

WAR IS UGLY; NOT RESPONDING IS UGLIER

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“Witness to War: World Trade Center Bombing.” That was the title of the lead story in the October 2001 edition of *Catalyst*. I made a personal statement about what we witnessed that day: we saw the Twin Towers crumble before us.

Once again, I am taking the occasion to address war, only this time the war is against Israel. I am writing this at home on the “Day of Rage,” Friday, October 13. I closed the office today because of the huge anti-Jewish rally in Times Square, just blocks from our office. I have seen enough of the New York crazies to know what to expect.

Catholics are fortunate to have a long history of Church teachings on war. Thanks to St. Augustine and St. Aquinas, it is helpful to recall what “Just War” theory is.

For a war to be just, it must abide by several criteria. There must be a just cause; it should meet the standard of comparative justice; a legitimate authority must execute it; the right intention must be evident; the probability of success should be operative; the means used should be proportionate to the situation; and it should be done as a last resort.

Israel has met these criteria. The vicious attack on Israeli citizens, including the beheading of children, was unprovoked. Even more vile, its leaders pledged to kill all the Jews. That’s what Hamas has said over and over again. Ergo, Israel

had a just cause.

It also met the definition of comparative justice, meaning the injustice suffered by Israelis justifies the damage done to Hamas. The decision to defend Israel was made by its elected leader. The prime minister's intent was noble—to defend his people. Given the Israelis past success in combat situations, the probability they will prevail is realistic.

Israel alerted residents of Gaza to leave their neighborhood—giving them ample time to clear out—before their soldiers entered, thus was their response proportionate to current conditions. Despite decades of diplomacy, and the total withdrawal of soldiers from Gaza in 2005—giving the Palestinians what they wanted—it was not enough to satisfy Hamas, which is why they attacked Israel two years later. Thus, the decision to fight back was the last resort.

The left-wing indoctrinated American students who hate Israel also hate America. As a Catholic leader, a veteran, and a professor, I know what motivates these maniacs. Israel had no other choice but to defend itself and seek to defeat Hamas, once and for all.

Pray for Israel, but also pray for Catholics in Gaza and the West Bank, as well as those innocent Palestinians who have long suffered under Hamas.