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INTELLIGENCE AND THE TRANSITION FROM WAR TO PEACE CONFERENCE

For the conference panel discussion "Beyond Bosnia: Ethical Reasoning in Political Deliberations about Humanitarian Intervention," JMU faculty philosophers Mark Piper and Pia Antolic-Piper; lawyer and president of the faculty senate, David McGraw; and chair of the Madison Collaborative, Bill Hawk, reviewed the declassified U.S. policy discussions in search of significant ethical reasoning that shaped the U.S. response.

Must national interest exclude ethical considerations?

BY BILL HAWK

A situation so ethically compromised as ethnic war certainly called for an ethically-nuanced response. However, the policy-making record was mixed. While some policymakers, headed by U.N. Ambassador and later U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, urged a moral mandate that something had to be done to stop the atrocities, the actual decision-making record revealed little ethical reasoning. Reasons of state and considerations of politics dominated policy, though it is fair to say that morality motivated it.

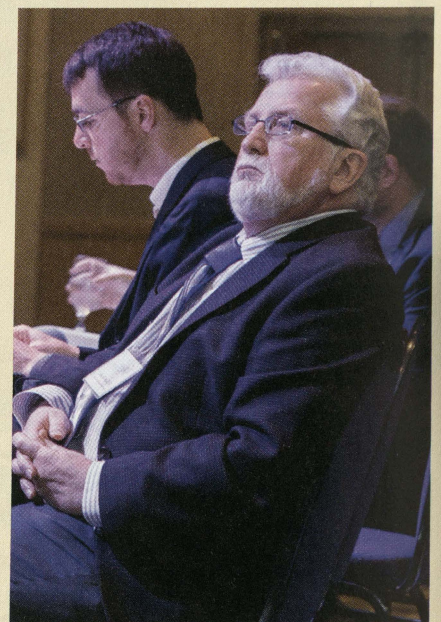
The absence of explicitly ethical reasoning may not surprise. There is a long-held view of "realism" in matters politic that elevates national interest and excludes ethics. President James Madison, however, used moral reasoning with skill. JMU President Jonathan R. Alger opened the "War to Peace" conference referring to Madison's ethical leadership and a call for a university engaged with ideas and the world that prepares students with ethical reasoning skills adequate to the complexities of modern life.

After Bosnia and Rwanda (1994) the United Nations engaged in an international conversation about the responsibility to

protect populations from the scourges of war crimes, crimes against humanity, ethnic cleansing and genocide. That conversation invoked explicitly ethical forms of reasoning and continues to shape the work of the United Nations.

JMU's newly initiated program to develop ethical reasoning skills, The Madison Collaborative: Ethical Reasoning in Action, will prepare JMU graduates to do what wasn't done in the Bosnia deliberations, namely, engage in a disciplined form of ethical reasoning. JMU's Eight Key Questions inquiry-based strategy identifies typical ethical considerations involved in moral decisions. The questions align closely with the ethical reasoning criteria of the United Nations new Responsibility to Protect norm for international relations and illustrate the Eight Key Questions broad applicability.

Unfortunately, there is no end in sight to ethnic hatred and lethal technologies. The combination of these proves deadly. Conferences like "War to Peace" and instruction in an inquiry-based ethical reasoning skill set prepare JMU graduates who pursue intelligence and policymaking careers to meet tomorrow's challenges. ■



With respect to the Bosnia situation, we can say that both the moral intuitions and the outcomes were relatively good – moral atrocities were stopped. But the question is, had there been ethical reasoning, could it have turned out even better?

BILL HAWK, chair of the Madison Collaborative

Enlightenment thinking tells us that government is only legitimate when it furthers the will of the people. To do otherwise would violate the social contract.

DAVID MCGRAW, JMU professor of integrated science and technology

Whether something is right or not is a matter of understanding moral precepts and principles as binding on all of humanity.

PIA ANTOLIC-PIPER, JMU professor of philosophy