
FOREIGN POLICY & DEFENSE

the Trans-Siberian Railway, for instance, would cut off the only land link between European Russia and the east. The vaunted Soviet civil defense measures do not compensate for such risks.

Both sides understate the human costs of nuclear war, Lebow says; "Awareness of these costs may—and should—constitute a more potent deterrent than any degree of relative nuclear advantage."

Protecting the Soldier

"Human Rights, Command Responsibility, and Walzer's Just War Theory" by James M. Dubik, in *Philosophy & Public Affairs* (Fall 1982), Princeton University Press, 3175 Princeton Pike, Lawrenceville, N.J. 08648.

A U.S. battalion was advancing cautiously down an open road into a valley when suddenly North Korean machine gunners opened fire. The U.S. troops dove for cover; tanks were brought up to pound the nearby hillside, then air strikes were launched. No attempt was made to protect civilians in the area. Finally, a platoon of soldiers moved out through the scrub to try to outflank the enemy. Was the commander right to use such heavy firepower to protect the lives of his soldiers?

In both Korea and Vietnam, U.S. commanders, trying to get at a hidden foe while keeping U.S. casualties to a minimum, often ordered massive bombardments—despite the increased risk to civilians. Dubik, an Army captain, weighs the morality of the tactic.

Citizens who become soldiers lose their rights to life and liberty, argued Michael Walzer, a political scientist at Princeton's Institute for Advanced Study, in his widely cited 1977 book, *Just and Unjust Wars*. Soldiers' lives should not be wasted, but commanders should take "due care" to minimize the hazard to civilians. "And if saving civilian lives means risking soldiers' lives," he wrote, "the risk must be accepted." Thus, in the Korean war incident, the patrol should have been sent out first—before any bombardments.

Dubik agrees that soldiers must accept increased risk. But they do not lose their natural right to life, which the state should still protect. Hence, a military commander, as the state's agent, must not only take "due care" regarding civilians, he must also see that his soldiers are exposed to no more than "due risk."

The right course for the Korean war commander, in Dubik's view, lay between the extremes of massive bombardment to protect passive troops, on the one hand, and no fire support at all for maneuvering soldiers. When troops move out to try to outflank the enemy, a commander becomes "quite justified" in backing them up with enough fire to suppress enemy machine guns. "Soldiers would enhance their own security at the expense of some civilians in this situation," Dubik writes; "however, civilians would be afforded *due* care and soldiers exposed only to *due* risk." And that is the balance that a military commander must strike.