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This thesis has been written at a critical juncture of international politics when the world is held hostage to disruptive forces like terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. There are about a dozen states possessing nuclear weapons with the capability to wipe out an entire generation of mankind from the face of the earth with a few first strikes. In such a world, I think it is pertinent to take serious note of the normative aspects of world politics that stresses on values like peace, compassion, democracy and freedom. This work indicates the dichotomy between a normative inquiry, the ‘idea of a Just War’, that espouses faith in human values like integrity, honour and fellow feelings and the realist’s penchant for a value free social science where such values have no influence on human behaviour. To my gratification, in various discourses with the academia, policymakers, students, laymen, friends and family, I definitely feel that the “normative spirit” is indeed strong in human life and noble ideas can move men and women to do acts that strongly reflect the idea of ‘humanitarianism’.

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