

## Pope Francis and Protecting People from “Unjust Aggression”

### (Part One)

That people have to be protected from evil is not an issue. Jesus came to protect people from evil now and forever. Indeed He came to protect people from evil by vanquishing evil. The Christian cannot just stand by, as Jesus did not just stand by, and let evil run rampant, while he or she does nothing but watch it take its course. To give but one obvious example, it would be wrong to simply watch the Palestinian people be subjected to war crime after war crime, crime against humanity after crime against humanity, hideous evil after hideous evil by the Netanyahu-Shamir-Begin disciples within Israel and Judaism, and do nothing.

As Pope Francis said to reporters flying back to Rome from Korea, *"In these cases, where there is an unjust aggression, I can only say that it is licit to stop the unjust aggressor. I underscore the verb 'stop.' I'm not saying 'bomb' or 'make war,' just 'stop.' And the means that can be used to stop them must be evaluated."*

In the First World's media frenzy to morally validate its own anti-Gospel violence justifying value system, it preemptively flooded every avenue of communication with the idea that what Francis said is that it is morally legitimate for Catholics and Christians to go into Israel and Gaza and kill the unjust killers of Palestinian men, women and children. He did not say that! Read the statement. He did not endorse military violence as a moral means for Catholics, Christians, or anyone else for that matter, to stop violence.

But, the universal media presentation of his words is that he morally put Peter's seal of approval on taking out the sword violent military interventionist action against the likes of Israel for the “unjust aggression” it is carrying out against Palestinians, as well as, against other groups engaged in “unjust aggression.” He did not. Read his words. The secular and the Constantinian Christian media blitzkrieg to saturate the world with the thought that Pope Francis approves of Catholics and Christians, and non-Christians, using militarized homicide to stop violence is so completely overwhelming and suffocating all other possible thought on the subject that what Francis actually said cannot be separated from what others are saying he said, which, in fact, he did not say.

*"I'm not saying 'bomb' or 'make war,' just 'stop.' I underscore the verb 'stop.'* Those are not words that morally validate Catholics or Christians or anyone else using military violence. If anything the word "not" of itself communicates that military violence and homicide is exactly what he is not morally endorsing let alone advocating.

*"And the means that can be used to stop them must be evaluated."* 'Means' are always evaluated in terms ends desired and ideas that transcend the immediate moment. For example, if a person says, "We need to evaluate that candidate for the job," he or she means that there are standards that exist independent of the person that must be used to measure whether this candidate is suited or not suited to do the job that is available. The candidate has to meet those standards, to whatever degree desired by the employer, or else he or she will not have the value that the company needs in that job and his evaluation for the job will be a negative one.

So also states Pope Francis, this must be the case in dealing with *stopping* an "unjust aggressor," whether it be by Israel, the United States, Britain, ISIS, France, Russia, etc. Certainly in evaluating the means that need to be employed to simply *stop* an "unjust aggressor," the means being evaluated are not the means needed to conquer or to destroy or to procure surrender from an "unjust aggressor."

*"The means to stop them must be evaluated."* Francis *"underscores the verb 'stop.'"* "Unjust aggressors" can be stopped in an untold number of ways other than killing and maiming them. For example in the case of Israel, the U.S. and the EU notifying Israel that all aid military and domestic will be cut off immediately by emergency executive order for an extended time into the future unless it *stops* its "unjust aggression" against the Palestinians, that dual citizenship status of people holding both Israeli and US or EU citizenship would be terminated and the person would have to make a choice and a renunciation, divestment from Israeli corporations, etc. have very high probability of *stopping* "unjust aggression" against the Palestinians.

In the case of ISIS or other non-state terrorist groups, who never possess the wherewithal to make one AK 47 or its ammunition, one M 16 or its ammunition, rockets or rocket launches, short range,

long ranger or battlefield missiles, or any other piece of modern weaponry or replacement parts, cutting of their weapons supply has about a equally extremely high probability of stopping the “unjust aggression” of the non-state group. The black market organizations and operators who make a fortune in the arms trade by running a perpetual and overflowing river of armaments into ISISesque groups across the globe are known to every major governmental intelligence agency in the world. Moreover, those who finance the purchase of those weapons are traceable and known. Both the black market arms makers and those super-wealthy people and organization and states that ultimately pick-up the tab for the weapons have million and billions of dollars worth of assets in the U.S. and the EU that can be frozen or confiscated in order to *stop* the flow of that without which ISIS and ISISesques non-state “unjust aggressors” cannot operate.

Until such step, and many, many others that are available, are taken against “unjust aggressors”—state or non-state—it is impossible to claim one has reach the point of last resort, which is the point one needs to reach before homicidal violence can be morally justified even in just war theory.

However, let me conclude with this anecdote from decades ago. In the spring of 1970 while teaching at the University of Notre Dame and at the height of the U.S. War on Vietnam, I organized an anti-war rally on the campus in the large courtyard between Dillon Hall and Alumni Hall. I asked Rev. John L. McKenzie who was on the faculty of the Theology Department at the time to speak to the gathering. He did. Upon the conclusion of his talk, which had several satirical but poignant references to the number of Christians killing people in Vietnam and the nonviolent and love of enemies teachings of Jesus, a student got up in the Q&A period and said with a perceptible level of aggressivity, *“What you’re saying is stupid. Nonviolence is stupid. It doesn’t work and it can’t work!”* McKenzie’s response was, *“Most Christian do not believe that Jesus knows what He is talking about in this area. They dismiss Him as unrealistic at best, probably stupid. Therefore they refuse to even to try to implement what He taught about nonviolence and love of enemies. This guarantees that His Way of nonviolence will never enter into history as more than a naïve and stupid idea. Give me the money that Christians give to the Pentagon for war, and I’ll show you nonviolence works.”*

-Emmanuel Charles McCarthy

(To be continued)