

Morality of Nation-States

Walzer, chapter 4

Crime of Aggression

- Aggression is only a crime if nation-states have moral standing.
- If we could invade *and improve* nation x, why might it still be wrong?
- Nations have two main rights: political sovereignty and territorial integrity.
- These are ultimately rights of *individual persons*. Why? What rights?

“Common Life”

- “The moral standing of any particular state depends upon the reality of the common life it protects...” (p. 54)
- “If no common life exists [or state doesn’t defend it]..., its own defense may have no moral justification.”
- What is “common life” of America?
 - Are French-speakers part of Canadian “common life”?
 - Are Palestinians part of Israeli common life?
 - Are Christians part of Iran’s common life?
 - Does Serbia’s common life include Albanian Muslims? Would Kosovo’s include Serbs?
 - Are Kurds (non-Arabs) part of Iraq’s common life?
- What about minorities?

Land

- Why do states have a right of “territorial integrity”? (Walzer: *not* “property ownership”)
- “The land follows the people”
- Agree with Sidgwick (p. 56): an original conquest may acquire a moral basis?
 - “any attempt to recover [lost land] aggression
 - US? Israel? Australia? New Zealand? Old Soviet control over Baltics, Poland, etc.?
 - Mubarak Awad quote. Original sins.

How to Resolve Land Disputes

- Conquest of empty land not aggression
- What if land thinly populated?
- Hobbes: okay for conquerers to constrain natives to “inhabit closer together” as long as they are not killed
- Walzer: their common life cannot be destroyed either (p. 57)

Legalist Paradigm / Domestic Analogy

- Parallel of states to individuals
- Aggression a crime, but no international police: “police powers distributed among all...the rights of the state must be vindicated.” (p. 59)
- Just war: repel and punish aggressor.
- Walzer footnote p. 59: ignoring nonviolent resistance (pacifism). OK or flaw?
- Walzer rejects “sea slug” analogy. Nations are not inevitably predators. *Moral CHOICE*.

Six Principles

1. There exists international society of states
2. Each state has right of territorial integrity and political sovereignty (rooted in rights of persons)
3. Aggression a criminal act
4. Aggression justifies self-defense by victim *or others who come to aid*
5. Only justification for war is aggression (to be modified)
6. Aggressor can also be *punished*
 - Why punish?
 - Who can be punished?

Apply to action against Iraq after its invasion of Kuwait

Extent of Domestic Analogy

- End of chapter: “an intellectual tool
- Needed revisions to come in future chapters
- Basic moral principle holds: “we want to live in an international society where communities of men and women *freely* shape their *separate* destinies”
[p. 72; my emphasis]

Response to Objections

- Bismarck: mistake to think of acts of state analogous to civil society
- Marx denies rights of states but then appeals to them

Appeasement

- Might there be a duty to seek peace at the expense of justice unless “surrender once and for all to the rule of violence”?
- What accommodation should be made to brute power (e.g., for Palestinians today)?
- Why does Walzer praise Finnish resistance