

Book Review of *Just War Against Terror: The Burden of American Power in a Violent World*, Jean Bethke Elshtain, New York: Basic Books, 2003, 240 pp.

By Wayne Northey

The book is a compelling *apologia* and call for America to be the police force for the world.

The Author and Book

Jean Bethke Elshtain has published or edited about twenty books, several of which have won prestigious awards. She has also written over 400 scholarly articles and nearly 200 book reviews. She is Professor of Social and Political Ethics at the University of Chicago. She is also considered “one of the country’s [America’s] leading public intellectuals (back cover)”, and works consciously from a committed Christian perspective. When she writes on any topic, it is obviously the reader’s loss not to pay close attention.

This book is no exception to that sage awareness. The book has an Introduction, an Epilogue, an Appendix, “What We’re Fighting For: A Letter From America” (issued by 60 American academics and intellectuals, February 12, 2002), of which she was a principal author, and twelve chapters. The prose throughout is lucid and highly readable. The command of a vast array of sources appears effortless. The arguments, within the organizing assumptions, are persuasive.

The White Man’s Burden

Elshtain quotes Hannah Arendt’s repeated warning that “Politics is Not the Nursery.” She dismisses the to her naïve *mea culpas* of American intellectuals who would see moral equivalency between the US and bin Laden as fundamentally flawed: bin Laden and Islamicists purposely kill innocent civilians; America does not. The moral gulf is absolute. And no amount of political change will satisfy the extremists out to destroy America: for America will not ultimately give up commitment to personal freedom.

America cannot *not* fight, catapulted into that world stage responsibility ever since World War II. “With our great power comes an even greater responsibility (p. 6).”, she declares, evoking the “white man’s burden” that British poet Rudyard Kipling thought so imperative in an 1899 poem by that title, in response to the Spanish-American War. She writes: “The burden of the argument in the pages to follow is that we must and will fight – not in order to conquer any countries or to destroy peoples or religions, but to defend who we are and what we, at our best, represent... Moreover, international civic peace vitally depends on America’s ability to stay true to its own principles, for without American power and resolve, the international civic stability necessary to forestall the spread of terrorism can be neither attained nor sustained (pp. 6 & 7).” She personalizes her reasons for writing as well, in part, she indicates, “because I have grandchildren who deserve to grow up in a world of civic peace ... (p. 7).” She argues for Kipling’s “savage wars of peace” to make the world safe for... what? We shall return to this.

Tami Biddle wrote that when aerial warfare was still only imagined in the 19th century, it meant “English-speaking peoples raining incendiary bombs over the enemy *to impose the customs of civilization* (Biddle, 2002, italics added; page number lacking).”¹ The white man’s (at least the West’s) noble burden indeed.

“*Only the Facts, Ma’am*”

Elshtain’s book is grounded in the horror of September 11, 2001, which “provided the historical, political, and rhetorical occasion for the writing of my book,” she explains in response to a robust critique of the book’s thesis (Hauerwas and Griffiths, 2003). In devoting the first chapter to this “unspeakable horror” (the words of Pope John II), she insists on getting the facts straight about the events and meaning of the attacks that day. “If we get our description of events wrong, our analyses and our ethics will be wrong too. The words we use and our evaluations of events are imbedded with important moral principles (p. 9).” She is adamant that September 11 is utterly reprehensible because the violence of it was totally aimed at noncombatants. “The terrorist commits himself to violence *without limits* (p. 23).”

She acknowledges in Chapter 4 that “There is widespread agreement – not unanimity – among just war thinkers that America’s use of atomic bombs in the Pacific theatre in the waning days of World War II did not pass muster under the so-called *in bello* criteria that are central to just war tradition. How so? Because such weaponry by definition violated the most fundamental of all *in bello* requirements: noncombatant immunity (p. 62).” She continues: “There is less agreement on whether Allied saturation bombing of German cities during World War II must be similarly criticized, if not condemned outright... I am critical of the bombing campaign (p. 62).” She references her book, *Women and War* (1987), and lauds just war theorists for their openness, as indicated above, to debate what constitutes just war.

One notes three absences “imbedded” in this factual “description of events”: no mention is made in her reference to “use of atomic bombs” that it occasioned 120,000 instant noncombatant deaths, about 100,000 more subsequently, besides other casualties, from two bombs dropped by America August 6 and August 9, 1945. No mention is made of how many cities were “carpet bombed” in Germany (42), or how many casualties (estimated at 460,000 civilian deaths, up to a million casualties). And no mention at all is made of saturation bombing in Japan of 67 cities. The most famous incident was March 9, 1945, when 15 square miles of Tokyo were burned to the ground, and 185,000 casualties were sustained, 100,000 of them fatalities, *all civilians*. In the nine subsequent months of Japanese saturation and atomic bombing, there were approximately 806,000 civilian casualties, 330,000 of them fatalities. These exceeded Japanese combatant casualties, estimated at 780,000 during the entire war. Howard Zinn in commenting on the atomic bombs said: “What means could be more horrible than the burning, mutilation, blinding, irradiation of hundreds of thousands of Japanese men, women, children? And

¹ In Luke 9:55, Jesus’ disciples wanted to rain fire down upon a Samaritan village, and Jesus “rebuked them”. So ever is the Way of Jesus. Willard Swartley comments: “Rather than eradicating the enemy, as was the goal of Joshua’s conquest narrative in the earlier story – in a similar location [Samaria] – the new strategy eradicates the enmity... Instead of killing people to get rid of idolatry, the attack through the gospel is upon Satan directly (Luke 10). Instead of razing high places, Satan is toppled from his throne! [Note 48 reads: “Hence the root of idolatry is pucked from its source...] (Swartly, 2006, p. 144)”

yet it is absolutely essential for our political leaders to defend the bombing because if Americans can be induced to accept that, then they can accept any war, any means, so long as the warmakers can supply a reason (Zinn, 2000).”

While Elshtain to her credit does disapprove of this American story of unmitigated terror, it is scarcely so in passing and utterly lacking in “getting the facts straight” (no facts are given at all in this book). September 11 numerically pales to near insignificance before the sheer volume of victims from Allied World War II bombings.

One wonders at the imbedded ideology enabling such a superficial gloss of “the facts.” Especially when General Curtis LeMay, placed in charge of the Japanese bombing campaign in the final months of the war, openly bragged: “We scorched and boiled and baked to death more people in Tokyo on that night of March 9-10 than went up in vapor at Hiroshima and Nagasaki combined (Shalom, 2004).” This is not unlike Martin Luther’s instructions in the early 16th century to the German nobility to “smite, slay, and kill” all the peasants possible during the Peasants’ Revolt, nor the papal legate Arnaud Amaury’s instructions in the early 13th century, who helped to lead the crusade against the Cathars: “Kill them all, God will know his own” at the massacre of 20,000 villagers at Béziers in southern France. And not unlike Osama bin Laden who “commits himself to violence *without limits* (p. 23).” Her assertion is just: “America’s war against terrorism would collapse into a horror were we to fail to distinguish between combatants and noncombatants in our response (p. 20).” One feels compelled to ask: But didn’t America’s *entrée* onto the world stage as super policeman “collapse into a horror” over the 1945 skies of Japan – by Elshtain’s own standards?! And just war theorists calling this less than a totally reprehensible and “unspeakable horror” (like Holocaust deniers) is okay, perhaps praiseworthy? When has America ever repented of this unmitigated terror?²

One soon begins to suspect that Elshtain’s book “is nothing more than an uncritical justification of the ideology of America as empire. It is itself a deeply ideological work rather than one of careful and critical thought (Hauerwas and Griffiths, 2003).” This despite her counter in the same website to their charge of ideology: “Just war restraint and indiscriminate slaughter belong to different moral and political universes.” One must agree. Only, America in World War II and Al Qaeda terrorists today *clearly inhabit the same (a)moral universe*. Yet all she can muster with reference to the “indiscriminate slaughter” of German and Japanese civilians is a bland, “I am critical of the bombing campaign (p. 62).” That’s all?! That’s it?! Even then, she immediately references with muted disapproval, if not implied acceptance, Michael Walzer who justifies the end (winning the war) despite gargantuan violation of immunity of noncombatants as means³.

² James Berardinelli in a review of Errol Morris’ 2004 film, *The Fog of War*, writes: “Long before McNamara became president of Ford motor company or entered the public spotlight, he served in World War II under the unrelenting command of General Curtis LeMay, the commander of the 20th Air Force. In 1945, LeMay was in charge of a massive firebombing offensive in Japan that resulted in the deaths of nearly 1 million Japanese citizens, including 100,000 in Tokyo during a single night. LeMay’s B-29 bombers raked 67 Japanese cities, sometimes killing more than 50% of the population. McNamara points out that, had the United States lost the war, he and LeMay would have been tried as war criminals. But, of course, it’s the victors who write the rules and determine what is justified. Nevertheless, it’s clear that McNamara has wrestled with this issue for decades. (Berardinelli, 2003).” As Elshtain has not!

³ The Chief of staff for Presidents Roosevelt and Truman wrote of the atomic bombs dropped: “It is my opinion that *the use of this barbarous weapon at Hiroshima and Nagasaki* was of no material assistance in

One wonders: Why would America do any differently today (or anytime since World War II), without national repentance for and total rejection of its World War II “unspeakable horror”, and without commitment to “never again”? Would a Parole Board ever release a criminal who never admits guilt, is a repeat offender, and shows no hint of dedication to changed ways? When has repentance ever been demanded and demonstrated at the State level? Has Elshtain, in all her voluminous political writings ever called for it? One has no reason to doubt that, despite Elshtain’s assertions, “violence *without limits*” (empirically) since World War II (arguably throughout its history) has been practised by America as well. I shall return to this.

*All Human Beings Are Created Equal – and Some (Americans) More So Than Others...*⁴

Chapter 2 claims, “The first American foundational principle is moral equality... (pp. 26 & 27).” “In the West it has long been a basic view, at least since the inception of Christianity, that *all human beings* are created in God’s image and possess thereby a dignity that states do not confer and *that states cannot withdraw* (p. 27, italics added).” In light of the above quote, in just war theory, one wonders what is Elshtain’s semantic range of “*all human beings*”? Combatants are obviously exempt; what about (how many) noncombatants? Elshtain writes, “Although civilian casualties should be avoided if at all possible, they occur in every war... The question of ‘collateral damage’ should never be taken lightly (p. 66).” Taken lightly or not is ultimately moot, for aerial warfare practised by America and the West in World War II and since ineluctably eventuates in significant civilian casualties, some claim 80 to 90%.

In *Watership Down* (Adams, 2001), Richard Adams tells the story of a rabbit warren seeking asylum. In its quest, it discovers a warren where everything seems ideal: that is until the awful truth emerges that the nearby farmer who created these “ideal” conditions captures and slaughters at will rabbits for delicious stews. The questing warren recoils in horror and moves on. Aerial warfare like drunk driving by definition claims innocent victims. Death of civilians is war’s inevitable horror. Elshtain’s flaccid, almost nonchalant acknowledgement, “they always occur in every war” is inexcusable. “Ain’t goin’ to study war no more” is the only moral response.

By analogy, “unintentionality” with relation to specific individual victims is no defence for drunk driving. Yet it is lawful in aerial warfare? It is a moral conceit that because

our war against Japan. The Japanese were already defeated and ready to surrender because of the effective sea blockade and the successful bombing with conventional weapons.

“The lethal possibilities of atomic warfare in the future are frightening. My own feeling was that in being the first to use it, *we had adopted an ethical standard common to the barbarians of the Dark Ages*. I was not taught to make war in that fashion, and wars cannot be won by destroying women and children (Leahy, 1950, p. 441, italics added). Leahy begs the question: when has war been other than “in that fashion”, one that invariably is “barbarous”, all just war theory notwithstanding? “War is hell”, observed Civil War General William Tecumseh Sherman. Just war theory claims: “War is peace”.

⁴ David Cole, a professor of law at Georgetown University, writes: “The Bill of Rights, however, does not distinguish between citizens and noncitizens. It extends its protections in universal language, to ‘persons,’ ‘people’ or ‘the accused.’ The framers considered these rights to be God-given natural rights, and God didn’t give them only to persons holding American passports (Cole, 2004).”

premeditated killing of *specific* innocent victims (“*John and Jane Doe*”) is not in question, *though assured!*, there is ethical exemption for aerial bombing, hence absence of terror. This is ethical sleight of hand that is no comfort to war’s victims and their loved ones. “A rose by any other name...” To quibble, as does Elshtain, over claims (according to her, made by those opposing war, “inflated”, urged by those supporting, “accurate”) of *numbers* of civilian deaths is casuistry.

When War is Just... or When is War Just... Wrong?

Chapter 3 considers “What is a just war?” Elshtain rejects pacifism as of limited effectiveness “in a world of conflicting human wills, one in which the ruthless would prevail if they faced neither restraint nor the prospect of punishment (p. 56).” She also rejects *realpolitik* ethically cut off from resort to violence. “For pacifists the reigning word is *peace*. For realists, the reigning word is *power*. For just war thinkers, the reigning word is *justice* (p. 56).” Chapter 4 continues with the question, “Is the war Against Terrorism Just?” Debates, she notes, about what is or is not “just” are “certainly foreclosed by the arguments of pacifism as well as by those of *realpolitik* (pp. 62 & 63).” One can imagine a similar argument by defence counsel: “For teetotalers, the reigning word is *abstinence*. For addicts, the reigning word is *indulgence*. For drunk drivers, the reigning word is *moderation*.” Innocent victims die regardless, in each of the latter two categories, but (unconscionably!) that is the price to pay for drunk drivers to continue driving.

Nonetheless, Elshtain (astoundingly) argues, “No institution in America pays more attention to ethical restraint on the use of force than does the U.S. military (p. 67).” Retired (American) Lt. Col. David Grossman also indicates that no institution in America pays more attention to brutalization and desensitization of its recruits than the modern U.S. military: “This brutalization is designed to break down your existing mores and norms and to accept a new set of values that embrace destruction, violence, and death as a way of life. In the end, you are desensitized to violence and accept it as a normal and essential survival skill in your brutal new world (Grossman, no date)”⁵. This trained brutalization is not unlike how child soldiers become cold killing machines. Killing of civilians is killing innocent civilians, cold comfort of “ethical restraint” notwithstanding.

Elshtain also says: “What the terrorists are planning, if they can acquire effective biological, chemical, and nuclear weapons, are attacks on civilians. What we are planning is to interdict their plans: to stop them without resorting to their methods (p. 67).” Yet the U.S. is many times over the greatest developer and supplier of conventional, biological, and chemical weapons in the world today (including to Iraq to fight the Iranians)! It is so far the only country to have used nuclear weapons in deliberate “attacks on civilians”! And it has never repented of that use. Further, under the current Bush doctrine, as under President Truman, there is commitment to pre-emptive use of nuclear weapons. Elshtain never mentions this. There is similar repeated, painful lack of “reality check” at work throughout her book. Does she really *only* inhabit an academic Ivory Tower, one wonders?

⁵ See also his website on “killology”, <http://www.killology.com>.

She claims, “The United States must do everything it can to minimize civilian deaths – and it is doing so (p. 69).” There is only one thing a drunk driver can do to guarantee cessation of all road kill: *stay off the road*. One need only superficially read a book like American freelance journalist William Blum’s *Killing Hope* (1998), and discredit 90% of the claims therein, or peruse his more recent publication, *Rogue State* (2000), with similar scepticism, to arrive at a chilling contrary view of American global intervention. Or one need only read American political science scholar Chalmers Johnson’s *Blowback* (2000) and his newly published *The Sorrows of Empire* (2004), and again dismiss most of the (in all cases meticulously researched and documented) material, to understand America in dramatically different terms. Johnson’s final words in the book are elegant rebuttal of Elshstain’s incredible belief in American righteousness: “Nemesis, the goddess of retribution and vengeance, the punisher of pride and hubris, waits impatiently for her meeting with us (p. 312).”

Exactly a year before Martin Luther King was murdered, he said: “[T]he greatest purveyor of violence in the world today [is] my own country (King, 1967).” On another occasion he asked: “Why has our nation placed itself in the position of being God’s military agent on earth...? Why have we substituted the arrogant undertaking of policing the whole world for the high task of putting our own house in order? (King, no date).” William Pepper, reflecting King’s understanding, writes: “*America has clearly emerged as the greatest purveyor of state terrorism on the planet* (Pepper, 2003, p. 269, italics added)⁶.

Chapter 5 critiques the “Academy” for its criticisms of the war against terror: that there was a mad rush to war; that America (or the West) created Osama bin Laden, etc.

Chapter 7 hails the contribution to just war thinking of two towering theologians: Reinhold Niebuhr and Paul Tillich. Chapter 8 continues a religious analysis with four “characteristics of the weak arguments and strong rhetoric I discern emanating from the communities of the religious: a radical oversimplification of the issues involved in the attacks of September 11 and in the U.S. response; a tendency to traffic in utopianism and sentimentality concerning politics; easy criticism, if not condemnation, of America and her leaders; and the loss or distortion of central theological categories (p. 113).” She says as well: “In the voice of terrorism and the radical Islamist advocacy of hatred and destruction, we see the face of nihilism, hear the voice of resentment, and are confronted by the celebration of death...” And further: “There are times when [the] call to life requires action against those claimed by death (p. 124).”

The above is to be juxtaposed with the theological analysis of terrorism and counterterrorism in *The War on Terrorism and the Terror of God*: “What would this mean if it were true that we love God only as much as the person we love least? Would it not mean that, when we have finally won the victory in our war on terrorism, when we have finally managed to exterminate all the thugs and Hitlers and terrorists, we will have expressed nothing so much as our total confidence in the death of God? (Griffith, 2002, p. 263)” Griffith’s theological analysis is the sustained thesis that “the biblical concept of

⁶ Pepper, a lawyer, claims in the book just cited that King was executed by the US government, to silence his opposition to the Vietnam War and leadership in an emerging “Poor People’s Campaign”.

‘the terror of God’ stands as a renunciation of all violence – and of death itself (inside front jacket cover).”

Almost “Just Peacemaking”!

In Chapter 9, “The Problem of Peace”, is presented Elshtain’s *de facto* nihilistic *realpolitik*, namely, that despite all the utopian visions of peace and *shalom* in the world, “.. the fact [is] that over the long course of humankind’s bloody history nothing remotely approximating this vision has ever been attained (p. 127).” What an astounding (deliberate?) ignorance of history, culture, and of the biblical idea of *eschaton*⁷! And so, “The vast majority of Christians reserve a vision of perfect peace for the end of history (p. 129).” The vast majority of said Christians contend as does Elshtain that “war is peace” in Orwellian doublespeak.

There is at this point fascinating discussion about “justice”, including “restorative justice”, where Elshtain acknowledges that even the murderer may not need execution in turn, but may be dealt with according to “several ‘just’ options (p. 130).” She comments rightly⁸: “As a way to honor the cause of both justice and mercy, political restorative justice is shaped significantly by Christianity. The goal is civic peace marked by justice (p. 130).” This is America’s goal too in its war against terror! And for a moment she seems to “get it!”⁹

Political restorative justice can be realized *within* not just *beyond* history. She nowhere cites Desmond Tutu’s *No Future Without Forgiveness* (Tutu, 1999), but this is the burden of his description of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission he headed up: *political restorative justice can be and was practised within the real world of political life here and now!* The spirit of that political realization is captured in Saint Paul’s provocative political statement: “Love does no harm to its neighbor. Therefore love is the fulfillment of the law (Romans 13:10).” Love is also the embodiment of restorative justice and realizable “just peacemaking”, as Glen Stassen calls Jesus’ third way in the Sermon on the Mount, and others argue for, rejecting both quiescent pacifism and just war¹⁰. This is also part of the Hippocratic oath: “Do no harm.”

⁷ Templeton Prize in religion winner (2004) theoretical cosmologist George F. R. Ellis co-authored with theologian Nancey Murphy (Ellis and Murphy, 1996) an inquiry into ‘the moral nature of the universe’ by a similar title, in which they argue that a “particular moral vision – a ‘kenotic’ ethic – is supported ‘from below’ by the social sciences and ‘from above’ by theology. Contemporary cosmology, they argue, points ultimately to an ethic that centers on self-sacrifice and nonviolence (back cover).” This is consonant argues Stanley Hauerwas in *The 2001 Gifford Lectures*, borrowing an expression from John Howard Yoder, “with the grain of the universe” (Hauerwas, 2001). It is presented highly imaginatively in Alison (1996) as “recovery of the eschatological imagination”, whose work as well interprets theologically that of René Girard, possibly the foremost living theorist on the origins of human violence. (See Bellinger, 2001). It is given ‘systematically’ in McClendon, Jr. (1986) as the true starting point of systematic theology.

⁸ See for starters, Christopher D. Marshall (2001).

⁹ But do not hold your breath. How one wishes Ms. Elshtain could be recruited to champion restorative justice the world over!

¹⁰ See Glen Stassen, (1992 and 1998); Duane Friesen (1986); Donald Shriver (1995); and Vern Neufeld Redekop (2002).

But Elshtain's momentary beatific vision, one repeatedly to be realized and realizable politically *within history*, (living then-and-there Kingdom Come *now* and *here*, as in: "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven (Matt 6:10, KJV)."), dissipates all too quickly. She writes: "The value of this approach in dealing with not just one state's internal efforts to build constitutional order but with relations between states is untested; political restorative justice seems likely, however, to fall prey to the classic dilemmas of international politics (p. 130)." This represents reprehensible *realpolitik* copout, sheer ignorance of contrary evidence¹¹, and nihilistic pessimism. It is the low point of Elshtain's book.

Like Moses and Martin Luther King, Jr., she actually *sees* the Promised Land, almost enters it, but draws back, untrue to the "already/not yet" nature of biblical Kingdom vision, to Robert Browning's sage words, "Oh that a man's reach should exceed his grasp, or what's a Heaven for?", and contrary to the best aspirations for world peace shared by all religions the world over, not least endemic to the Judeo-Christian story. For different reasons, Moses and King were prevented from entering that Peaceable Kingdom. For Elshtain, just war *ideology* as surely supplies a "flaming sword" barring entry as Yahweh and a rifle bullet did for Moses and King. It is also a failed vision profoundly cynical of King's famous "I have a Dream" speech, or Desmond Tutu's new publication: *God Has a Dream* (Tutu, 2004). The rest of this chapter disappointingly sets the stage for a nonetheless highly informed critique of "Islamicism", or Islamic fundamentalism, the burden of Chapter 10.

The New Rome

Chapter 11, "States and Self-Defense in a Dangerous Time" offers a startlingly perceptive historical analogy, one however that says far more than Elshtain intended: "The shock waves that rippled around the globe in the wake of September 11 reminded us that the expectation of American power, American stability, and American continuity is a basic feature of international order. Whether people celebrate this fact or lament it, it is undeniably the case that American political, diplomatic, economic, and military power now structures and anchors the international system. Small wonder that many of us compared the plenary jolt to the world's nervous system delivered on September 11, 2001, to the sack of Rome by the Vandals in A.D. 410... Roman law and rule provided stability and a point of reference. Rome was the umbrella of power under which so much else stood (p. 151)."

Her analogy is "dead" on, with ironic use of "dead." The fifth-century barbarian invasions gave rise, of course, to Saint Augustine's development in the Christian West of just war theory so ably expounded by this book. Augustine could not imagine Christian civilization without *pax Romana*: the brutally imposed peace of the Roman state upon the then (in the West) known "civilized" world. Elshtain similarly cannot imagine world peace without the brutally imposed order of *pax Americana*.

Elshtain is an ideological (American) Empire loyalist, who quotes Canadian Michael Ignatieff (of similar ilk) approvingly in calling for America's role in the world as

¹¹ See for example Weitekamp and Kerner (2003).

“Nation-Building lite¹² (pp. 178 & 179, and footnote).” She says in Chapter 12: “That is why some have called for a return of imperialism – not the bad old imperialism that colonized and took all power for governance out of the hands of indigenous peoples... Rather, the sort of imperialism that commentators like Sebastian Mallaby and Michael Ignatieff are groping toward is an image of the world’s great superpower taking on an enormous burden and doing so with a relatively, though not entirely [!], selfless intent (p. 166).” The white man’s savage-wars-of-peace burden reprised, and Elshtain is absolutely serious, which is chilling.

At this point one could wish Elshtain have injected into her political analysis the searing social consciousness of Jeremiah who wrote: “*The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it?* (Jeremiah 17:9).”; or Saint Paul: “*There is no one righteous, not even one* (Romans 3:1).” There is at work in Elshtain a political *naïveté* about American *realpolitik* that smells of Eusebian imperial ideology on the order of almost absolute (in this book) ‘monkey see no evil.’ Elshtain’s head ostrich-like is thoroughly ensconced not so much in an academic Ivory Tower *as in the fantasy playland of self-righteous American neo-Manifest Destiny*. This is reminiscent of Thomas Gabor’s critique of average “law-abiding” citizens so condemning of the light sentences of convicted criminals while never acknowledging our own illegalities, which are legion, we “law-abiding” (some 90% of us) being given to repeat opportunistic criminal offences¹³.

What is sobering of course is the biblical prophetic assessment of *pax Romana*, namely, it is the “Great Beast” (Revelation 13). Mark Taylor, whom Elshtain otherwise critiques resoundingly, comments accurately: “The United States, contrary to many of its citizens’ expectations is not an anti-imperial force. To the contrary, it is the key and privileged player in supporting the imperial ways of transnational, global empire that services primarily the wealthier nations and the elites in poorer countries (2001, p. xv).”

Chapter 12 treats of “American Power and Responsibility.” She cites Michael Ignatieff, who wrote that the “most carefree and confident empire in history now grimly confronts the question of whether it can escape Rome’s ultimate fate (p. 169).” But even here, in her and Ignatieff’s astute analogy to Rome that she admits is “not perfect, of course (p. 151)”, *they just do not get it!* America’s fate like Rome’s for many is not the primary issue (though Chalmers Johnson in his newest book believes that fate inevitable). The tragic reality is, America has *become Rome* in brutal empire ways. Mark Taylor on American empire: “This is empire nearly as real and as vicious as that of Rome (Taylor, 2001, p. xvi).” Desmond Tutu adds a sobering note with reference to awareness of South African apartheid: “The former apartheid cabinet member Leon Wessels was closer to the mark when he said that they [South African whites] had not wanted to know [about the terrorist acts of police and military], for there were those who tried to alert them (Tutu, 1999, p. 269).” For Elshtain and Ignatieff not to know, as with German citizens living during the Nazi Holocaust, involves a certain willful ignorance.

In the 1999 movie version of Jane Austen’s *Mansfield Park*, the central character, Fanny Price at age 10 goes to live at her relatives’ fairy-tale estate, Mansfield Park. Her life is idyllic and genteel in every way, in stark contrast to the grinding poverty she had been

¹² See also Ignatieff’s recent books (2003 and 2004).

¹³ See Gabor (1994).

raised in. But eventually into her adulthood the awful truth emerges, adumbrated throughout the film: the superior “civilized” opulence of her new existence is underwritten by the putrid horror of New World slavery, that her uncle, Sir Thomas, not only trades in, but likely participates in “care-free” (Ignatieff’s term) violent rape with impunity of chattel black women.

One Nazi war criminal at Nuremberg declared: “You have defeated us Nazis. But the spirit of Nazism rises like a Phoenix amongst you.” However, Elshtain will have little of that; she bristles in fact against the “naïve” charge that “the pot is calling the kettle black.” In her response to Hauerwas and Griffiths, Elshtain wrote: “On the more substantive issue of America and its sins, the authors know perfectly well that I have for years criticized the weaknesses of American society. But my critiques of American society and culture have always turned on a critical comparison of American practices and American principles (Hauerwas and Griffiths, 2003).” This is possibly the greatest *naïveté* in Elshtain: her lauding America’s founding principles while downplaying, almost ignoring, its global criminal practices.

One wishes to give Elshtain and the United States full marks for American principles! Internationally, however, too often domestically throughout its history, which Elshtain acknowledges, increasingly on the home front in post 9/11 America, and in its global War on Terrorism, its practices are as brutal and contrary to those principles as Sir Thomas’ were to English civilized ideals at the turn of the 19th century. Elshtain’s failure to see America for the continuing horror story it represents worldwide, eviscerates her upholding America’s founding principles and achievements. In short, *America is what it hates*.

One may argue with Elshtain that indiscriminate Islamicist assassins are worse than precision American hitmen. The contention is possibly sound¹⁴. But in the end, if so

¹⁴ Political scientist Mahmood Mamdani however, in a new book (Mamdani, 2004), says international terrorist organizations are America’s creation. “Not only does he argue that terrorism does not necessarily have anything to do with Islamic culture; he also insists that the spread of terror as a tactic is largely an outgrowth of American cold war foreign policy. After Vietnam, he argues, the American government shifted from a strategy of direct intervention in the fight against global Communism to one of supporting new forms of low-level insurgency by private armed groups... ‘In practice,’ Mr. Mamdani has written, ‘it translated into a United States decision to harness, or even to cultivate, terrorism in the struggle against regimes it considered pro-Soviet.’... ‘The real damage the C.I.A. did was not the providing of arms and money,’ he writes, ‘but the privatization of information about how to produce and spread violence — the formation of private militias — capable of creating terror.’ The best-known C.I.A.-trained terrorist, he notes dryly, is Osama bin Laden... Drawing on the same strategy used in Africa, the United States supported the Contras in Nicaragua and then created, on a grand scale, a pan-Islamic front to fight the Soviets in Afghanistan. Whereas other Islamic movements, like the Iranian revolution, had clear nationalist aims, the Afghan jihad, Mr. Mamdani suggests, was created by the United States as a privatized and ideologically stateless resistance force. A result, he writes, was ‘the formation of an international cadre of uprooted individuals who broke ties with family and country of origin to join clandestine networks with a clearly defined enemy.’ (Eakin, 2004)” Elshtain counters this idea somewhat in a section, “DID AMERICA CREATE OSAMA BIN LADEN?, (pp. 80 - 82)”, but knows nothing of Mamdani’s thesis.

there is only difference *in degree, not in kind*. To get this idea, one need barely skim a plethora of books such as: *Dreaming War* (Gore Vidal, 2002); *War and Globalisation* (Michel Chossudovsky, 2002); *The New Crusade* (Rahul Mahajan, 2002); *The Clash of Barbarisms* (Gilbert Achcar, 2002); *Bush in Babylon* (Tariq Ali, 2003); *Superpower Syndrome* (Robert Jay Lifton, 2003); *After the Empire* (Emmanuel Todd, 2003); additional books mentioned above, and many others.

American journalist Serge Schmemmann, in an article entitled, “The Coalition of the Unbelieving” that discussed several of the books just mentioned, wrote: “Though I have lived abroad for many years and regard myself as hardened to anti-Americanism, I confess I was taken aback to have my country depicted, page after page, book after book, as a dangerous empire in its last throes, as a failure of democracy, as militaristic, violent, hegemonic, evil, callous, arrogant, imperial and cruel (Schmemmann, 2004).” Hans Christian Andersen best captures the tragic pathos of Elshtain’s inability or refusal to “see” in his children’s story, *The Emperor’s New Clothes* (Andersen, 2001). Ms. Elshtain obsequiously fawns (current) Emperor Bush like Eusebius “puffed” Emperor Constantine, Augustine championed the Roman Empire, and Andersen’s Emperor’s courtiers continued with the obstinate parading of the naked emperor through the streets.

Elshtain ends the Epilogue on a theological note, quoting poet W. H. Auden: “We must love one another or die.” But that “love” is restricted to fellow Americans, and most emphatically does not extend to terrorist enemies, alien civilians, or anyone else in the way of the American Empire juggernaut.

Theology and “Only the Facts, Ma’am” (Reprised)

Hauerwas and Griffiths conclude their critique with the following words: “In the end, the use of Christian language and ideas in this book is nothing more than window-dressing for a passion to impose America upon the world. It is not a book whose argument should convince Christians; it is not a book whose argument should convince anyone thoughtful; it is a book—and here, out of respect for its author, we do not mince words—informed by jingoistic dreams of empire. Clarity about Elshtain’s question, the question of the burden of American power, can only be had if clarity is gained about America. That clarity has both a *theological* and an *empirical* aspect. Neither is present in this book (Hauerwas and Griffiths, 2003, italics added).” I shall consider now some theology, and current American political reality.

Theology

Elshtain offers a court theology of Empire. This is faulty Christian epistemology. Her theology sources the just war tradition, but not the New Testament. The latter is univocally non-violent. Elshtain does not wrestle with pacifism (preferably “just peacemaking”) politically. She posits it as impractical and therefore ahistorical.

Consequently, there is no theological engagement with the text of the New Testament, for it would only indict her thesis, such as offered in *The Moral Vision of the New Testament* (Hays, 1996); there is no struggle to apply such to history or to the current world situation as presented in *Engaging the Powers* (Wink, 1992); there is no theological analysis of “just peacemaking” at various points in history, as discussed in *The War on Terrorism and the Terror of God* (Griffith, 2002). Above all, there is no referencing Jesus. One must ask simply, in the context of Elshtain’s virulent pro-violence Christian *apologia*, “Whom would Jesus bomb?” This is not unlike the question, “Whom would Jesus send to hell?”

One hears in Elshtain’s book, as mentioned, an echo of the papal legate in Béziers, France. On July 21, 1209, 20,000 people were massacred by the church with the said Cistercian holiness instructing the army commander, “Kill them all, God will recognize his own.” During that same time in France, fully one million “heretics” were butchered by the church. (This matches the million German victims of World War II Allied bombings. Likewise, the 800,000 plus Japanese victims of World War II match a similar number of Tutsi genocide victims in Rwanda, ten years ago to the day (April 7, 2004), as I write. We have not learned much in nearly a millennium!)

Father George Zabelka was the Catholic chaplain with the US Army air force who blessed the men who dropped the bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945. He said this in an interview: “The mainline Christian churches still teach something that Christ never taught or even hinted at, namely the just war theory, a theory that to me has been completely discredited theologically, historically, and psychologically.

“So as I see it, until the various churches within Christianity repent and begin to proclaim by word and deed what Jesus proclaimed in relation to violence and enemies, there is no hope for anything other than ever-escalating violence and destruction (Zabelka, 1980).”

Richard Hays writes: “One reason that the world finds the New Testament’s message of peacemaking and love of enemies incredible is that the church is so massively faithless. On the question of violence, the church is deeply compromised and committed to nationalism, violence, and idolatry (Hays, 1996, p. 343).”

Zabelka continued: “To fail to speak to the utter moral corruption of the mass destruction of civilians was to fail as a Christian and as a priest as I see it. . . . I was there, and I’ll tell you that the operational moral atmosphere in the church in relation to mass bombing of enemy civilians was totally indifferent, silent, and corrupt at best—at worst it was religiously supportive of these activities by blessing those who did them.... I, like the Catholic pilot of the Nagasaki plane, ‘The Great Artiste,’ was heir to a Christianity that had for seventeen hundred years engaged in revenge, murder, torture, the pursuit of power, and prerogative violence, all in the name of our Lord.

“I walked through the ruins of Nagasaki right after the war and visited the place where once stood the Urakami Cathedral. I picked up a piece of censer from the rubble. When I look at it today I pray God forgives us for how we have distorted Christ’s teaching and destroyed his world by the distortion of that teaching. I was the Catholic chaplain who

was there when this grotesque process that began with Constantine reached its lowest point—so far (Zabelka, 1980).”

Elshtain makes two references to the Vietnam War in her book, both disparaging. One describes the My Lai bloodbath as unconscionable, though she allows distinguishing combatants from noncombatants could have been part of the problem (!). The massacre is described as an apparent stand-alone that rightly elicited punitive censure. Again, we find facts (now about Vietnam) embedded with ideologically muted critique. The American reason for beginning the war was a fabricated incident in the Tonkin Gulf, August 4, 1964. Elshtain makes no mention of the massive savagery during the War of the American offensive, matched, to be sure, by the Viet Cong. For instance, secretly and against international law, U.S. B-52s dropped over 75,000 tons of bombs (about six Hiroshima-size atomic bombs) on one area of neutral Laos from 1964 to 1969, seeking to annihilate the population through “automated war.” Again in secrecy and illegally, the B-52s dropped 40,000 tons (about three Hiroshimas) in a little more than one year (1969-70) on Cambodia.

The *New York Times* recently ran an article (Kifner, 2003) about a series published by *The Toledo Blade*, based upon accounts of several Vietnam War veterans. The article said in part: “The report, published in October [2003] and titled ‘Rogue G.I.’s Unleashed Wave of Terror in Central Highlands,’ said that in 1967, an elite unit, a reconnaissance platoon in the 101st Airborne Division, went on a rampage that the newspaper described as ‘the longest series of atrocities in the Vietnam War.

“ ‘For seven months, Tiger Force soldiers moved across the Central Highlands, killing scores of unarmed civilians – in some cases torturing and mutilating them - in a spate of violence never revealed to the American public,’ the newspaper said, at other points describing the killing of hundreds of unarmed civilians.

“ ‘Women and children were intentionally blown up in underground bunkers,’ *The Blade* said. ‘Elderly farmers were shot as they toiled in the fields. Prisoners were tortured and executed - their ears and scalps severed for souvenirs. One soldier kicked out the teeth of executed civilians for their gold fillings.’” The *New York Times* confirmed the claimed accuracy of the stories by contacting several of those interviewed. It reported: “But they wanted to make another point: that Tiger Force had not been a ‘rogue’ unit. Its members had done only what they were told, and their superiors knew what they were doing.

“Burning huts and villages, shooting civilians and throwing grenades into protective shelters were common tactics for American ground forces throughout Vietnam, they said. That contention is backed up by accounts of journalists, historians and disillusioned troops...

“ ‘Vietnam was an atrocity from the get-go,’ [one veteran] said in a recent telephone interview. ‘It was that kind of war, a frontless war of great frustration. There were hundreds of My Lais. You got your card punched by the numbers of bodies you counted.’ (Kifner, 2003).”

Current likely Democratic Presidential candidate John Kerry was also quoted giving evidence before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in 1971. He reported that American soldiers in Vietnam had “raped, cut off heads, taped wires from portable telephones to human genitals and turned up the power, cut off limbs, blown up bodies, randomly shot at civilians, razed villages in fashion reminiscent of Genghis Khan, shot cattle and dogs for fun, poisoned food stocks and generally ravaged the countryside of South Vietnam in addition to the normal ravage of war, and the normal and very particular ravaging which is done by the applied bombing power of this country (quoted in Kifner, 2003).”

Elshtain offers no tangible reasons to believe that American troops do not act in other interventions up to the present with similar barbarity. The documented stories of Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq under the U.S. military, and in dozens of other American foreign detention centres are replete with horror. There never has been repentance for the Vietnam War with concomitant “making things right” and avowal never to do it again (the restorative justice way). There is a vast body of well documented publications, some cited in this review, that demonstrate America is still doing to innocent civilians on a global scale what it did to the Japanese in 1945 and to the Vietnamese and others from 1964 to 1975 – whenever and wherever American vested interests are at stake.

Why should one be surprised? Empires have invariably slaughtered, invaded, destroyed, butchered, oppressed and conquered – whether with uptight or care-free spirit, in the end is inconsequential. Why should America, its vaunted founding principles notwithstanding, be any different? *Democratic* totalitarianism impacts its victims identically as does *despotic* totalitarianism. “A rose by any other name...”, again! Small comfort that America’s victims are killed in the name of the vainglorious principles of freedom and democracy. Talk and theory, as ever, come cheap and readily from Empire bastions of power – and their Ivory Towers.

Jesus’ theology in response to the unremitting reality of the evil of Islamicist terrorism is summed up in Saint Paul’s terse *political* commentary: “Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good (Rom 12:21).” We have it again in Jesus’ concise words, intended no less politically for nations to whom “restorative justice” is mandated to be brought by the “Suffering Servant” of Isaiah (Chapter 42), and never meant biblically on only the private/personal level: “Love your enemies (Matthew 5:44)”¹⁵. By no casuistry or doublespeak may one declare counterterrorism’s bombs, bullets, and missiles “good”, such ordnance being the exact inversion of the “good seed” of the Gospel of Peace.

Elshtain wishes civic peace for her grandchildren and for the world, yet willingly consigns others’ grandchildren (and thousands more civilians) to death and maiming by “collateral damage” in the War on Terror. There is an arbitrary division between combatants and noncombatants unwarranted according to any precedent in biblical ethical thinking (versus that of Christian tradition). One might imagine a situation where some of her grandchildren are in a Day Care Centre like at the site of the Oklahoma City bombing. Only a homegrown terrorist like Timothy McVeigh does not detonate the explosives, rather the CIA, since it is the only way, “regrettably”, to take out a

¹⁵ One wonders if Elshtain has ever read the classic on this: *The Politics of Jesus: Vicit Agnus Noster* by John Howard Yoder (1972 & 1994).

surrounded al Qaeda cell, after an impossible standoff. As in the case of McVeigh, this action in America would elicit moral outrage, and in an understandably excruciatingly personal way would be *anathema* for Ms. Elshtain and her family. *But those bombed-to-death children, her justified “collateral damage” on foreign soil, are somebody’s grandchildren just the same!* As are all the other victims somebody’s mother, father, son, daughter, brother, sister, uncle aunt, etc. Ethical casuistry alone permits a legitimating rationale for assured bombing of children and other victims on foreign soil when it is unconscionable in America¹⁶. Lurking just beneath the surface of such Elshtainian justifications are *nepotism and racism*.

American Empirical Reality

Elshtain nowhere in her book mentions Western weapons of mass destruction as a global concern of gargantuan (or any size) proportions. Canadian Senator Douglas Roche however is pointed: “The Group of Eight rich and powerful industrialized countries includes the U.S., Britain, France and Russia, which all possess nuclear weapons, and Germany, Japan, Italy and Canada, which support the nuclear powers. Together, the G8 holds 98 per cent of the 31,000 nuclear weapons in the world; spends 75 per cent of the \$800-billion annual world military expenditures; accounts for 87 per cent of the \$40-billion annual trade in weapons; and provides only 0.22 per cent of its collective Gross Domestic Product in official development assistance, far short of the UN target of 0.7 per cent (Roche, 2002).”

The current US spending on the military is so staggering that it numbs our moral sensibilities. Elshtain by her absolute silence on this displays a most amazing desensitization (read: “moral brainwashing”) at one with the average American citizen socialized into blithe acceptance of the most enormous militarization of a nation the world has ever known. This is David Grossman’s “killology” at the mass psychological level.

The moral bankruptcy of America’s military spending on developing, selling, and deploying weapons of mass destruction is matched only by its inevitable imploding – “The End of the Republic”, as argued in *The Sorrows of Empire* (Johnson, 2004)¹⁷. “For Fiscal Year (FY) 2004, the US military budget is \$400.1 billion, which is equivalent to approximately 47% of 1999 global military expenditures.* \$343.1 billion (2002 US dollars) is the average amount spent throughout the Cold War from 1946 to 1989. The FY 2004 military budget is now more than six times larger than that of Russia, the second largest spender. The FY 2004 military budget is more than the combined spending of at least the next twenty-five nations. The FY 2001 military budget was twenty-four and a

¹⁶ Tragically, there was Waco, Texas and M.O.V.E. in 1985...

¹⁷ Johnson described these four sorrows thus: “I think four sorrows inevitably accompany our current path. First is endless war... As it stands right now, since 9/11, Articles 4 and 6 of the Bill of Rights are dead letters. They are over... Second, imperial overstretch... The third thing is a tremendous rise in lying and deceit... The difficulty to believe anything that the government says any longer because they are now systematically lying to us on almost every issue. The fourth is bankruptcy. Attempting to dominate the world militarily is a very expensive proposition... The United States, for the last 15 years, has had trade deficits running at 5 percent every year. We are on the edge... I do not find it easy at all that any successor to George Bush would make any difference... That leads me to the conclusion that we are probably going to reap what we have sown. That is blowback (Nimmo, 2004).”

half times greater than the combined spending of Iran, Iraq, North Korea, Syria and Libya, countries which the US deems potential enemies or 'states of concern'.

*1999 is the latest available year of global military expenditure estimates (Nuclear Files, 2004).”

Dwight Eisenhower is unmatched in his April, 1953 commentary on such unconscionable obscenities: “Every gun that is fired, every warship launched, every rocket fired signifies, in the final sense, a theft from those who hunger and are not fed, those who are cold and are not clothed. The world in arms is not spending money alone. It is spending the sweat of its labourers, the genius of its scientists, the hopes of its children.” And Ms. Elshtain has nothing to say about this in her just war *apologia*...

Finally, consider just some of the kinds of weapons the US has developed. The United States did not sign the 1997 Ottawa Mine Ban Treaty forbidding production and use of landmines. It has dropped tons of cluster bombs in all recent conflicts. When unexploded on the ground, they act just like landmines. (Their bright yellow canisters entice delighted children to play with them...) Listen to their chilling description: “The CBU-87 is a 1,000-pound, Combined Effects Munition (CEM) for attacking soft target areas with detonating bomblets. The CBU-87 CEM, an all-purpose, air-delivered cluster weapons system, consists of a SW-65 Tactical Munitions Dispenser (TMD) with an optional FZU-39 proximity sensor. The BLU-97/B Combined Effects Bomb (CEB), effective against armor, personnel and material, contains a shaped charge, scored steel casing and zirconium ring for anti-armor, fragmentation and incendiary capability. The bomblet case is made of scored steel designed to break into approximately 300 preformed ingrain fragments for defeating light armor and personnel. A total of 202 of these bomblets are loaded in each dispenser enabling a single payload attack against a variety and wide area coverage. The footprint for the CBU-87 is approximately 200 meters by 400 meters. The body of the submunition is cylindrical in shape, approximately 20 centimeters long, and has a 6 centimeter diameter. It is bright yellow when new. [They never get old...]

“During Desert Storm the US Air Force dropped 10,035 CBU-87s. During Allied Force the US dropped about 1,100 cluster bombs, and most of these were CBU-87s. The dud rate for a standard cluster was approximately five percent (CBU-87, no date).”

As to landmines themselves: “Since the early 1990s when the mine ban movement began in earnest, the number of mine producing countries has dropped from 54 to 14. Trade of the weapon has come almost to a halt, and more than 52 million antipersonnel landmines have been destroyed from the arsenals of the world. Nations have removed millions of landmines from communities devastated by the weapon and have provided medical and rehabilitative support to victims of landmines. Most importantly, say anti-landmine advocates, casualty rates from the weapon have dropped from approximately 26,000 people per year to 15,000-20,000 per year, though millions more continue to suffer the agricultural, economic, and psychological consequences wrought by the presence of the weapon in more than 80 countries worldwide (Landmines, 2004).” About 25% of all landmine victims are children, who usually die. The United States has refused to sign the treaty, including banning their sale worldwide. Though by 2010 it is committed to producing only self-deactivating ordnance...

On the macro scale, this excerpt from a poem I wrote, “It’s All Fun and War Games at the Air Show”, captures the horror of only a few of the dozens of WMD’s designed by American scientists who exhibit imaginations from hell in developing such monstrosities, yet like Nazi Concentration Camp Guards, the President, and the Generals who order their deployment, go home and hug their kids at night, and take in Beethoven and U2 or the like concerts:

“Or the BLU-82 – a friendly 15,000 pound giant. (The kids would love its flash!)
Second biggest conventional money can buy! The Vietnamese loved it (NOT!).
One explosion kinda unmakes their (“them” not “us”) day
Though the kids below would never know... They call it “Daisy Cutter”
I call it “Widow, Widower, Fatherless, Motherless, Sibling-less Childless Maker”
Doesn’t matter really what it’s named – leaves all around not just maimed...
Since it vapourizes up to 264,000 square metres. Everything/one.
(Makes the Oklahoma City Bomber, *that Devil Incarnate!*, look like an amateur,
His detonation almost an innocuous love-in. Executed justly for his *misdemeanour!*)
Not to worry though: only a few dozens ever used, and certainly NIMBY!
Instant helicopter landing pad! Likely a promotion for the inventors...
Why unlike Edison like its victims do we never know their names?
Are they ashamed to hold heads up high beside such diabolical engines of death –
I wonder why?”

The US has recently developed a new, larger bomb, the MOAB (“Mother of All Bombs”, to parody Saddam Hussein). It is an “air-burst” weapon, so that its destructive energy is maximized above ground, not partially dissipated into the earth. It is 40% more powerful than the BLU-82... And I have not even begun to mention the atomic weaponry... *And Elshstain implicitly endorses this (im)moral insanity?!*

Ms. Elshstain would not of course have her or any of America’s children/grandchildren victims of any of this. So America must strike first, hardest and everywhere around the world. For democracy and freedom, of course. America’s at least. And for peace without question, though it be the peace of the graveyard. Lee Griffith catches this nepotistic horror well, while discussing Christians who believe in the “rapture”, God’s last-minute rescue operation for all the “good guys”, so terrifyingly represented in the bestselling *Left Behind* series by Jerry Jenkins and Timothy LaHaye: “This is the rapture in which the saints are akin to an audience at a horror movie, floating at a safe distance while being thrilled by scenes of the terror suffered by others. Both military superpowers and the raptured righteous claim the right to float unscathed above a world of suffering humanity (Griffith, 2002, p. 178).” This “suffering humanity” of course in no small part is consequence of the United States War on Terrorism.

Griffith a few pages later aptly sums up Elshstain’s stance, with which I shall end:
“Military ‘missions’ are no longer evil; they are humanitarian. Decisions to embark on such missions are less cause for damnation than *cause for palace priests to extol the justness of it all* (Griffith, 2002, p. 183; italics added).” And so the book title: “*Just War Against Terror.*” Indeed.

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