

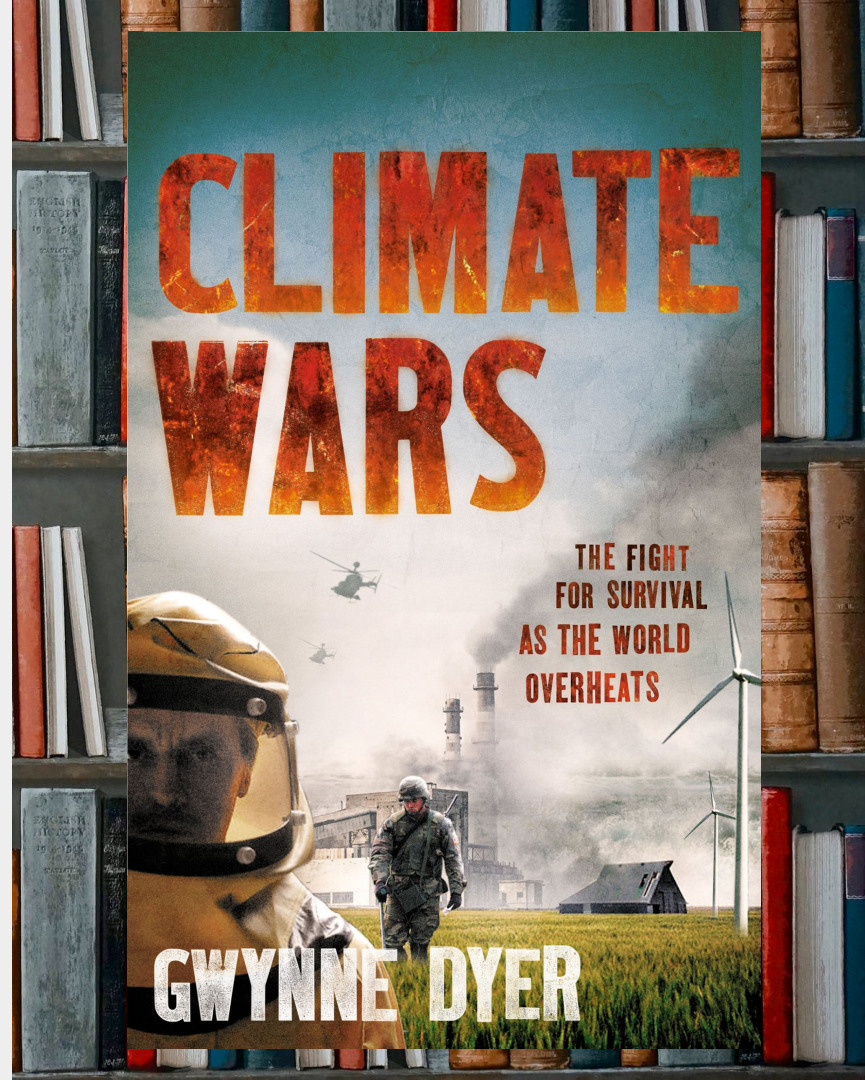
Ticking  
Time-bombs  
&  
Terrorism



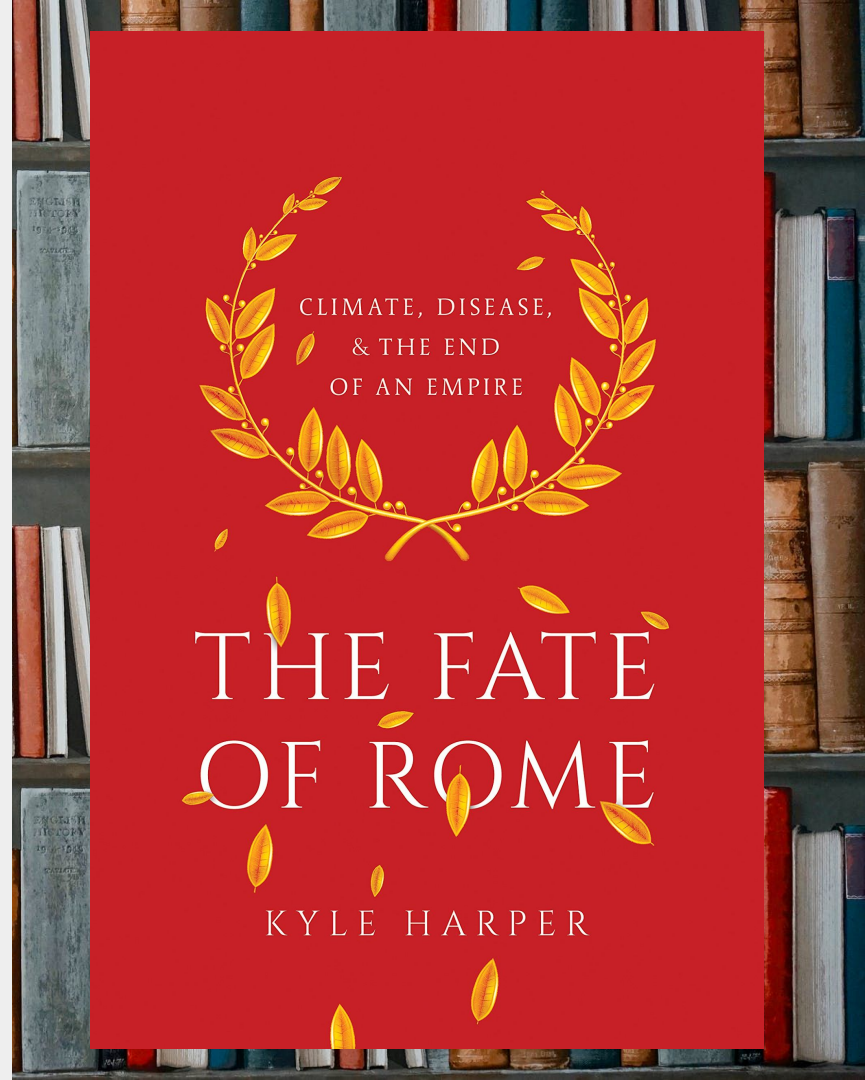
*Food for thought...*

In *Climate Wars*, Gwynne Dyer reports on the military plans of various governments' that are currently in place for when the effects of climate change start occurring.

Among the various scenarios outlined: climate refugees.



**Kyle Harper (2017) makes the case that naturally-occurring climate change influenced the movement of Germanic tribes (e.g., Goths) and played a role in the fall of the Western Roman Empire.**





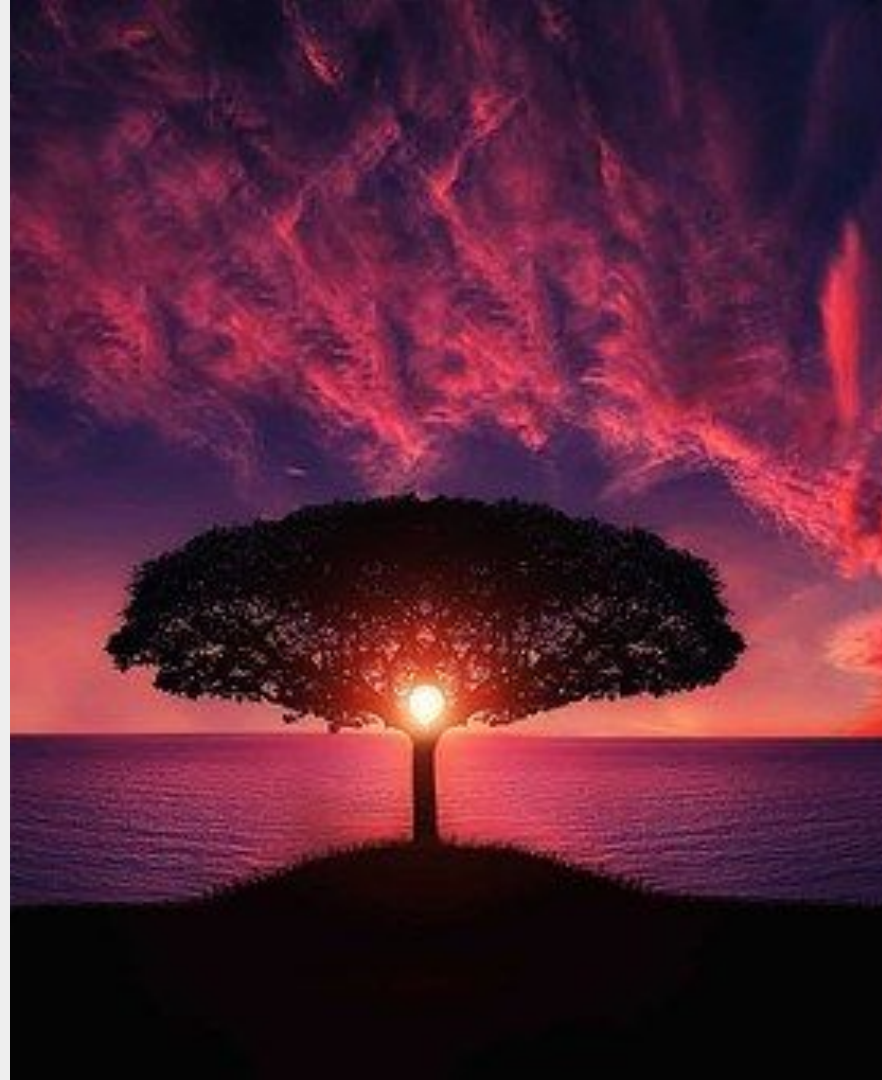
**Taking stock...**

**“In my view, most general theories or theoretical approaches in political philosophy—liberal egalitarianism, contractarianism, utilitarianism, and so on—are too controversial to form a secure basis for reasoning. It is not known which, if any, of those theories are correct...” (430).**

Our discussion on immigration showcased the reluctance of some ethicists to argue from established ethical theories.

Other ethicists have argued in this way, notably Judith Jarvis Thomson in *A Defense of Abortion*. (Stay tuned.)

These thinkers argue by providing thought-experiments that appeal to our **moral intuitions**. (Stay tuned.)





# Important Concepts

McPherson ([2007](#)) argues that...



# Moral Definitions

A **moral definition** of a term includes an evaluative claim; i.e., it includes a judgment on whether it is morally permissible, impermissible, supererogatory, etc.

Most definitions of terrorism are moral definitions; they tend to include a directive against this type of political violence.

# Non-moral Definitions

A **non-moral definition** of a term is purely descriptive; i.e., it seeks to define a concept without evaluating it on moral grounds.

A non-moral definition of terrorism would only seek to describe it analytically, differentiating it from other forms of political violence, e.g. war.



# The Dominant View

- What McPherson calls the **Dominant View** is the view that:
- a. conventional warfare and terrorism are categorically distinct types of political violence, and
  - b. terrorism cannot be morally justified, while conventional warfare can be (in some cases).

McPherson will argue against this view.

## A notable proponent of the Dominant View...

In his 1977 *Just and Unjust Wars* (4th edition published in [2006](#)), Michael Walzer argues that:

- a. Some wars are morally justified (**just war theory**), and
- b. Modern terrorism is always wrong because it is just the random murder of innocent people (the **dominant view** about terrorism).

If terrorism is a revolutionary action, Walzer claims, then the targets cannot be civilians; rather the targets should be political officials and other agents of regimes that are oppressive.

## **A notable proponent of the Dominant View...**

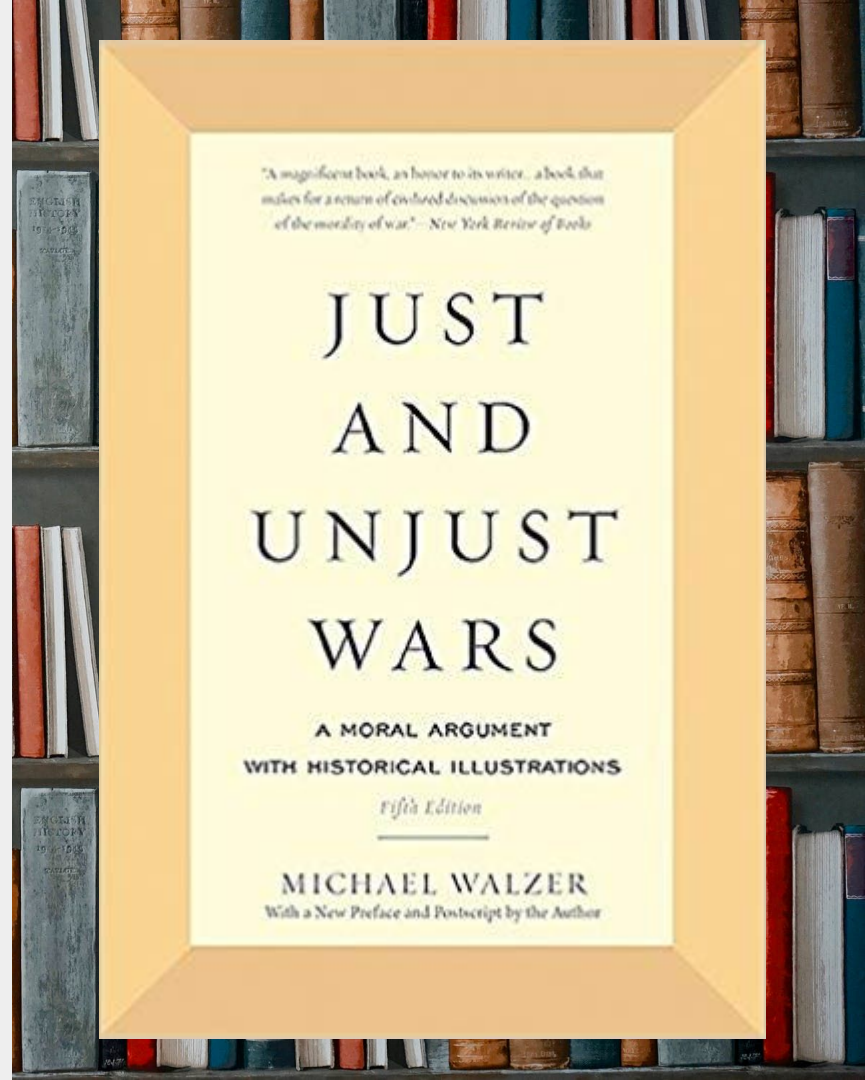
**Moreover, there is also an issue over legitimacy.**

**Any military action must come from the right authority, the State.**

**By and large, Walzer argues, non-state military actions are illegitimate.**



Walzer develops his ideas on war and terrorism in his book *Just and Unjust Wars*, originally published in 1977 and now in its 5th edition.



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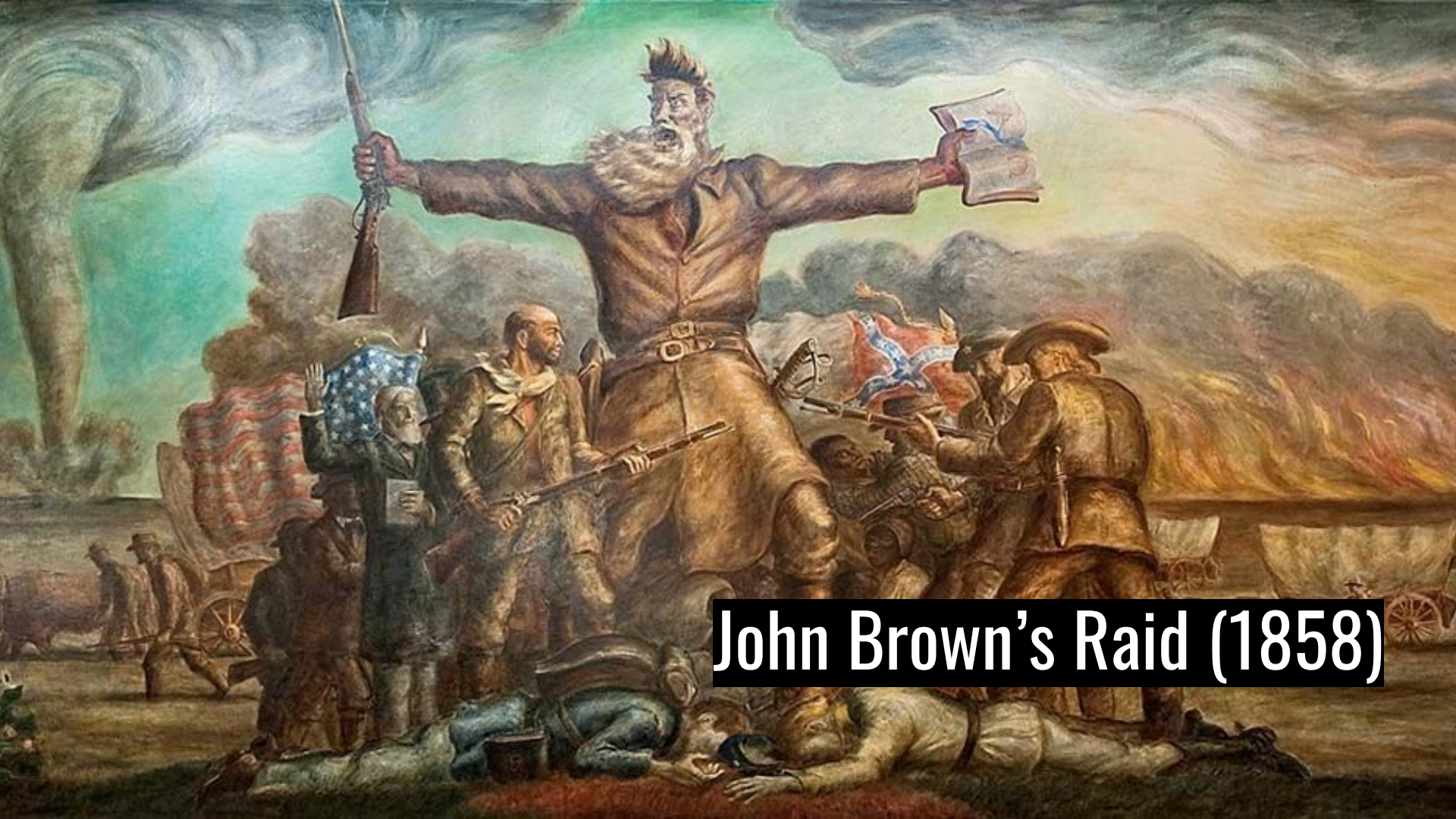
# Storytime!



**Terrorism pre-WWII mostly took the form of targeted assassinations.**

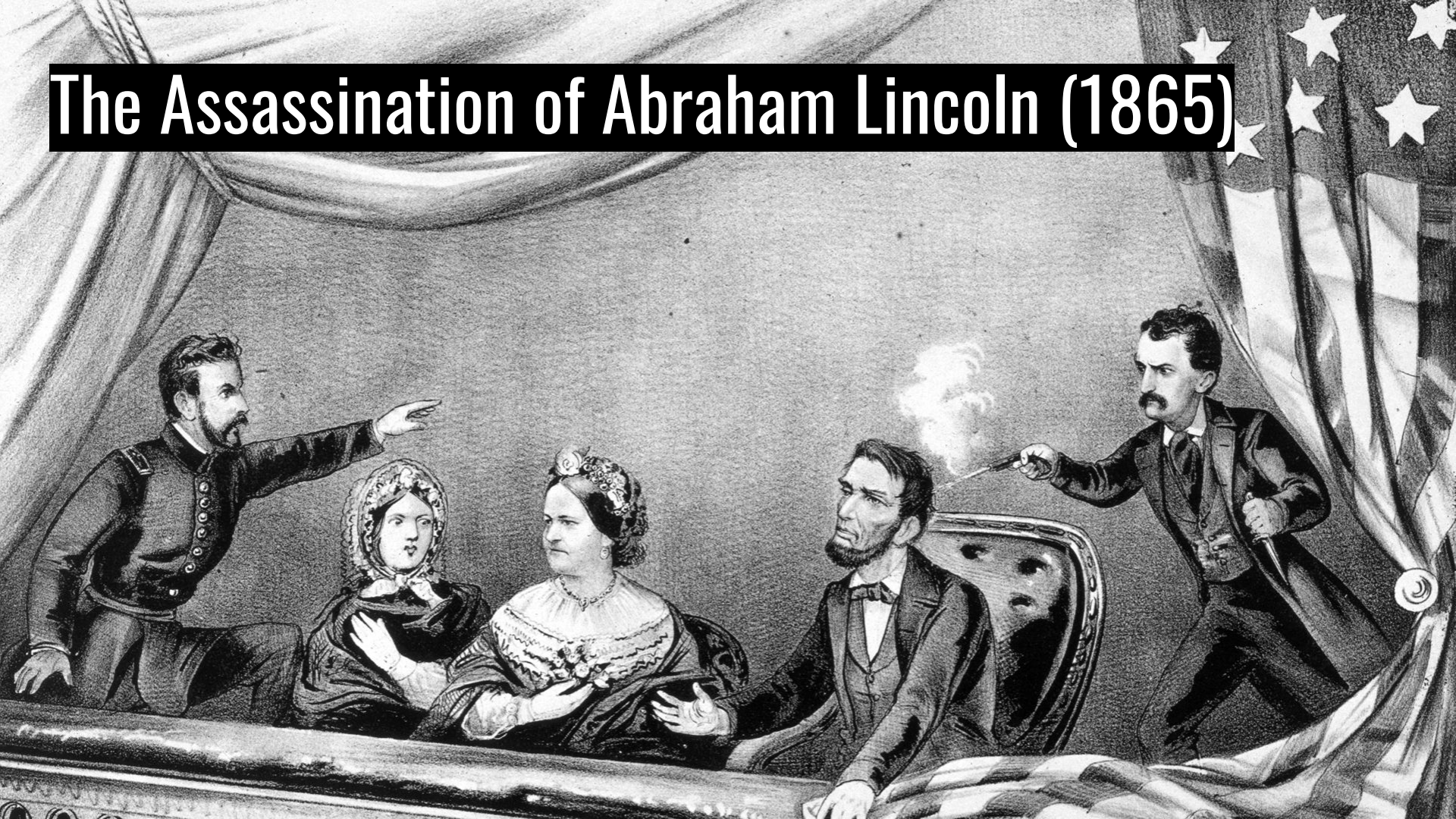
**E.g.,**



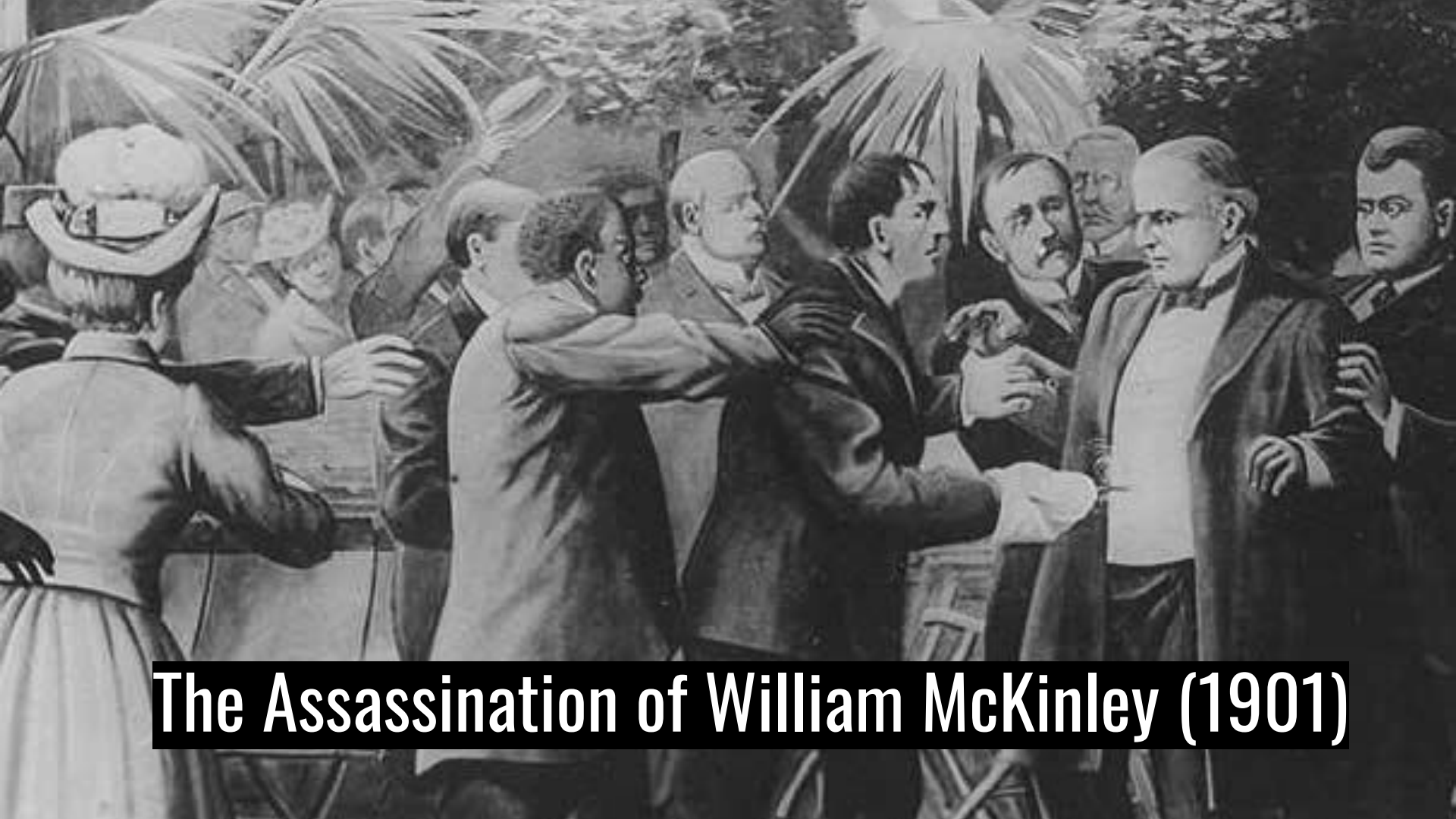


**John Brown's Raid (1858)**

# The Assassination of Abraham Lincoln (1865)







**The Assassination of William McKinley (1901)**



**The Assassination of Franz Ferdinand (1914)**





**Kitty  
Marion:  
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**TRIED TO MURDER  
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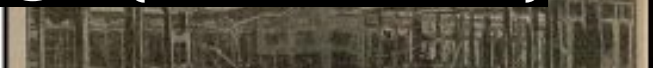


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HOUSE WRECKED BY A BOMB.**




**The Suffragette Bombing Campaign (1910-1914)**



# Wall Street Bombing (1920)





**But during WWII, both the Axis Powers and the Allied Powers ratcheted up their strategy of targeting civilians (so that the civilians would request an end to the war).**

**E.g.,**

# The Blitz on British Cities (1940-1941)





# The Bombing of Dresden (February 1945)

# American Firebombing of Tokyo (March 1945)



**Since then, according to Walzer, the strategy of terror is primarily used against random civilians...**

**This is so that the civilians will demand of their government whatever it is the terrorists are requesting.**



**But some theorists would object that there is already conceptual and empirical problems here...**



For example, Isabelle Duyvesteyn ([2004](#)) reminds us that...

“Apart from being difficult to define, the term should also be judged from **the perspective of the beholder**. This refers to the too often quoted cliché that one man’s terrorist is another man’s freedom fighter.

Put in the words of Noam Chomsky, ‘we have to qualify the definition of ‘terrorism’ given in official sources: the term applies only to terrorism against *us*, not the terrorism we carry out against *them*’” (p. 440; italics in original, emphasis added).











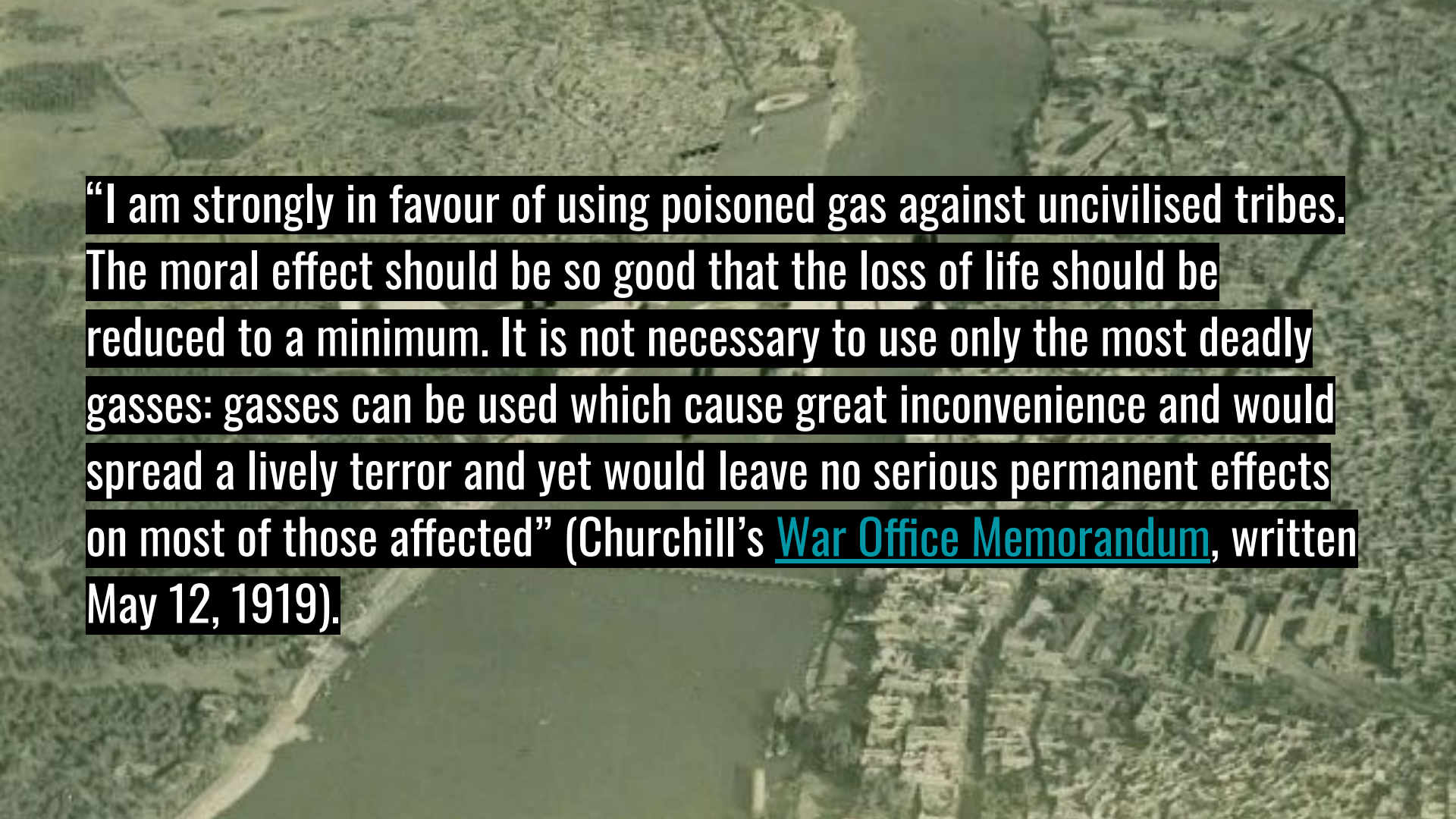


**“To watch the courageous Afghan freedom fighters battle modern arsenals with simple hand-held weapons is an inspiration to those who love freedom.”**

**~Ronald Reagan**



**1920 Iraqi Revolt (against the British)**

An aerial photograph of a landscape, likely a river valley, with a winding river and dense vegetation. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent dark green filter.

**“I am strongly in favour of using poisoned gas against uncivilised tribes. The moral effect should be so good that the loss of life should be reduced to a minimum. It is not necessary to use only the most deadly gasses: gasses can be used which cause great inconvenience and would spread a lively terror and yet would leave no serious permanent effects on most of those affected” (Churchill’s [War Office Memorandum](#), written May 12, 1919).**





**INVADES 90% OF THE WORLD'S  
COUNTRIES**

**COMPLAINS ABOUT IMMIGRANTS**



# García's TWO cents





**One wonders if Winston Churchill would be called a terrorist if he had targeted, say, a white race (like the Irish Republican Army, who are considered terrorists, did) as opposed to an Arab race...**



McPherson is arguing **against** theorists who seem to use a **moral definition** of terrorism and thereby make a clear distinction between war and terrorism, where **terrorism is (by definition) always wrong.**





For example...

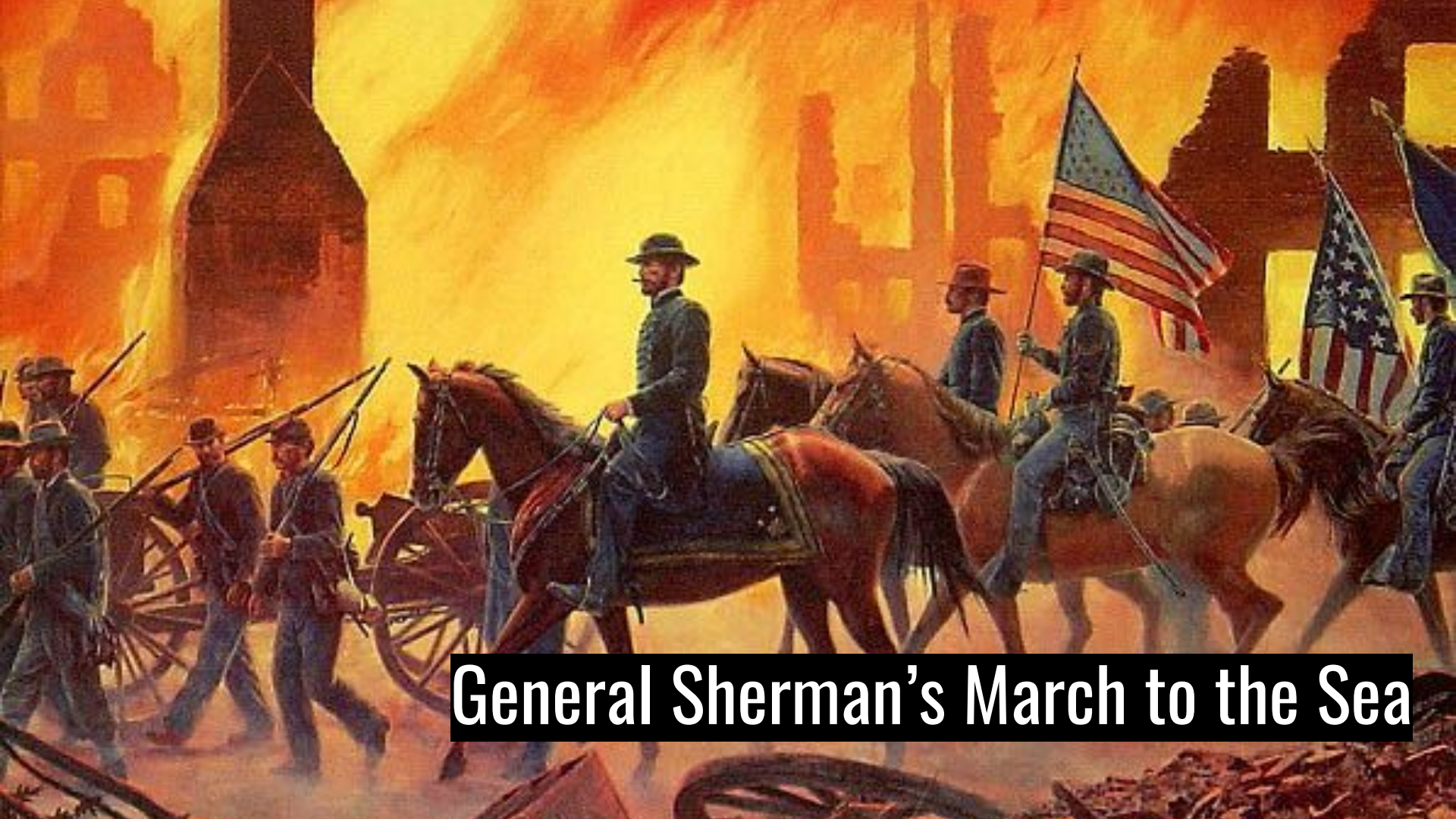
**“Terrorism should not be confused with traditional warfare. In war, a target is selected because it has military value and will achieve a specific military objective... In terrorism, the target is of little interest, per se. What is important is that the target will realize a certain reaction on the part of the greater society” (Garrison [2003](#): 42).**



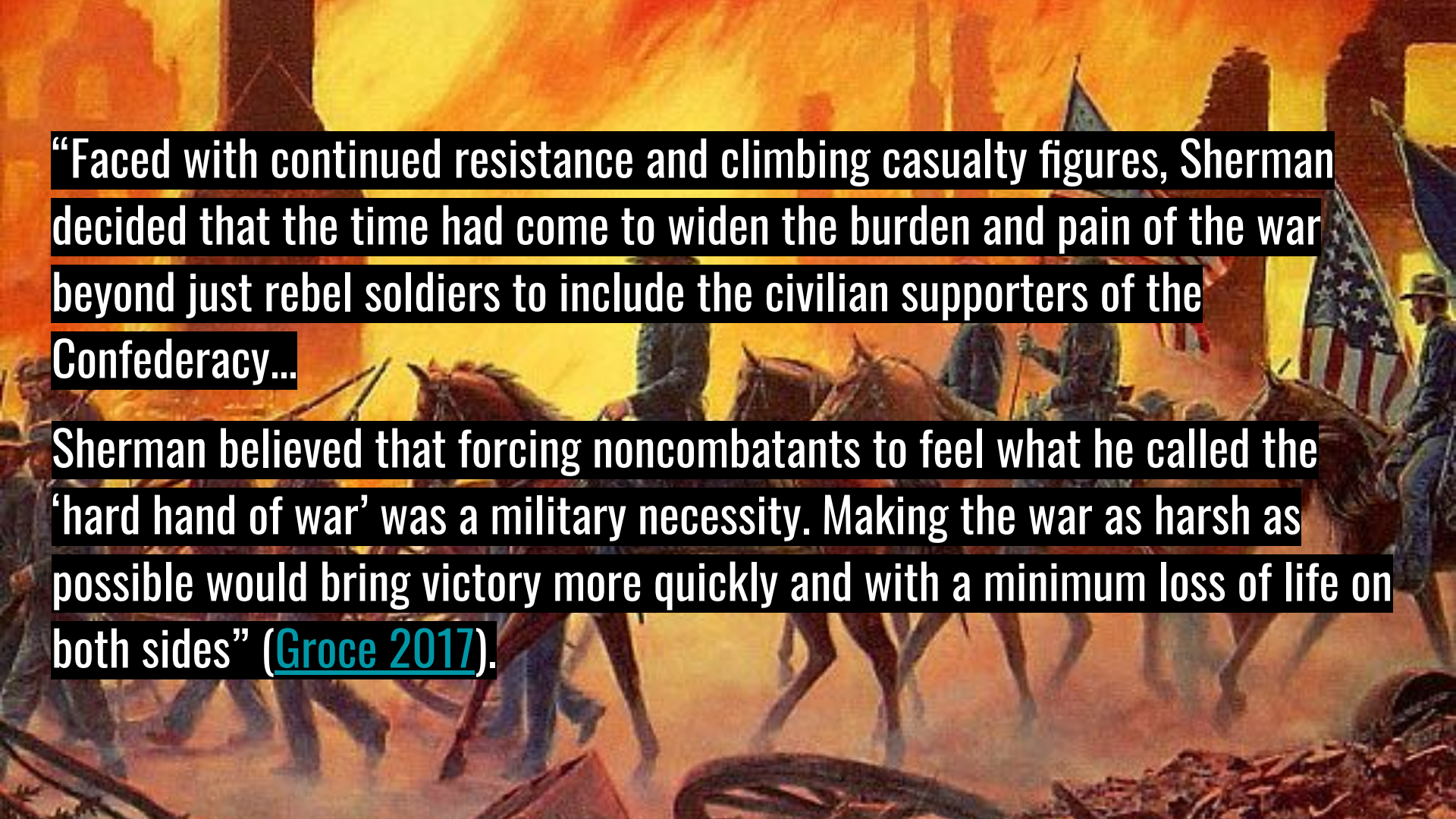
**Garrison claims that there is a clear distinction between “acts committed in war to cause an enemy to surrender [e.g., General Sherman’s March to the Sea] and acts [of terrorism] committed to intimidate and cause policy change” (ibid., 43).**

**But isn’t surrendering a policy change?**





**General Sherman's March to the Sea**

A painting depicting a scene of destruction during the American Civil War. In the foreground, soldiers on horseback are visible, some holding flags. The background is dominated by a large, intense fire, with bright orange and yellow flames rising against a dark sky. The overall atmosphere is one of chaos and devastation.

“Faced with continued resistance and climbing casualty figures, Sherman decided that the time had come to widen the burden and pain of the war beyond just rebel soldiers to include the civilian supporters of the Confederacy...

Sherman believed that forcing noncombatants to feel what he called the ‘hard hand of war’ was a military necessity. Making the war as harsh as possible would bring victory more quickly and with a minimum loss of life on both sides” ([Groce 2017](#)).





Also, McPherson (p. 527-8) reminds us that even “[c]ases of violence against combatants, for example, the bombing of the U.S. Marine barracks in Lebanon in 1983, have been described as terrorism.”

So the targets **do** seem to matter to the “new” terrorists, as Duyvesteyn ([2004: 445-7](#)) also points out...



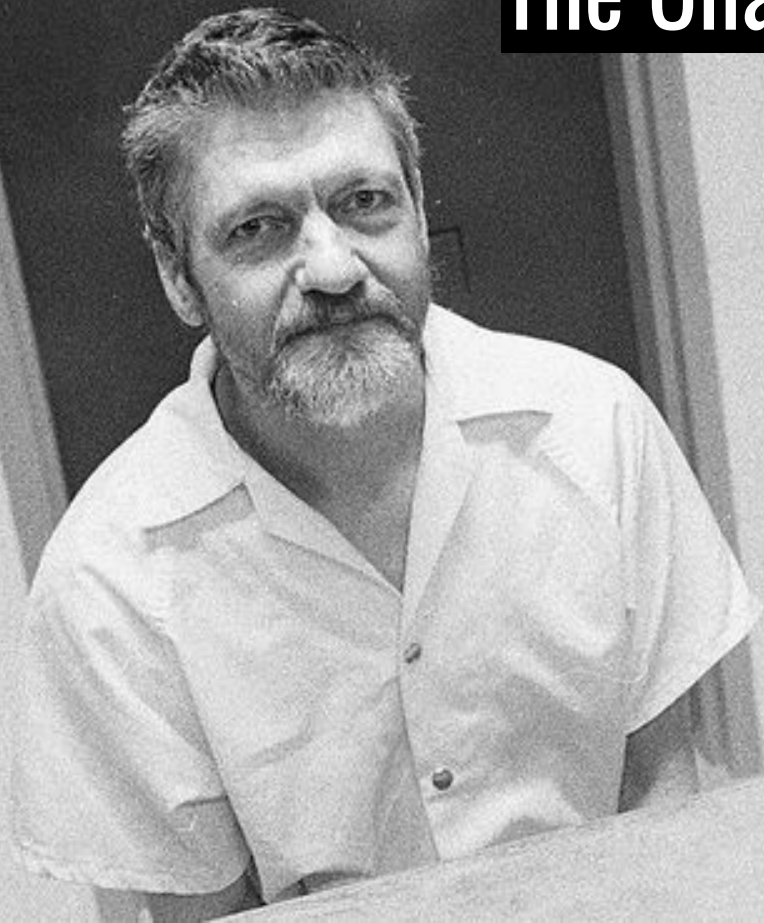


# The Weather Underground

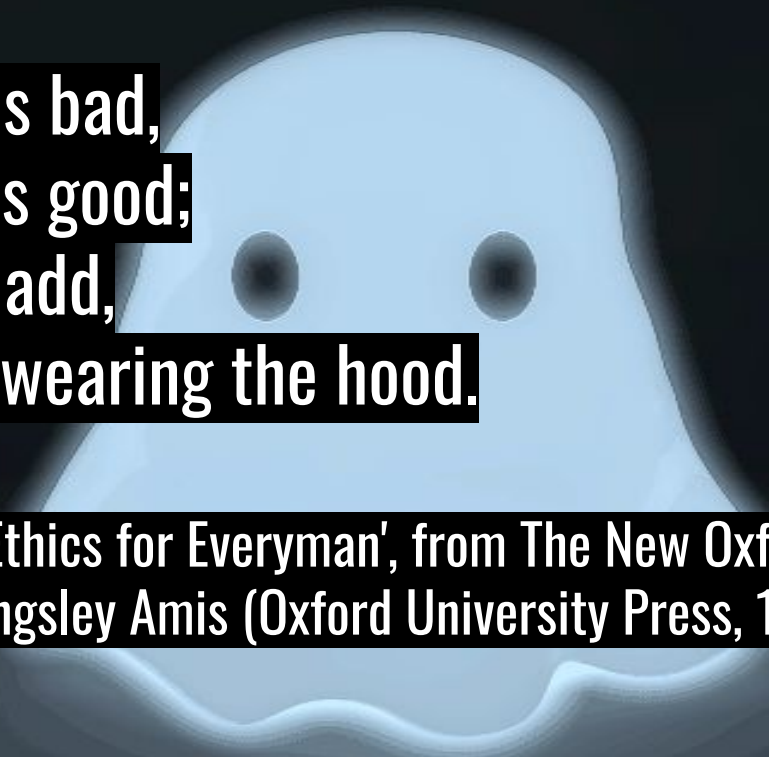


**Earth Liberation Front**

# The Unabomber



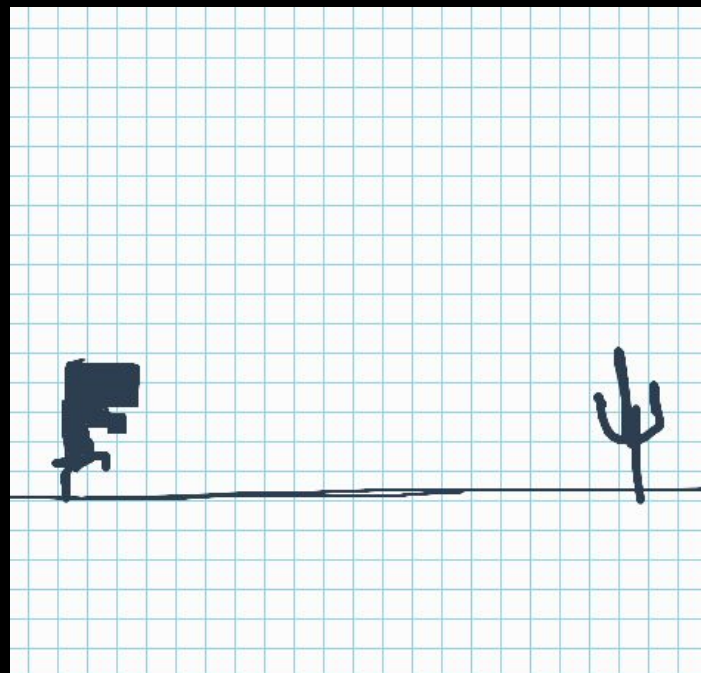




**Throwing a bomb is bad,  
Dropping a bomb is good;  
Terror, no need to add,  
Depends on who's wearing the hood.**

**Source: Roger Woddis, 'Ethics for Everyman', from The New Oxford Book of Light Verse, chosen and edited by Kingsley Amis (Oxford University Press, 1978), 292.**

INFORMAL  
FALLACY  
OF THE  
DAY



# Begging the Question

This is a fallacy that occurs when an arguer presents an argument for a conclusion and one of the premises supporting the conclusion is the conclusion itself.

**RCG:** Shakira is my gf.

**Dude:** Dude, that's like not true. Why should I believe that?

**RCG:** Cuz she's my gf, bro.

**Joe:** God exists.

**Fred:** Why believe that?

**Joe:** Because God exists.

—



## Standard Form(?)

1. My view.
2. Therefore, my view

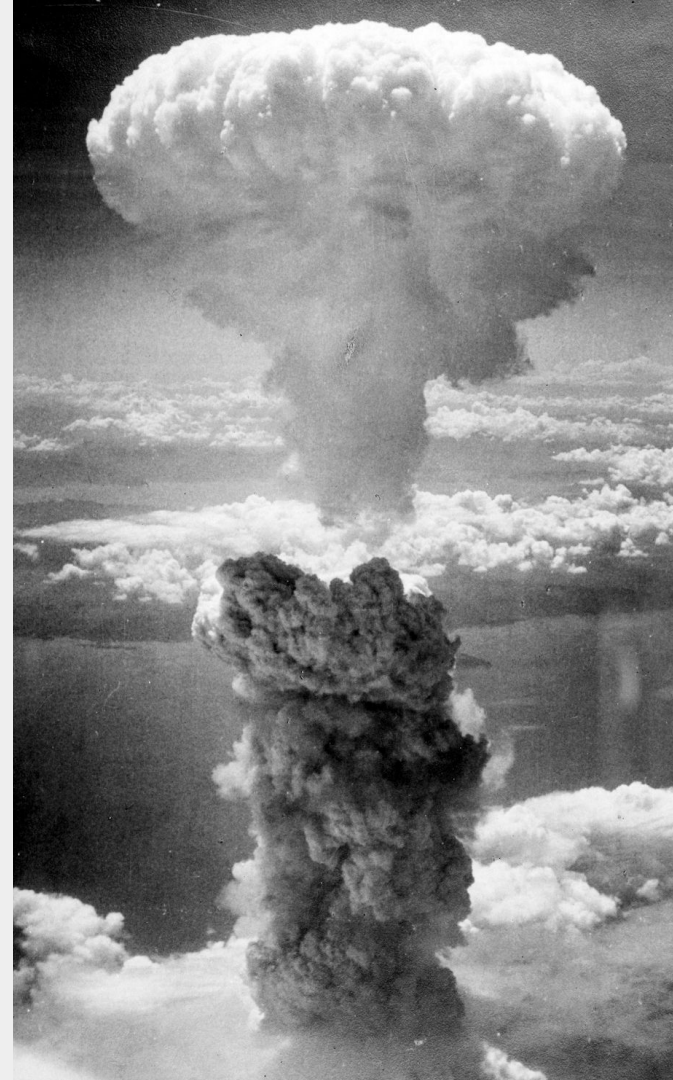


**And so both characterizing modern-day terrorism as “new” and using moral definitions of terrorism to distinguish it from conventional warfare don’t seem to be tenable approaches...**

“A better opening question, I believe, is whether use of force [any use of force] that leads to casualties among ordinary **noncombatants** is morally objectionable.

The latter question prompts comparison of terrorism and conventional war.

Judging by practice and common versions of just war theory [Walzer’s view], the answer is plainly no” (McPherson 2007: 526-7; emphasis added, interpolation is mine).



**It is true that Just War Theorists will agree that sometimes the use of force resulting in the death of noncombatants (a.k.a., “collateral damage”) can be morally justified.**

**“Thus Michael Walzer, the influential just war theorist and ostensible proponent of the dominant view of terrorism, defends ‘overriding’ the rules of war in a ‘supreme emergency,’ which is when ‘we are face-to-face not merely with defeat but with a defeat likely to bring disaster to a political community’” (ibid., 526).**







**Six-Day War (1967)**



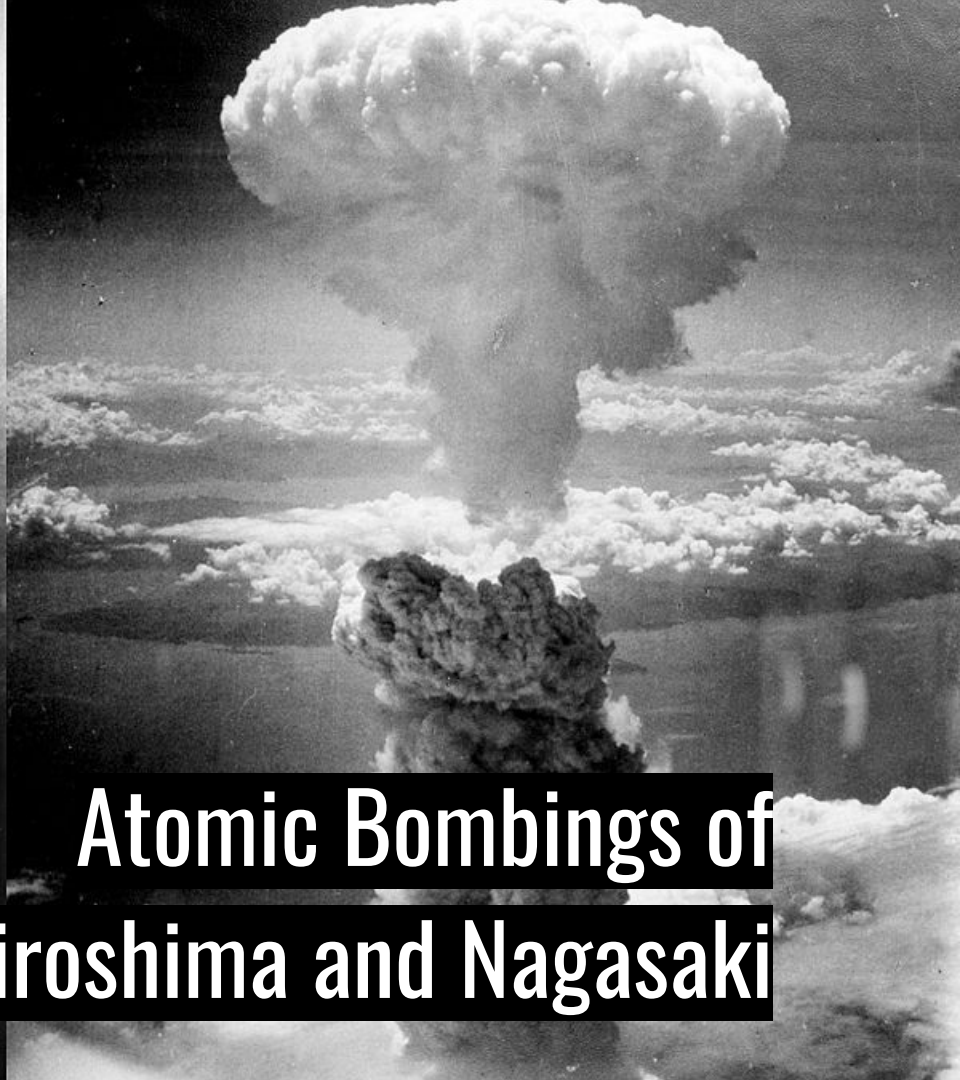
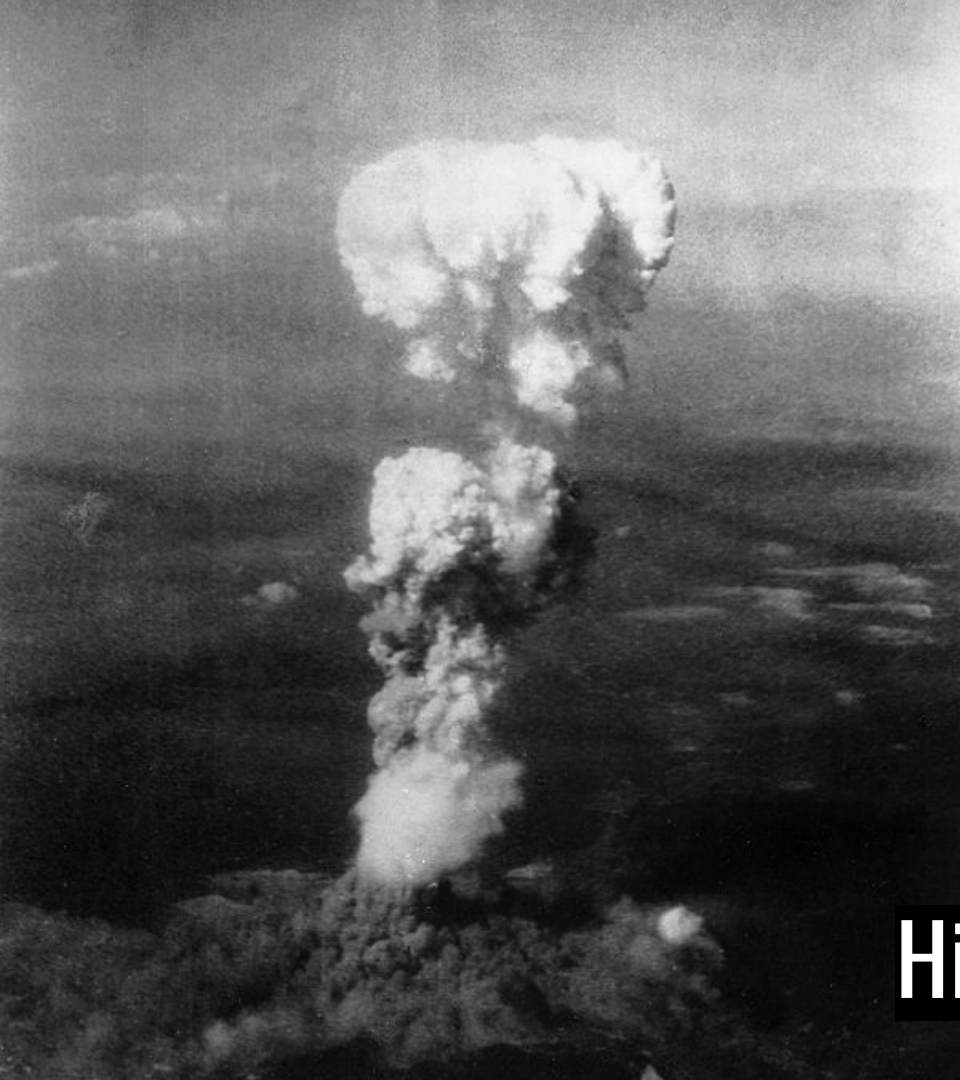
**World War II**



# McPherson's Response to Issues of Legitimacy

The dominant view claims **properly trained** combatants from a legitimate authority will minimize incidental loss of civilian life.

But in practice, commanders prefer to protect their own soldiers at the expense of civilians ([Hedges 2003](#)).



**Atomic Bombings of  
Hiroshima and Nagasaki**

# McPherson's Response to Issues of Legitimacy

Just War Theorists also claim that military personnel at least make a distinction between civilians and military personnel.

But some groups responsible for terrorism have also made this distinction. This is evidenced by their claims that this is a **last resort**.



# African National Congress

# McPherson on civilian casualties

**Both** terrorism and conventional warfare cause noncombatant casualties, as well as instill fear (i.e., terror) in ordinary civilians.

Moreover, conventional warfare causes **more** deaths to civilians than to military personnel ([Hedges 2003](#)).

Hence, civilians have more to fear from conventional warfare than terrorism.



McPherson ([2007](#)) argues that...

“If we believe that war can be justifiable on grounds of just cause and the unavailability of less harmful means, despite the harm it does to noncombatants, we must take seriously whether these same grounds could ever justify terrorism.

The failures of the dominant view of terrorism should lead us to adopt either a more critical attitude toward conventional war or a less condemnatory attitude toward terrorism” (p. 546).





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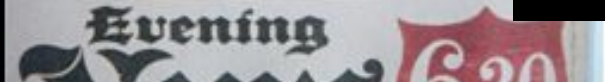


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