

Dear Peucinian,

I would like to extend my warmest welcome to you all, from the seasoned veterans to those who have yet to see their first battle. I hope that our campaigns this summer have left us all bodily and intellectually rejuvenated. I cannot wait to see you all around the table this Thursday when we level our cannons at this week's resolution.

Resolved: All Is Fair In War

Affirmative: Voltaire

Negative: Woodworth Bell Winmill

This disputation is not going to be about if war itself is a noble act, or a necessary act. Rather we wish to investigate the conduct of a state, or a consortium of states, or a faction, or of a single figure when wartime rolls in. Is a warring group dedicated to its people and the preservation of its cause above all other things? Political realism is eager to point out that the duties of a state are very different from the moral obligations of an individual. While an individual might be called "to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God," a state's greatest moral calling is its preservation and it should do anything required to keep that end. Or, do states and allies and individuals have an obligation to the humanness of their enemies? Some would advocate that prisoners be given enough food and spared from torture, that weapons do only harm to the fighting generation, and that the property and lives of civilians not be destroyed wantonly. Others assert that every soldier and factory worker an organ of the enemy and should be dealt with as such.

Attached to this email are four different works encompassing vastly different eras, traditions, and mediums. They are

included potential reference material or as seeds for arguments, but please do not use these as the only sources for inquiry. The first is much condensed version of the Bhagavad-Gita (more lengthy versions are well worth reading). The second is a particularly famous work by Pablo Picasso. Both of these works address civil wars; one between cousins over the fate of the universe, and one that ripped apart Spain and is still politically divisive there. I also suggest a long chewing over of the Syrian and American Civil War. The Third is a chapter from a seminal work on political realism, written in the wake of a world war and the brink of a cold one. Also attached is a link to a segment of (and discussion on) the Milian Dialogue, where Thucydides presents a conversation between a colonial and conquering force that has a war to win (and a cause to advance), and a tiny, mostly neutral one which hopes "to stand upright."

http://web.mit.edu/dimitrib/www/Milos_Photos/Milian_Dialogue.html

If all is fair in love will be left to a different Thursday.

Please come to the third floor of Massachusetts Hall on Thursday the 11th at 7:30 pm. Business attire (whatever combination of skirt, trousers, collared shirt, tie, blazer, dress, sweater, suspenders, and relevant accessories suit you) is required.

Always whispering and sincerely yours,
Aesop