Session 3

Morality and National Security

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Introduction

Moral/Ethical (I use the terms interchangeably) codes are rules of behavior adopted by a given group of people to govern their interaction so that the good of the whole will be served. The group may be as small as a dyad (married couple), a profession, a local community, a nation, or the international community. Most codes are unwritten, although many professions do have written codes and religious organizations usually have a "bible." Such codes are not normally subject to legal sanctions, although some are codified into laws, e.g., marriage vows that are enforced by pre-nuptial agreements.

Enforcement of moral codes depends on two basic forces: psychological and social. The psychological force is the individual conscience; the social force is the behavior of the social environment in which a person lives. At the heart of the conscience is a sense of honor; the commitment of a person to live by the code she/he has agreed to adopt. To publicly agree to a code in order to have the respect of society and violate the code is hypocritical and violates one's honor. Social sanctions are in many forms; shunning, explicit disapproval, expulsion from a group, etc. To the degree these forces are successful, the less need for laws to govern individual behavior. As we saw in the previous discussion of the Constitution, the document is designed to place much of social order under the control of moral codes.

Given the wide divergence of individual needs (economic, social, sexual, individual freedom, etc.), inherent conflicts, and the scarcity of resources to meet those needs, how is social order possible? How do we avoid human interaction governed by the "law of the jungle" and survival of the fittest? Throughout most of the history of mankind many argued for a strong sovereign ruler who could make laws and enforce them. Otherwise, they said, there will be "…a war of all against all, and life will be solitary, nasty, brutish and short…" These are the words of Thomas Hobbes, who held a rather pessimistic (some would argue, realistic) view of human nature.

John Locke, a contemporary of Hobbes, believed people were inherently somewhat selfish and fallible, but that they could be socialized to be reasonable and respecting of the rights of others. Therefore, people would reason together and agree on some basic values and rules of behavior that reflect those values. As a practical matter, Locke said, people will accept that there has to be give and take and for the most part, they can trust each other, as a matter of honor, to abide by those agreed-upon rules.

The Founding Fathers crafted a blend of these two points of view and decided to try a revolutionary approach to social order. They distrusted tyrannical governments and wanted individual freedom and liberty as much as possible. But they reasoned that if we were to have social order based on moral, rather than legal/political authority, there are certain fundamental requirements that must be met. First, a society must agree on some basic values. What do we want out of life, what are our goals? Next, what behavior reflects these values, what are the norms of conduct? How do we ensure that these norms are internalized by members of the group so that they will comply as a matter of honor? Obviously, we cannot rely totally on moral

authority; some political/legal constraints will be necessary. The goal should be, however, to minimize the necessity for such political constraints. Moreover, we can expect people to disagree on many issues, e.g., abortion, same-sex marriage, public welfare, affirmative action, and indeed, the role of government in meeting the people's needs. Honorable men can and do differ on these matters.

Ideally, people can agree on procedures to resolve differences in a peaceful manner. In the realm of laws, the Constitution establishes those procedures. In the realm of morality not covered by laws, people must agree on certain rules for resolving differences. Hopefully, these rules will emphasize civility and peaceful resolution, but this is not always the case. The one essential ingredient of any system of social control, however, is trust and confidence in each other and in the leadership of a group. As the noted author Sissela Bok has said:

> "...Trust is a social good to be protected just as much as the air we breathe or the water we drink. When it is damaged, the community as a whole suffers; and when it is destroyed, societies falter and collapse.
>
> ...Trust and integrity are precious resources, easily squandered, hard to regain..."
>
> Lying, 1978

Reflect on Bok's dictum as you consider the state of public trust in our American institutions--our justice system, our business community, our health system, and most alarmingly, our political institutions and leaders.

This segment of the course focuses on "macro" ethical/moral issues that affect national cohesion and unity. It will focus on those aspects of morality that relate to our ability to cope with the two immediate threats to our security, the economic crisis and terrorism. We will deal with the economic threat in session four and the moral dimension of foreign policy in the fifth session, which focuses on how to deal with radical groups who use terrorism as their principal means of force. The first part of this essay pertains to the economic issue and the second part to foreign policy focused on terrorism.

Economic Equity. The current political climate in the nation is bitterly partisan, both on foreign and domestic policies. Much of the discord as it pertains to the economic centers around what ethicists call "distributive justice". As we shall see, the unity of the nation depends to a great deal on how people feel the system is "just" in its distribution of benefits and its demand for sacrifice. Several political scientists have questioned whether the Constitution, as currently manifested in our political system, is suitable to meet the challenges. Basically, the fear is that people will not elect officials who will require the necessary sacrifices to meet those challenges.

Key to the question of distributive justice is the role of government. The Preamble of the Constitution declares that the purpose of the union is to establish justice and promote the general welfare, among other lofty goals, but the body of the document itself is open to interpretation. Hopefully, the voters could express a preference for what role the government should play, and it has worked out that way over the two-plus centuries of our history. As we shall see, the government at all levels, especially the national government, has increased its role significantly in determining distributive justice in all segments of life, e.g. civil rights, criminal justice, health care, retirement benefits, and employment benefits.

How one approaches the problem of national cohesion as it concerns ensuring equity depends a great deal on one's political philosophy. In general, conservatives downplay the concept of a national "community" where the people are united by ties of brotherhood and are willing to share benefits and burdens to insure that justice is distributed nationwide. This is not to suggest that conservatives do not believe in distributive justice; rather, they see this best handled at the local level--and by the private sector. Some argue that distributive justice should be left to the market place, unencumbered by government interference. Liberals tend to see a larger role for the government. Conservatives tend to also view national cohesion in terms of defense of country and use of power in international affairs. These different views are manifest in polls which show that liberals show a greater preference for "America the Beautiful" (which lost out by a narrow margin when the current anthem was adopted in the early 30s) as the national anthem as compared to conservatives, who favor the "Star Spangled Banner". An examination of the music and words of the two reveals the logic of these preferences. The Star Spangled Banner is basically a war symbol. Liberals tend to focus on a national community, a family where people care for each other. William Schambra quotes LBJ as reflecting the liberal point of view:

> "**I see a day ahead with a united nation, divided neither by class nor by section nor by color, knowing no South or north, no East or West, but just one great America, free of malice and free of hate, and loving thy neighbor as thyself. I see America as a family that takes care of all of its members in time of adversity ... I see our national as a free and generous land with its people bound together by common ties of confidence and affection, and common aspirations toward duty and purpose."**
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> Pp. 31-32, "The Quest for Community"

Schambra takes a dim view of LBJ's "Great Society" and its effort to create a national community of brotherhood, in which the Federal Government, particularly the President, was to be the catalyst for creating the sense of community. The attempt to replace the local community did not work. He claims the "new left" recognized this in the 60s and started the move back toward decentralized community. This group was followed by the other end of the political spectrum, who was being alienated by the Federal Government. George Wallace benefited from this movement and Carter and Reagan won by repudiating it.

Why the failure of national community? Schambra says it is not natural. It is difficult to develop a bond of emotional depth beyond the level of family and neighborhood. A crisis can pull people together, as in time of war against a clear enemy, but this is temporary. A "War on Poverty" or an "Energy Conservation" program equivalent to war will not do it. He takes us back to the founding fathers, where the Federalists argued for national community. The Anti-Federalists argued that the conditions necessary for a sense of moral community could not be created above the local level. He identifies those conditions as: General equality of wealth and power; a homogeneous population; a commonly shared, rigorously inculcated moral or religious tradition, etc.

As Schambra points out, Mondale adopted LBJ's view of America and was soundly rejected. Dukakis and other Democratic leaders have taken that view with similar results. Clinton backed away from that position. Schambra says the notion of community at the

national level is passé. He favors a return to local community identification as espoused by Reagan. Schambra rejects the claim that a vote for Reagan was a vote for selfishness, greed and caring only for self; rather, it was a quest for community at the traditional level--the local group. (Bush favored the Reagan approach. Obama has adopted the FDR and LBJ ideology.)

Kevin Phillips, also a conservative, sees it differently. In his Post Conservative America (Chapter 11, "The Balkanization of America"), he questions whether such small-is-beautiful can keep the nation from being torn apart by parochial interest groups pursuing their self-interests. He suggests that he breakdown of national community has caused Americans to turn to less exalting forms of self-identification such as ethnicity, regionalism, selfish economic interests, sects, and neighborhoods. The several causes of this trend include: Collapse of the "Manifest Destiny" ethos; the general failure of the Great Society; the failure of the "melting pot'; regional competition for economic and political power; racial, sex, and age "rights"; political balkanization; major elements of society pursuing their own narrow self-interests.

Phillips argues that progress and growth have always come from a movement away from the limited, the parochial, to the more general and universal. As a result of the forces toward balkanization in the U.S., he sees the widening of vertical and horizontal schisms in our society, potential social discord, and socioeconomic disillusionment of the lower class. He asks: Has America lost its élan vital and civitas? The quest for localism, neighborhood, family, and church has a nice sound, but seems romantic and sentimental. Small-but-beautiful may turn into small-is-divisive or even small-is-dangerous.

Who is more nearly correct? The future of the United States as a powerful nation may depend on the path we take. The dominant religious values in the United States seem to support a community of all mankind. The dominant secular economic, political, social and psychological values seem to support the philosophy individual responsibility. The latter appears to govern everyday behavior more than the former, notwithstanding entreaties from religious leaders. This poses both a moral, as well as a practical, question. Morally, are we obligated to ensure equity at the national level? From a pragmatic viewpoint, do we need it to survive as a strong nation?

Since World War II, patriotism and calls for self-sacrifice have largely centered on anti-communism and a strong military to meet the communist threat. In the absence of a "clear and present danger", we have not been too successful in mobilizing national will to solve our domestic problems. The crucial question is whether or not we can pull together and elicit the sacrifice to meet these challenges. And, can we do it without a sense of equity among the people?

As Phillips points out, balkanization is not new to U. S. society. The myth of the "melting pot' should not delude us; we are a heterogeneous society. The question is, does this present a problem for national cohesion, national will and national security? I believe it does. My assessment is that the challenges facing the U. S today, particularly in the economic area, will require significant sacrifices on the part of most Americans. Given our current balkanization and dominant societal values, the critical question is whether we will be able to elicit the necessary voluntary self-sacrifice. Many people agree with Schambra and argue that national cohesion is relevant only to national military action and foreign policy. Others argue that, while a sense of national community is necessary, and a perception of equity is a component of that, this cannot come from the national government.

My purpose in posing these questions is not to sway anyone's political philosophy; rather, it is to enhance understanding of the critical moral, and practical, issues involved in

domestic policy. This debate was at the heart of the struggle to adopt our constitution. It continues to define the central political divide in this country. What does the constitution say about it? It depends on who interprets it! You need to think this though as you make decisions about policy. Obama's Economic Agenda and opposing views will be discussed in the fourth session when we discuss the Economic Threat. The Republican leadership, the Tea Party, and other elements apparently seek to defeat the Obama agenda.

Morality and International Affairs.

If one accepts the concept of ethical codes described in the introduction to this session, to wit, they are rules of behavior designed to produce the greater good for all those who endorse a given code, what is in the best interests of the United States: 1) Going to war to prevent nations from developing the capability to attack us (this is *preventive war*. Going to war to prevent an imminent attack is *pre-emptive* war*)*? 2) Using torture to gain intelligence? 3) Using bombs and artillery to fight insurgents even though it involves killing innocent civilians? Do these actions violate our commit to international laws and in effect violate our honor? If so, are they justified from the standpoint that the benefits outweigh the costs?

One of the perennial debates in discussions of international relations and foreign policy relates to the role of morality. Should foreign policy officials consider the moral implications of what they do, or should they pursue the nation's interests without regard to the moral implications? Clearly, these are not either/or choices; rather, it is a matter of degree.

The "Realpolitik" school of foreign policy argues that national self-interest is the only consideration in formulating foreign policy. According to this theory of international relations, a nation has no permanent friends, or permanent enemies—only permanent interests. Some critics suggest that this is equivalent to an "amoral" approach to international relations. This overstates the case. Morality is taken into consideration by most "realists", but only to the extent it supports national interests. International institutions and their moral principles should be used when they support national interests, ignored when they do not. In other words, the use of international institutions, or willingness to abide by international law and moral rules, is a pragmatic matter and morality does not figure into the calculus *unless flouting morality undermines our national interests.* This is a key caveat*;* if moral legitimacy in the world is seen as important to achieving our national interests, it becomes a means to an end and thus important in our decision-making. Thus, "Realpolitik" does not necessarily equate to a "might makes right" approach to the conduct of international relations. Some in this philosophical grouping place a high premium on the value of maintaining the "moral high ground" as a practical matter. They tend to respect international institutions and rules of conduct endorsed by these institutions simply because it is in our national interest to do so.

Extreme proponents of this approach are not willing to give up any national sovereignty to international institutions, rules of behavior, or international law. This amounts to a policy of unilateralism except for temporary coalitions that last only as long as the coalitions are useful to support national interests. Advocates of this approach often consider themselves to be tough-minded realists as opposed to what they consider the tender-minded idealists who advocate an approach based on morality. They discount the value of having the "moral high ground" and emphasize it is more important to be feared than "loved." This is equivalent to the Machiavellian approach to domestic politics. While proponents of this approach do not reject the moral factor, it is more for appearance rather than substance, that is, they pay lip service to morality because of the utility value.

Others argue that enduring world order will come only when nations adhere to some common values and rules of conduct that settle differences in a peaceful manner. This, of course, requires that nations be willing to surrender some of their sovereignty to international institutions such as the United Nations, World Trade Organization, and the World Court. Most proponents of this approach do not insist that a nation surrender all its sovereignty or that it avoid all instances of unilateral action when the vital interests of the nation are at stake. Rather, the idea is that every effort should be made to strengthen moral conduct of nations, the rule of international institutions, and the rule of law. Moreover, the proponents of this approach argue that even if one adopts an amoral view, it is in the *national self interest* to be viewed as holding to moral principles. The extreme elements of this philosophical grouping are often viewed as naïve idealists who would sacrifice the interests of their nation to some abstract notion of "world community."

Most governments recognize the value of being viewed as moral in their policies and actions; rarely does a nation act with force without cloaking its action in moralistic terms. This is for the benefit of both the domestic audience as well as the international community. Such masking of national self-interest in the rhetoric of morality was certainly effective in Germany and Japan during WWII as well as the Allied nations. It is usually effective for domestic audiences when the government has an effective information/propaganda program, whether it is in a dictatorship or in a democracy such as the United States.

To base foreign policy on moral principles is quite different than going on a moral crusade to promote one's own version of what is good for the entire world. As Hans Morgenthau observed:

> **"Nations no longer oppose each other...within a framework of shared beliefs and common values, which imposes effective limitations on the needs and means of their struggle for power. They oppose each other now as the standard bearers of ethical systems, each of them of national origin and each of them claiming and aspiring to provide a supranational framework of moral standards which all the other nations ought to accept and within which their foreign policies ought to operate. The moral code of one nation flings the challenge of its universal claim with messianic fervor into the face of another, which reciprocates in kind. Compromise, the virtue of the old diplomacy, becomes the treason of the new; for the mutual accommodation of conflicting claims, possible or legitimate within a common framework of moral standards, amounts to surrender when the moral standards themselves are the stakes of the conflict. Thus the stage is set for a contest among nations whose stakes are no longer their relative positions within a political and moral system accepted by all, but the ability to impose upon the other contestants a new universal political and moral system recreated in the image of the victorious nation's political and moral convictions."** Politics Among Nations, New York, Knopf, 1978.

Neoconservative Foreign Policy.

The "Neoconservative" movement seems to fall into the category of "moralists" who claim they have an answer to the world's problems. Under the guise of "Wilsonian Idealism," they advocate an aggressive foreign policy of "spreading democracy" throughout the world, even through the barrel of a gun. One of the intellectual gurus of this philosophy, Francis Fukuyama,

titled an essay "The End of History," claiming that the debate over the final answer to the best political and economic institutions was over—liberal democracy and free markets were the final solution. The Neoconservatives hold that belief with metaphysical certitude. The Bush 2002 National Security Strategy was based on this philosophy; thus, we embarked on a "Pax Americana" policy of remaking the world in our ideological image. The first area chosen to implement this strategy was the Middle East and Iraq was seen as the fertile ground to launch this policy.

Added to this moralistic crusade in the Bush strategy was the notion that we could ignore the rest of the world and execute the strategy unilaterally. International institutions would be used when they agreed with our strategy, ignored when they disagreed. This brand of "idealism" rejected the pragmatists' approach to foreign policy in the Middle East. Although many of the neocon architects of the Bush National Security Strategy (2002 and 2006 versions) jumped ship (notably Francis Fukuyama) after the Iraq invasion, the administration still clung to that strategy.

There is a stark moral difference between the Bush approach to foreign policy and a genuine attempt to create moral order in the world. The Bush approach reflected a self-righteous, moralistic crusade to impose our values on the world, as described in the Morgenthau quote cited above. In essence, the Bush policy was a repudiation of international morality as expressed by the international community. The Reagan administration took several steps in that direction, but the Bush administration went much further, to include repudiation of the Geneva accords regarding torture. The disdain for international institutions in this go-it-alone strategy alienated much of the world and convinced much of the world community that the United States is a threat to world peace. As it applied to Iraq, Joseph Nye said this was not "idealism," but "illusionism." Brent Scowcroft described it as a "pipedream."

Working toward genuine international moral order based on shared values requires a great deal of patience. It is difficult to achieve universal agreement on other than abstract values and rules that lend themselves to a wide variety of interpretations. The effectiveness of these moral concepts depends to a large measure on the voluntary response to world opinion, usually expressed through the international institutions involved. Few of these institutions have the ability to enforce their judgments. In the case of the U.N., the Security Council must approve the use of force to enforce decisions. Each of the permanent members has veto authority. When one of these five permanent members vetoes a resolution passed overwhelmingly by the fifteen-member body, it implies a rejection of moral consensus by the member casting the veto. Used sparingly when one's vital interests are involved is understandable; flagrant use of the veto reflects disdain for multilateral approaches to world order based on a moral consensus. In effect, it says to the world that a country will abide by consensus only when it is in its interest to do so. This of necessity weakens the legitimacy of the UN and international law.

One can make the case that it is in the long-term interest of all nations—even the powerful—to build world order based on moral consensus. In the short term, a nation may serve its national interests by ignoring the moral dimension of foreign policy. This builds resentment among other nations, however, and promotes retaliation by coalitions that can retaliate. In the long term, this can destroy the effectiveness of the moral dimension of world order and lead to reliance on "might makes right". History shows that no nation stays on top forever. The time to strengthen international moral order is when one is on top. Henry Kissinger comments at the end of his book, Does America Need a Foreign Policy: "America's ultimate challenge is to transfer its power into a moral consensus, promoting its values not by imposition, but by their willing acceptance."

It is quite natural for people to believe their values are the true values for the entire world and to judge others negatively when they reject those values. This reaches the most intense level when those values are religious beliefs, but this tendency applies also to secular values. The problem comes when nations try to impose their values on others. In his classic article "Morality in Foreign Policy", Foreign Affairs, 1985, George Kennan warned the United States against demanding that the world adopt our version of democracy and economic systems as we understand them. These values are not necessarily the future of all mankind, he said, nor is it the duty of the United States to assure that they become that. He warns against:

> **"…what might be called the histrionics of moralism at the expense of its substance. By that is meant the projection of attitudes, poses, and rhetoric that cause us to appear noble and altruistic in the mirror of our own vanity, but lack substance when related to the realities of international life."**

Kennan goes on to say that where the United States has real interests in intervening in the internal affairs of another country, actions—and the reasons therefore—"should be carried forward frankly for what they are, and not allowed to masquerade under the mantle of moral principle."

How far a nation goes in considering morality in the conduct of foreign affairs is a difficult boundary to draw, especially in the area of economics. All moral theories include some concept of distributive justice, which includes the distribution of economic benefits. How far does a wealthy nation such as the United States go in sharing its wealth with less fortunate countries? In addition to foreign aid, trade policies affect the distribution of wealth. There is little consensus on what is just and unjust in these matters. Some argue that the duty of government is to meet the needs of its citizens without regard for the fate of others. Here again, one need not chose all or nothing in considering the moral dimension. Most would agree that the "Marshall Plan" at the end of WWII was not only a moral thing to do, but that it was a practical policy that was in the long-term interest of the United States. Currently, the U.S. ranks at the bottom of industrial nations in the percentage of its GDP that goes to foreign aid. And even that small amount goes largely to two recipients—chosen for their strategic importance rather than on economic need. Other issues, such as global warming and pollution, are more controversial.

The fact that nations and other groups attempt to mask their actions in moral righteousness indicates recognition of the importance of being perceived as basing one's action on moral principles. Undoubtedly, many leaders sincerely believe they have the moral high ground; too often, however, this is no more than a ploy to rally faithful followers to a cause since citizens need to believe they are supporting a just and moral effort. In a rare moment of candor at a press conference in 1990, Secretary of State James Baker said we were preparing for the Gulf War to protect our access to oil. The outcry caused the administration to focus on demonizing Saddam Hussein as another Hitler. Interest in oil was not cited thereafter as a principal motive; rather, it became a moral crusade—and it worked. Some argue the ploy worked too well—when Saddam Hussein was not deposed, President Bush's approval ratings dropped precipitously.

Many viewed the Bush National Security Policy as, in essence, a policy of *Pax Americana* justified by our dominant military and economic power and the moral belief that our value system represents "the end of history". We are morally justified in imposing our political, economic, and social systems on the rest of the world because we believe these values are best

for the entire world. We have also endorsed assassination of heads of State and preemptive strikes against suspected threats. These have important consequences for international law.

We will discuss the Obama approach to foreign policy in session six. As we will see, although it also emphasizes Wilsonian Idealism, it seeks to work through international institutions. This is in sharp contrast to the Bush policy, which often declared we would "go it alone."

Terrorism[1].

Terrorism presents a special moral problem, whether it is domestic or international in scope. The first hurdle is coming to a consensus on a definition of terrorism. In the most general sense, terrorism can be defined as the use of violence against a target when the intended effect is the psychological impact on a wider audience in order to achieve political goals. Some limit the definition to apply only when the specific target is noncombatant civilians. In the past, different agencies of the U.S. have used approximations of this definition. If one accepts this definition, the carpet-bombing of cities in WWII, by both sides, can be classified as terrorist acts. The use of atomic bombs on Japan was, in fact, deliberately designed to terrorize the Japanese into surrendering and it worked President Truman's diary and the planning minutes attest to this purpose. All participants in WWII used such measures. They were routinely morally justified as avoiding greater violence. Thus, the atomic attacks avoided the costly invasion of Japan, which most analysts agree would have resulted in millions of deaths, both civilian and military.

This rationale may in fact suffice as a moral justification of the acts, but it does so by arguing that the ends justify the means. Some ethicists reject the notion that ends can justify means when the act in itself is immoral. This is not universal, however, and experience shows that most people often justify acts that are immoral per se, but where the consequences of the act can justify it. Thus it becomes a calculus that weighs the pros and cons if the consequences can be shown to further a "just cause". Those who bomb abortion clinics and/or kill doctors who perform abortions, as well as those who justify the use of weapons of mass destruction, follow this reasoning.

Terrorism is the force of choice for domestic dissidents and the militarily weak in international affairs because it gives them an asymmetrical advantage, especially if they cannot be readily identified. Non-government groups conduct much of international terrorism such as the 9-11 acts. While they may have the support of governments, these connections are difficult to prove. This limits the counter-terrorist efforts because over reaction against broad targets can generate more hostility and lose moral legitimacy for the counter terrorism effort.

If a belligerent wishes to brand acts of terrorism against it as immoral, it must find a definition that distinguishes the type of terrorism used by it and its allies from that of its

[1] The following discussion is designed for those who wish to be analytical in their approach to the subject of terrorism. In the current environment created by the 9-11 tragedies, it is difficult for any American, including this author, to contain emotional hostility toward any suggestion that the acts could be defended on moral grounds. Some of the following, if publicly stated, would be considered by some as unpatriotic at best and probably traitorous. I will state categorically that I would volunteer on a suicide mission to kill Osama bin Laden, so you may know where my sentiments lie. But this kind of emotional response will not serve us well in the long run and may indeed keep us from solving the real problem. Any honest academic endeavor, however, must strive to be analytical and set emotions aside. I ask the reader to do that as far as possible. Much of my language criticizing U.S. policy is derived from non-U.S. media, statements of foreign leaders, and experience in the Middle East, where I taught a one-week ethics course in late 2001 to 21 senior officers of the Omani Air Force.

adversaries. In the case of the current "war against terrorism", declared by President Bush, this presents problems. It is useful to rally the American people by stating the effort in moralistic terms of good versus evil and rejecting any suggestion that the terrorism is any way related to U.S. behavior. Another way to isolate the Islamic terrorists is to define terrorism to exclude actions of nations or their military. Recent definitions by U.S. Government Agencies in fact offer such definitions, restricting the label to non-nation activity. This restricted definition, of course, denies legitimacy to the primary means of violence available to the weak and takes away the reciprocal advantage. This word-smithing may appeal to the militarily powerful, but non-nation terrorist groups may argue that the ends justify the means if their terrorist acts result in a change in U.S. policies that they label as unjust. Moreover, they may argue, those U.S. policies involve a form of economic and military terrorism—economic against Iraq, Cuba, etc. and militarily against the Palestinians, Nicaragua, etc. It all depends on whose ox is being gored; one person's terrorist is another's freedom fighter. Each side is convinced of its moral high ground. It then becomes a contest for convincing the rest of the world that your version is the valid definition.

Summary:

The jury is still out on how successful the current foreign policy of the United States will be in its fight against terrorism and its vision of world order. While the initial response to the 9-11 terrorist acts was overwhelmingly in favor of condemning those directly involved in the attacks, talk of expanding the war to include action against all "terrorism"—and adopting the policy of "preventive wars"—are receiving less than universal support.

Most polls show that the American public believes the policies of our nation are based on the highest moral principles. The common perception is that we "have the moral high ground" in the conduct of our international relations. Surveys reveal that much of the rest of the world sees it differently. Even in the case of our response to terrorism, much of the world rejects our public explanation that the terrorists base their action on hatred solely because we "are free and democratic." Although our government attempts to disconnect terrorism from our policies, much of the world insists that the two are linked.

The most common policies that draw linkages to terrorism, especially in the eyes of the Mid East and Muslim communities, are the quest for cheap oil and unwavering support of Israel. (The Long Commission report, which investigated the terrorist attacks on American Embassies and the USS Cole, warned against divorcing these attacks from the Israeli-Palestinian conflict). Other sacred cows of America's value system that underlie our foreign policy include the export of "market economies" and "liberal democracy" (see Kennan's comments above). Many parts of the world see these policies as the exercise of raw power when economic, political, and military power are used to impose these beliefs on others as if they are prerequisites for "freedom and human rights" and legitimacy.

Whether or not criticism of these policies is valid is arguable, but perception is reality from a moral standpoint. World order based on morality requires shared values and beliefs about what is good and bad behavior. There are necessary compromises and this means surrendering some sovereignty in the process. Charters of international institutions such as the United Nations and World Trade Organization usually contain abstract values as the basis for moral order. When nations flout the rules of behavior in these charters, moral order is weakened.

In the final analysis, there is considerable evidence that almost all nations at one time or another use violence against civilians to terrorize a wider audience to achieve political goals if it suits their interests. If a nation adopts the "Realpolitik" approach to foreign policy, it need not

attempt to justify its actions morally, but it must be prepared to face the moral condemnation of the international community. Most terrorists dress their actions in moral clothes, arguing that theirs is a just cause and that the ends justify the means. The victims attempt to strip the terrorists of any moral authority for their acts and cast the battle as good versus evil. Adversaries usually invoke the support of their particular God to buttress their moral legitimacy to conduct war, whether it is conventional or terrorism, as is the case with both Al Qaeda and the United States.

Note. The comments on torture are my personal views on this subject. I was a member of the "Campaign to Ban Torture" that urged Obama to ban torture. The group was co-chaired by two retired USMC generals, one a former Commandant of the Corps. As the reader will conclude, I believe it is in our national interests to occupy the "moral high ground" in the war against terrorism. I believe it is basically a war of ideas, not a war to be one by military force. That war of ideas will be won by the side that is perceived to have the moral high ground. An essential condition to defeat terrorists is to isolate them from the people who provide recruits, intelligence, and other types of support. **To get rid of alligators, you have to drain the swamp.**