can Be Done to Deal with Aggressive Threats?*

First Area of Concern

There are many regimes in the world that deny their citizens basic rights, abuse authority, and squander resources for the inordinate enrichment of those in power. Saddam Hussein's regime may have been a particularly vicious example of a disturbing phenomenon. What can be done to change such regimes? How effective is military action, not merely as a means of destroying such regimes, but creating conditions that encourage more democratic replacements?

Traditionally—influenced by just war thinking as well as an understandable reluctance to employ violence—military action has been considered something to be utilized only as a "last resort." This reluctance has seemed to some to permit situations to grow more threatening and difficult before action is taken to deal with them. A new doctrine has developed that holds threats should be dealt with while they are in early stages of development–when the amount and intensity of the coercion needed to eliminate dangers is presumably less than would later be required.

This shift— from "last resort" to "preemption"—undoubtedly played a decisive role in shaping the administration's decision to take military action against the regime of Saddam Hussein. Guided by this premise, the administration has considered it prudent to deal with the problem now rather than later, when it is still largely potential rather than actual. This argument makes sense to many people. Once it is assumed that military action removes threats, it seems only logical to take action when it requires fewer resources and less destruction than would probably be the case were it postponed.

But the idea of preemption poses grave moral problems as well as seeming to offer apparent tactical advantages. It goes a long way toward setting aside the restraints that have done much to keep nations from resorting to the use of violence against each other too readily. Much has been done, particularly through the efforts of the United Nations, to make such restraints more effective and thus create a greater sense of security in international relations. The idea of preemption constitutes a counter trend with potentially destabilizing consequences. Perhaps an analogy to the laws and practices governing relationships between individuals can highlight the potential outcome of this approach. Under the provisions of domestic law, for instance, individuals who are attacked by others have the right to defend themselves by using force. There is a corresponding provision in the charter of the United Nations affirming the right of nations to self defense. Suppose, however, the provisions of civil law were changed to give people the right to use force against any persons they perceive to be possible threats. The result could be a rash of preemptive assaults that would greatly undermine the peace and tranquility of the civic order. If nations assume a right to take preemptive actions, will that not have serious consequences for international affairs?

For Discussion

- What are the most likely consequences of the use of preemptive strikes for the international order?
- Are such preemptive actions likely to nip festering problems in the bud, and hence make the use of military power more effective (and perhaps even less costly), or are they apt to destabilize international relationships as individual nations feel at liberty to attack those whom they feel are merely potential threats rather than actual aggressors?

Second Area of Concern

Success in war has generally meant victory on the battlefield that brings about closure to hostilities by signing an armistice.

The military operation against Iraq has unfolded somewhat differently from traditional wars. Instead of coming to a conclusion with a surrender in which an enemy agrees to discontinue the struggle, this action has run on indeterminately. To be sure, President Bush announced the combat phase of the operation to be over as soon as Saddam Hussein was apparently deposed (or, possibly, driven undercover). What has followed has been an occupation of Iraq by forces chiefly composed of American armed services. This occupation has been complicated by the development of insurgency actions that have injured both American and Iraqi people (as well as members of military units from other countries assisting in the occupation).

These consequences may, as the advocates of the military occupation of Iraq contend, be eventually brought under control. "Staying the course" and/or escalating firepower may eventually discourage such insurgency action and bring about order and stability. But that outcome is not necessarily assured and even if possible may be a long time in coming.

There are two ways of resisting military action. One of these involves non-violent resistance, in which those against whom military force is directed refuse to be intimidated, thus nullifying the suppressive potential of coercive action. While not wide spread such non-violent resistance has in specific instances been carried out with effectiveness by groups committed to its use, and trained to carry it out with the high degree of discipline and dedication required to make it work.

It seems, however, that another way of nullifying traditional military power is being developed. The insurgency actions that have occurred with increasing frequency in "post-combat" Iraq have many of the marks of terrorist behavior, and may even be instigated by terrorist organizations. They are carried out anonymously and by surprise. They very often target civilians. Instead of breaking the cycle of violence, as might nonviolence resistance, terrorism ups the ante and pushes the uses of violence beyond tolerable limits. Terrorists are not afraid to die, nor do they necessarily have scruples against seeing others harmed. They can go underground when attacked by military means and carry out resistance by secrecy and surprise. Hence, they can potentially thwart the possibility of bringing military action to successful closure by causing the cycle of violence to spiral indefinitely. It may be that insurgency has the potential to lead the use of military action into a quagmire.

For many people in Iraq oppression has been replaced by insecurity, fear of brutality has been replaced by fear of being injured by random violence. Although Americans may feel their security at home has been enhanced by confronting terrorist activity elsewhere (as has been alleged to be the result), those who live in "elsewhere" may not see this as a happy consequence of military action, nor be impressed by the claim that the world has become a safer place.

For Discussion

- Does insurgency activity such as that developing in Iraq have the capacity to defy the suppressive power of even massive military presence and thus maintain an indefinite period of ongoing violence?

- Does action that shifts the location of terrorist activity to others pose moral problems?

- In your opinion, do you consider that the world in general, and your world in particular, has become a safer, more peaceful place as a result of Operation Iraqi Freedom?

Third Area of Concern

When dealing with enemies, military action is designed to create fear. It is essentially punitive in nature. It is a form of suppression. It aims to change behavior by the using the stick rather than the carrot. It assumes, not without some plausibility, that the use of force can make people change behavior. This happens when the force that can be mounted by one side clearly outstrips the force that can be mustered by the other side. As long as those against whom military action is directed agree to change their behavior in order to avoid harm, military power is potentially effective–at least in obtaining reluctant submission from those against whom it is directed.

When a nation has undergone a traumatic, even if a widely desired, change in governance something else is needed. A feeling of security must be created. Order must be established and protected. The well-being of the people must be advanced. Infrastructures must function dependably and possibly even be rebuilt. Daily living must normalized. To assign the task of seeking these results to armed services is to require them to redirect their skills in a major way.

For Discussion

- Can the same organization serve both roles?

- Does military planning pay enough attention to the difference between them to make it possible for armed forces to play both roles effectively?

- Should military officers be rewarded and advanced as much for their skills in making occupations remedial as for skills in combat?

Fourth Area of Concern

Are the insurgency actions a last ditch effort of those seeking to stave off surrender or are they the actions of quite different groups taking advantage of a power vacuum created by the elimination of a tyrannical rule? While it may not be possible to know with certainly which is the case it is important to have some perception of what is going on. Although in neither case are the actions of insurgents in Iraq acceptable, it is possible they call for different responses.

If these insurgency actions are extensions of terrorism, then all of the questions as to how terrorism may best be countered have to be raised in order to deal with its emergence in this new setting. How to deal with terrorism is a matter on which opinions differ widely. Many hold that terrorism is a form of malfeasance that can only be stamped out by the resolute use of force. Actions taken on that premise will simply seek to destroy the insurgency in Iraq by continued and extended use of military power. Others hold that terrorism is a form of criminal activity that requires a careful and targeted apprehension of individuals or small groups and their punishment through judicial process, ideally conducted on an international level. To move against terrorism in this way points toward greater cooperation through the United Nations and the development of carefully trained investigatory agencies that can identify terrorism and apprehend offenders. Still others argue that initiatives must be taken to listen to what those who are seduced into terrorist activity are trying to say through their actions and seek to engage them in ways that seek to overcome the hostility and estrangement they feel toward the West. This is the course of action likely to be favored by advocates of just peacemaking. It is a transformative rather than suppressive approach.

For Discussion

■ How does the development of insurgency action in Iraq affect the way we think about how to deal with terrorism?

Resources for this Section

Scriptural passages with Implications for these matters

■ Jeremiah 51:20-23
■ Isaiah 30: 15-18
■ Micah 4:1-4
■ Matthew 12:43-45
■ Matthew 13:24-30

Resources for Understanding Iraq

■ Presbyterian Peacemaking Program, Toward a Better Understanding of Iraq: Its Heritage, Challenges and Current Crisis.

■ Burns, John F. "The New Iraq is Grim, Hopeful and Still Scary," *The New York Times Week in Review* (November 16, 2003) 1,7.

■ Purdum, Todd S. and the staff of the New York Times. *A Time of our Choosing: America's War in Iraq (New York: Henry Holt, 2003).*

Websites of Interest

■ Presbyterian
  • www.psusa.org/peacemaking/iraq/ga/policy-htm
  • www.pcusa.org/peacemaking/iraq/more-info.htm
  • www.pcusa.org/pcusa/ep/region/mideast.htm
■ Quaker
  • www.afsc.org/iraq/guide/resources.shtm
■ Mennonite
  • www.mcc.org
■ Brethren
  • www.brethren.org/genbd/washofc/Iraq.htm
■ Middle East Council of Churches
  • www.mecchurches.org

Resources Concerning Terrorism and Counter-Terrorism

■ Koza, Dee. *Faithful Living in a Time of Violence and Terrorism A study Guide on the Resolution on Violence, Religion. and Terrorism* (Published by the Presbyterian Peacemaking Program, 2004).

■ Long, Edward LeRoy, Jr. *Facing Terrorism: Responding as Christians* (Louisville, Ky: Westminster/John Knox Press, 2004).

■ Pillar, Paul R. Terrorism and U.S. Foreign Policy (Washington, D.C: Brookings Institution Press. 2001).

■ Stassen, Glenn Harold. "Turning Attention to Just Peacemaking Initiatives that Prevent Terrorism," in *The Bulletin of the Council for the Study of Religion* 31, no. 3 (September 2002) 59-65.

Session Three: *How are Political and Social Transformations Brought About?*

First Area of Concern

One of the professed aims of the intervention in Iraq is to establish a democratic society to replace the dictatorship under which its people have been living. This is a worthy aim. But regime destruction does not automatically translate into nation building. A democratic order will not necessarily follow the removal of an oppressive regime. Several important and profound attitudes are necessary on the part of a people for the functioning of a democratic form of government to be successful. Democracy depends as much on respect for covenants of obligation as it depends upon the enjoyment of liberty. Democracy should be thought of as a way to enable people to put their shoulders together to serve the general welfare at least as much as a way to keep government off their backs.

To establish a democratic society in Iraq will require the creation of these conditions. People may be naturally inclined to desire to be free (though they will often sacrifice liberty in order to be assured security), but they may not be as readily inclined to accept what have been called "the wise restraints" that safeguard freedom with constitutional guarantees and prevent it from misuse.

To be sure, it is necessary to eliminate tyrannical oppression in order to make way for democracy to develop, and the basic needs of people for living must be dependably available. But these are preliminary necessities, not sufficient conditions for democracy to function. Efforts must be made to rebuild Iraq and to enable it to achieve the fullness of her own destiny as a viable nation. Even those who judge the military action taken in Iraq to be wrong can realize that once such action is begun it must be responsibly supplemented by a much more complex and difficult process of helping the society to meet the needs of people and to protect their freedom.

For Discussion

■ How can we strike the delicate balance between being helpful in helping Iraq move toward democracy yet respect and encourage the autonomy of the Iraqi people?

■ What are the responsibilities and obligations associated with nation building?

■ What planning is necessary and what resources are required for doing this?

■ What are the prospects of success and the prospects of failure?

■ What can be done to enable a nation to move from a troubled past to a desirable future?

Second Area of Concern

One of the important conditions for a society to function in a free and democratic manner may be described by the term "domestic tranquility." This is a much deeper and more complex condition than the absence of oppression or provision of basic necessities. It describes a climate that is characterized by a general sense that life can go on without unexpected threats and without arbitrary behavior by those in power. Domestic tranquility is not so much the absence of oppression as it is a condition that builds confidence in the political process and sustains the willingness of citizens to trust that process to provide for their well being. It denotes the many ways in which people working together help each other beyond and apart from what they are required to do by legal requirement. In theological terminology this depends upon the acceptance of covenant obligation.

For Discussion

■ When a country is suddenly freed from totalitarian rule how are the habits of civic responsibility necessary to sustain domestic tranquility created and maintained?

■ What obligations must people accept, however tacitly those obligations are agreed to, for a society to be both free and orderly?

■ Can any occupying power, however inclined to benevolence or effective in eliminating oppression, play a pivotal role in the creation of the attitudes that are crucial for sustaining domestic tranquility or must the covenants on which it depends come from the people themselves?

Third Area of Concern

Another condition important for a democracy to function is an open flow of ideas and information. Much more is required than allowing people to say what they want to say. Information must be thorough and reliable, sufficiently complete to enable the public to understand issues and make meaningful decisions. To be sure, reports of what is happening are always affected by the perspective and the limits of individuals or particular groups. No report is purely objective; no speech without limitations. There is an element of advocacy in even balanced reporting. Therefore, the free flow of information depends upon having a variety of

sources, openness to many points of view, and the countering of advocacy on one side by the presence of advocacy on the other.

Because all forms of communication are attended by individual limitations and perspective, open debate is crucial to the flow of information, imaginative thinking as important as faithful reporting. Not only is open debate important, but a tradition of loyal criticism is required. The model of loyal criticism has its roots in the Hebrew prophets, who did not hesitate to point to ways in which the behavior of the people–both those in authority and ordinary members of the society— often violated the moral covenant basic to the tradition. Press, radio, television, and pulpit all have roles in seeing that the public is both informed about events and prompted to take responsibilities. Today, journalists frequently carry on the prophetic function. They are part of the information flow upon which democratic decision-making depends. Moreover, information has little value unless people read and listen and seek to understand issues.

For Discussion

- If democracy is to function, what can and must be done to facilitate the flow of information and the exercise of responsible criticism in a country that has previously inhibited both?

- Is there a special role for religiously-based social witness?

- How can American Christians help the people of other countries and even of other faith traditions relate religion to the public sphere without the divisive consequences that fracture church life here at home?

Fourth Area of Concern

Democracies depend upon having constitutional provisions for the exercise and restraint of authority. For this reason the effort to develop a constitution for Iraq is an important matter. But it is not easy to draw up constitutions that both specify how governance is to function and what limits are necessary to keep the exercise of that authority bound. The early leaders of the United States met to draw up our constitution following a revolutionary effort that had brought them together in a common cause. Even so, differences appeared and a number of issues had to be resolved. One has to wonder what would happen if the people of the United States were trying to write a constitution today. Would the intense partisanship, strongly contrasting views about moral issues, impact of special interests, and sharply contrasting views as to the proper place and function of government that are now so strong in our society make it impossible to draw up a constitutional form of governance?

Iraq faces the prospect of drawing up a constitution in very complex circumstances. It faces this task, not as a people that has worked together to secure its own liberty but as a people whose oppression has been removed by a foreign power. Iraq is affected by many of the same divisive forces that are found in all parts of the contemporary world. There are divisions in the country between groups with differences of opinion about basic issues that are tenaciously held and fervently cherished. Little has happened to prompt them to work through those differences, and the conditions needed for constitutional governance to function cannot be imposed by others.

For Discussion

- What are the prospects that Iraq can draw up a constitution for democratic rule to which the various groups that exist within its borders give assent?

- How can a free and open society be established in the face of diverse and even hostile factions that may very well engage in civil strife if not strongly suppressed?

Fifth Area of Concern

In dealing with Iraq, the administration has shown a variety of attitudes toward other countries. It sought the approval of the Security Council of the United Nations for Operation Iraqi Freedom but was unsuccessful in making it an international undertaking. It then elicited cooperation from nations supportive of its policies, but that did little to change the unilateral stance of the United States into a significant international mandate. The administration criticized the failure of those who did not cooperate as a form moral tepidness in the face of evil.

When the nation building process began the administration sought help from other nations. While it has not been decisively rebuffed neither has the rebuilding and rehabilitation of Iraq become a truly international undertakingBone that draws upon and benefits from the resources available in the world community as a whole. In both the destruction of the regime of Saddam Hussein and in the attempt to rebuild Iraq the United States has played a dominant if not commanding role in the process.

Moreover, American private interests play major roles. American companies are very much in evidence, both as contractors for the government and as entrepreneurs.

For Discussion

- What is gained and what is lost by having the United States dominate the process nation-building?

- What distinctive contribution can other nations offer?

- Can the United States expect help from other nations without giving them a place in deciding policy

Resources for this Section

Scriptural passages with implications for these matters

- Exodus 19:1-17

- I Kings 21:1-20

- Romans 15:1-13

- I Corinthians 12:1-26

Resources for thinking about Democracy

- Bellah, Robert. *The Broken Covenant: American Civil Religion in a Time of Trial* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992).

- Fore, William F. "Faith, Lies and the Media: Wartime Misperceptions," *The Christian Century* 120, no. 24 (November 29, 2003). 10-11.

- Ignatieff, Michael, "Why are We In Iraq?" *New York Times Magazine* (September 7, 2003), 38, 40-43, 71-72, 85.

- Niebuhr, Reinhold. *The Children of Light and the Children of Darkness: A Vindication of Democracy and Critique of Its Traditional Defense* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1944).

Appendix A: Iraq and Beyond

How can Presbyterians seeking to be faithful understand the war in Iraq and respond with a Christian perspective?

People in Presbyterian congregations struggle with the reality of human suffering that war brings to all parties of the engagement. Families lose sons and daughters, parents and spouses. Great emotional trauma and physical pain and suffering are inflicted on innocent civilians and combatants. Human sacrifice and permanent damage is involved on all sides of the conflict. No matter what happens in the military side of this conflict, the enormous human suffering that it has entailed is cause for sorrow.

People have different understandings of what this war is all about. Congregations find themselves divided. Presbyterians know they are called to be peacemakers. For some, peacemaking means ensuring a more stable future by taking up arms against acts of terrorism and tyranny. For others, peacemaking means emphasizing diplomacy, negotiations, and nonviolent interventions to prevent war. An important debate is taking place in some quarters as a result of the war in Iraq. A broader discussion is needed. The issues in this debate will not go away regardless of the military outcome.

Historically, the Presbyterian Church has affirmed a nuanced understanding of warfare. For instance, the Second Helvetic Confession offers this role to the Magistracy:

> . . . and if it is necessary to preserve the safety of the people by war, let him wage war in the name of God; provided he has first sought peace by all means possible, and cannot save his people in any other way except by war" (*The Book of Confessions*, 5.256).

The Westminster Confession recognizes the legitimate use of military force for defense:

1. God, the Supreme Lord and King of all the world, hath ordained civil magistrates to be under him over the people, for his own glory and the public good; and to this end, hath armed them with the power of the sword, for the defense and encouragement of them that are good, and for the punishment of evildoers.

2. It is lawful for Christians to accept and execute the office of a magistrate, when called thereunto; in the managing whereof, as they ought especially to maintain piety, justice, and peace, according to the wholesome laws of each commonwealth, so, for that end, they may lawfully, now under the New Testament, wage war upon just and necessary occasions (*The Book of Confessions*, 6.127–128).

But while acknowledging the possible legitimacy of war under certain conditions, the Presbyterian Church has also emphasized the importance of seeking peaceful reconciliation of conflict. The Confession of 1967 reminds the church that its calling to reconciliation includes the political search for cooperation and peace among nations "across every line of conflict, even at risk to national security." The Confession of 1967 warns the church that to identify "the sovereignty of any one nation or any one way of life with the cause of God denies the Lordship of Christ and betrays [His] calling" (*The Book of Confessions*, 9.45).

In dealing with recent conflicts, such as the Vietnam War and the 1991 Desert Storm War in Iraq, much attention has been given to the significance of "just war" teaching as one basis for judging the moral justification of conflicts. Perhaps the most important just war principle cited in reference to the recent war is that war can be justified only if undertaken as a last resort. There has been debate as to whether the decision to mount military operations in Iraq constituted a last resort. To be sure, diplomatic efforts were undertaken. The president of the United States turned to the United Nations Security Council for approval of intervention in Iraq. In November of 2002, the Security Council reaffirmed that Iraq must disarm. The U.S. accepted the Security Council resolution for disarmament of Iraq of weapons of mass destruction it may possess with the clear expectation of the U.S. government that compliance would occur within a very limited period of time. But many other nations were seeking a more extended time to let the weapons inspections work. A clear difference of opinion existed between the United States (along with some of its allies) and other nations concerning whether all reasonable alternative possibilities had been exhausted prior to the war decision. These differences make it difficult to contend that the conditions of last resort have been met.

Other important considerations in "just war" teaching state that military action undertaken must have a reasonable chance of success, must be in proportion to the outcome that is sought, must use appropriate force, and must protect the civilian population. At different points, the U.S. president indicated a number of objectives in support of the war, including disarmament of weapons of mass destruction, removing the dictatorial leadership of Iraq, liberation of the people of Iraq, installing a democratic government in the country, and opening the Middle East for democracy. To accomplish these goals, the president and his administration embarked on the use of overwhelming force in order to

remove a possible threat to the world order before such a threat was actually exercised. Such a strategy of "preventive war" was especially necessary, the administration advocated, in the post-September 11 context of a fight against terrorism.

The strategy of "preventive war" was put forth in the U.S. National Security Strategy released by the White House in the fall of 2002 (www.whitehouse.gov/nsc/nss). It followed the mid year 2002 publication of Joint Vision 2020 by the Department of Defense (www.dtic.mil/jointvision). This document is the blueprint for how the U.S. military will fight and win the nation's wars over the next two decades and describes "the creation of a force that is dominant across the full spectrum of military operations--persuasive in peace, decisive in war, preeminent in any form of conflict" (*Joint Vision 2020*, U.S. Department of Defense). "Full Spectrum Dominance" is defined as follows:

> The label full spectrum dominance implies that US forces are able to conduct prompt, sustained, and synchronized operations with combinations of forces tailored to specific situations, and with access to and freedom to operate in all domains—space, sea, land, air and information. Additionally, given the global nature of our interests and obligations, the United States must maintain its overseas presence forces and the ability to rapidly project power worldwide in order to achieve full spectrum dominance (Joint Vision 2020, U.S. Department of Defense, p. 6).

The new policy of full spectrum dominance, together with the strategy of preventive war, represents a significant change in U.S. military doctrine. In this posture, the U.S. reserves to itself the right to intervene with military force anywhere in the world with dominant force, unilaterally, in a preventive war to protect its interests. Moreover, those who oppose this policy believe that it has the potential to change the nature of international relations even more than acts of terrorism by any other entities. There is a great likelihood that this U.S. policy will tend to increase the anxiety within many nations. They will wonder where the U.S. will choose to strike next. The probability of increased hostility toward the U.S. and its citizens in many places around the world will be greatly increased.

Many groups, using the tenets of "just war" teaching, have raised questions about the very nature of "preventive war." The consequences such as "preventive war" when waged against a Muslim nation, for example, might produce worldwide Muslim hostility, further terrorist acts of violence, deeper resentment of American power, and the further destabilization of the Middle East. Moreover, those who raised these concerns thought that the human and financial cost of the war would go well beyond what is morally acceptable.

Another danger is the precedent "preventive war" sets for other governments to settle chronic conflict. The differences in these views raise a number of serious questions that require more thoughtful study and reflection. Among others, these include but are not limited to the following:

1. How does the policy of "full spectrum dominance" relate to the values of the gospel?

2. How can Presbyterians, together with other people of faith, fulfill their responsibility to actively work for peace in relation to this new U.S. military policy?

3. What are the unique responsibilities and limitations of a "superpower nation?"

4. How does a "superpower" keep the use of war for national security and the duty of humanitarian intervention appropriately connected?

5. How does a "superpower nation" keep a perspective of moral self-criticism?

Not since the Vietnam War have we had to deal with this amount of strong disagreement in times of war. Indeed, unlike what happened in the case of Vietnam, this opposition to the war against Iraq was expressed even before the war began and has not gone away even though war itself tends to override the inclination to tolerate differences. The more a war is conducted from premises that are debatable, the greater the possibility that dissent from that war will be met with official hostility. The church must urge every jurisdiction within the land, from the federal government to the local governing body, to make every effort to protect the right of disagreement, to sustain the civility of policy debate, and to tolerate demonstrations in support of all viewpoints.

In the face of the disagreement between the current administration and much of the religious community in the U.S. and around the world, as well as conflict within the church over the war with Iraq and, more generally, the doctrine of preventive war, this study offers the following for thought and discussion.

1. The anguish of those who feel that this war is unjustifiable and the conviction of those who support the war must be acknowledged as legitimate moral responses that should not be condemned. Furthermore, strong support and deep concern for United States military personnel involved in the war with Iraq does not necessarily imply support for the decision that directed them into the conflict. Moreover, Christians must maintain their concern not only for their own who are in harm's way as a result of this war, but for all of God's children who are in danger of suffering and death.

2. The differences of moral judgment between individual members of various religious groups must be openly acknowledged without becoming occasions for hostility

or rancor. While the positions of various churches may be critical of a particular policy for well-thought-out reasons, that does not require individual members to support those positions. It should prompt all people to pay respectful attention to the basis on which the churches have arrived at those positions and to make their differences clear with poise and graceful thoughtfulness. God alone is the Lord of the conscience in matters of moral judgment. To hold a position in obedience to conscience warrants respect from those who hold differing positions. This does not mean that debates about the morality of war should be tabled for the sake of maintaining an assumed sense of peace within congregations. Such debates are going to be part of American political, social and religious life for many years into the future and churches have an important contribution to make that process both respectful and probing.

3. The 215th General Assembly (2003) urges that in the conduct of hostilities that are now going on, or that will take place in the future, every effort possible is made to protect civilian lives and to abide by all other international conventions designed to mitigate harshness and excess in the conduct of military operations. The United Nations is the most appropriate agency for the monitoring of human rights. This involves, but is not confined to, appropriate treatment of the prisoners and hostages of war, avoidance of obliteration tactics, making provisions for the care of refugees and displaced persons, and the restoration of destroyed infrastructures. The minimization of suffering and the healing of damage must be just as central a concern as the thrust for victory.

4. The renewal of Iraq's economic and civil life must be affirmed as a moral obligation. Further, the cultural and historic traditions of a people must be regarded with respect. The initiative of the Iraqi people to reorganize the life of their nation must be encouraged and supported. Processes for self-determination must be thoughtfully planned and carried out under the supervision of the United Nations.

5. The 215th General Assembly (2003) lifts up the importance of the United Nations. It calls upon the United States to support the United Nations as the international entity that can be the most helpful agent for coordinating the rebuilding of Iraq and assuring that human rights are protected. It encourages all nations to work together through the United Nations toward reconstruction in Iraq after the war.

6. The natural resources of any nation, such as Iraqi oil and minerals, belong to the people of that nation. They should not become a commodity from which an occupying army, a foreign interim government, or even a United Nations transitional administration may benefit or support itself for an extended stay.

7. The religious community, including the Christian churches, will have a significant role to play in humanitarian aid, civic and social renewal in Iraq. The church has an opportunity to partner with sister churches in Iraq (there are five Presbyterian congregations in Baghdad) to contribute to the humanitarian recovery of the people.

The Worldwide Ministries Division suggests the following concerns for additional discussion and prayer:

1. Attitudes of resentment and hostility growing within Muslim societies toward the United States would affect, in the first instance, the relations between Christians and Muslims, especially the relations of PC(USA) partner churches with their neighbors in the region, and their long-term efforts toward mutual trust-building. Partners in Pakistan and Indonesia, for example, have already experienced such tensions.

2. Security of PC(USA) and other ecumenical mission personnel may suffer, as well as the effectiveness of their work in the present and their recruitment in the future. Several PC(USA) mission personnel have had to be temporarily evacuated, and are understandably anxious about the future of their ministries. The very integrity and credibility of our partnership relations in vast regions of the world may be in jeopardy.

3. The witness of PC(USA) partner churches and ecumenical bodies in the entire region will long be affected by the Iraq crisis. At the heart of continuing strife in the Middle East is crisis in the land of Christ's birth, life and ministry, death and resurrection. Christian witness has continued unbroken for two millennia, but now faces the severe challenge of survival in the face of massive Christian emigration caused by political and economic exigencies and the unrelenting suffering of Palestinians under military occupation.

As people of faith, we are called to love even our enemies and seek reconciliation. The conflict between the United States and Iraq is a challenge to all of us to live into the calling of our Lord to show compassion, seek justice, and demonstrate commitment to the building up of life beyond the war.

In a climate where our work may continue for some time to be inaccurately seen as projection of U.S. power, we will need a spirit of humility and patience, willingness to trust and accompany partners, and the guidance of the wisdom of the Holy Spirit.

APPENDIX B: GAC (WMD) Comment on Item 12-08

Editor's note: The General Assembly Council through its Worldwide Ministries Division offered the following comment to the 215th General Assembly (2003) as they considered *Iraq and Beyond*. You will notice that several of the points raised by the comment were incorporated into the statement itself.

The General Assembly Council communicates the following concerns for Worldwide Ministries mission implications:

The WMD is concerned with the following implications for mission:

1. Attitudes of resentment and hostility growing within Muslim societies toward the United States would affect, in the first instance, the relations between Christians and Muslims, especially the relations of our partner churches with their neighbors in the region, and their long-term efforts toward mutual trust-building. Partners in Pakistan and Indonesia, for example, have already experienced such tensions.

2. Security of our mission personnel may suffer, as well as the effectiveness of their work in the present and their recruitment in the future. Several of our mission personnel have had to be temporarily evacuated, and are understandably anxious about the future of their ministries. The very integrity and credibility of our partnership relations in vast regions of the world may be in jeopardy.

3. The witness of our partner churches and ecumenical bodies in the entire region will long be affected by the Iraq crisis. At the heart of continuing strife in the Middle East is crisis in the land of Christ's birth, life and ministry, death and resurrection. Christian witness has continued unbroken for two millennia, but now faces the severe challenge of survival in the face of massive Christian emigration caused by political and economic exigencies and the unrelenting suffering of Palestinians under military occupation.

4. Concern for the continuing Israeli-Palestinian strife, and its urgent need for a just and enduring resolution, cannot be overemphasized and will require even more programmatic attention. (A separate more detailed resolution is before the assembly on the Israel/Palestine situation. See Item 12-01.)

5. The Worldwide Ministries Division, because of a long historic working relationship and a deep love for the peoples of the region, is constrained now more than ever before, to lift up Iraq as a special focus for renewed commitment in mission partnership, as well as ministry with Iraqi Christians outside Iraq who, in the providence of God, may receive and share the gospel and new life in new ways, faithfully and with integrity.

6. Already, the division, through Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, has responded to the urgent humanitarian needs resulting from the war, through an initial emergency grant followed by a wider appeal. It is anticipated that the scope of involvements will expand and may involve organizations of other faiths.

The division recognizes that in initial stages after the war, mission may take primary forms of disaster assistance and restoration of services. In the long term, to which we must also be committed, there is a need to be colleagues on the journey with Presbyterian and other Christians who may have a new opportunity to be the church in mission. We will need people with language and cultural skills and passion for the gospel of Christ in all its fullness. In a climate where our work may continue for some time to be inaccurately seen as a projection of U.S. power, we will need a spirit of humility and patience, willingness to trust and accompany partners, and the guidance of the wisdom of the Holy Spirit.

Notes

Notes

Reflections and Feedback

Reflections and feedback from the study of *Iraq: Our Responsibility and the Future* may be sent to the offices of the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

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