

Nov. 2, 2007-11-02  
Progressive Ponderings  
Technological Warfare

My favorite activity at this stage in life is "grandpa-ing."  
Grandchildren develop on many levels as they mature, creating new opportunities for dialogue at each level. Grandpa's stories are accepted as amazingly true. Growing up in a world without a refrigerator, a television, computer, cell phone, microwave, even central heating is incomprehensible to a young sprout who has never been without them.

Grandpa has shied away from some areas of human technological achievements, one being the efficiency we've developed to kill each other. Our "achievement" in killing has gone from one-on-one combat to the ability to kill thousands at one time without being on the same continent. What progress!

This "progress" has accelerated since World War I. At that time, combatants killed compared to civilians killed was about ten to one. Modern killing efficiency has possibly reversed those statistics, causing some killing experts to make comments such as "We don't do body counts." If the bodies, degraded to "collateral damage", are from the "Third World," the need to keep count becomes even less important. Our proficiency in indiscriminate murder of civilians pressures us to invent a terminology of denial such as "collateral damage." "Body counts" eases the guilt of targeting fellow human beings who belong to families and are grandchildren and possibly grandparents themselves. We use the remote killing methods of "smart bombs" and "pin-point" targeting so that we don't have to encounter our victims. How "shock and awe" bombing fits into our professed concern for civilian "body counts" is never addressed.

The current controversy over the unprovoked and indiscriminate killing of civilians by Blackwater mercenaries is extremely important. It is forcing us to assess the use of contractors while we grant them immunity from prosecution. It is providing a posturing moment for war-monger politicians to express concern for such inefficient killing. It eases our national conscience.

BUT, isn't it absurd to selectively condemn the face-to-face killing of civilians by Blackwater and yet continue to deny our daily remote technological killing of children, women, infirm, aged, and innocent? We bomb every day in Iraq. We still bomb frequently in Afghanistan. After the first few months this "made for television" bombing show

became tedious, boring, monotonous, so our media stopped reporting it.

Last week "60 Minutes" explained our position of "proportionalized" violence. If less than thirty civilians are likely to be killed with a long-range missile or a bomb, then the decision is "bombs away." If 30 or more women, children, aged citizens are likely to be murdered, then permission and approval must be sought from a higher god at the Pentagon or White House. The depth of our concern and compassion is overwhelming! This "proportionality" theory fits well with our "just war" theory to ease our conscience.

Profits and stock prices for technological innovative efficient weapons companies have sky-rocketed since 2001. Proficiency in killing equals proficiency in profits!

I wonder whose grandchildren will become "collateral" today?  
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