

## 'Ethics and war' speech misses the main point – moral justification

If The Daily News' report of his speech was correct, professor Porter Halyburton of the Naval War College said the questions to be answered before conducting an "ethical" war include:

- ◆ What are the goals to be achieved?
- ◆ How long will it take?
- ◆ How do we know when we have won?
- ◆ How will peace be restored?
- ◆ What are the consequences of failure?

I don't see anything particularly ethical about this list. Adolph Hitler could have

checked off every one of these requirements and then invaded the countries surrounding Germany with a clear conscience. Professor Halyburton is confusing the "ethics of war" with the "expediency of war."

The most important omission from this list is a requirement of moral justification before going to war.

Under classical "just war" thinking, the first requirement for war is that the cause be just; for example, to defend one's country against attack. Other requirements

include the proportionality of the response to aggression, maximum protection for civilians and other noncombatants, and war as the last resort — after all attempts at diplomacy have failed.

Requiring a moral justification for war would render unethical a war of aggression, a war to seize control of another country's oil, or a war waged on a pretext, such as to prevent the use of nonexistent weapons of mass destruction.

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