

James Burk (ed.), *How 9/11 Changed Our Ways of War*, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 2013, 295 pp.

Reviewed by Ori Swed

Many have written on the 9/11 attacks as an historical mark, a symbol and a game changer in various fields. The kidnapped commercial planes, crashed into American symbols of power, changed the world and the way we perceive it in more than one way. One of this attack's outcomes was to drive the West and its allies, led by the US, into a global "War on Terror" and the invasion into Iraq and Afghanistan. These two wars, stretched over the first decade of the 21st century, functioned *de facto* as a playground for the most advanced warfare theories and technology. Furthermore, these wars defined what the Western ways of war are in the clearest way possible for their advantages and limitations.

These are precisely the issues addressed in this volume, edited by James Burk. The book's main argument is that the Western way of war turned into a limited act curbed by the ability to enlist a society and administration to war and to define what success is, by the limits of force in the context of democracy and the world system, as well as by the challenges in raising resources for the purpose of conflict. The book looks at post-9/11 interventions, focusing on warfare, Western style, in a broader sense. It addresses three major themes, offering a layered and complementing outlook on the subject : *choosing war*, *using force*, and *mobilizing resources*. Each theme highlights different aspects of what makes the ways of war and is explored in three chapters respectively.

The first theme addresses the questions relating to the "choice of going to war", starting with Andrew Bacevich's study, "The End of (Military) History? The Demise of the Western Way of War", that analyzes the theme from an historical perspective. Bacevich confronts two opposing beliefs/approaches regarding warfare. The former, which he describes as "the end of military history", is shared by most Western countries; it views contemporary warfare as limited, claiming that the structural global limitation applied to war turned it into a flawed policy tool. Conversely, the latter, popular in the US and Israel, believes that military force can solve political problems and is considered an efficient and legitimate political instrument. Consequently, Bacevich argues that this core belief is the main predictor of the US response to the 9/11 attacks and that the eventual US military response was the dominant political option from the outset.

In the second chapter, "Assessing Strategic Choices in the War on Terror", Stephan Biddle and Peter Feaver add to the discussion on the theme by looking at the institutional process of the decision of going to war. They examine it by using a comparative counter-

factual analysis, contrasting an actual string of events to two alternative scenarios and potential outcomes. The competing scenarios mildly alter only the severity of the administration's response, displaying one scenario that exemplifies a more lenient response to the attack than actual events and the second a harsher one. In comparing the three scenarios, Biddle and Feaver's conclusion defends the policy and decisions taken, identifying them as reasonable under the circumstances with no obvious better alternative.

In the third chapter, "The Rise, Persistence, and Decline of the War on Terror", Ronald Kerbs focuses on the rhetorical response to the attack and its ramifications while paralleling it with the War on Terror's policy trends of rise, persistence and, eventually, decline. Kerbs examines these trends by looking at "the terror narrative", generated and handled by the administration, as a form of policy guideline. By concentrating on narrative, Kerbs displays the mechanism which controls the discourse and makes sense of events, and accordingly accounts for the administration's policy line at a given stage. He shows how a policy-led narrative is utilized to enlist support or shun aside competing explanations and political ideas, building on historical and national currents to elevate or replace the same narrative.

Looking at the three chapters, we identify different approaches to the theme of choosing war. While Bacevitch argues for an almost predetermined approach, claiming for nearly a Pavlovian administrative reaction, both Biddle and Feaver and Krebs highlight the decision and choice in the process that shapes it.

The second part of the book focuses on the theme of how force should or is being used in the post-9/11 climate. This part opens with Joseph Soeters' "Odysseus Prevails over Achilles: A Warrior Model Suited to Post-9/11 Conflicts". This chapter compares and contrasts two models for using force in a low-intensity type of conflict over four cases. Two cases are pre-9/11, "The Troubles" in Northern Ireland and the "Moluccan Troubles" in the Netherlands, and two are post-9/11 cases, namely the British and Dutch experiences in Afghanistan, during the Helmand and Uruzgan province campaigns, respectively. The first model, titled the Achilles model, is the British way of war, emphasizing the use of force to achieve security goals. The second model, titled the Odysseus model, is exemplified in the Dutch approach, characterized by the application of a minimum amount of force and relying instead on cunning and guile to achieve security goals. Soeters' conclusion is that in the post-9/11 type of conflict the Dutch approach proves the more efficient.

Christopher Dandeker's "What 'Success' Means in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Libya" touches upon a core dilemma in post-9/11 warfare: what can be defined as success? Dandeker argues that global conditions, economic constraints and changing public opinions prevent a result of military intervention that can be translated into or accepted as a victory. He shows that in spite of their overwhelming technological, economic and military superiority over their rivals in Iraq and Afghanistan, the Western allies' ability to achieve even moderate goals was

impossible. The West's advantages in using force failed to yield the required political goals. This inability, stemming from the limits of military force in light of the current world order, raises questions about what is victory and how can we define and achieve it.

James Burk's "Torture, Harm, and the Prospect of Moral Repair" adds the moral questions related to the use of force, looking at torture in the context of 9/11. Burk evaluates the evolution of the Bush administration's controversial policy to allow "harsh interrogations" as a response and a solution to the terrorist threat. The chapter illustrates the moral limitation and price of using force to interrogate, emphasizing the moral harm done to those directly involved, including the public servants in government, the civil society, and the US moral image in world politics. Those levels of harm mark another form of limitation on the use of force.

The three chapters present a different outlook on the limitation of using force, complementing Bacevich's argument in the first chapter concerning the end of military history. Soeters looks at the tactical level's constraints, Dandeker on the limited ability to achieve success using force, and Burk highlights the moral restrict of using force.

The third part of the book focuses on the issue of mobilizing resources to support and allow war. The first chapter in this section, "Isomorphism within NATO?: Soldiers and Armed Forces before and after 9/11", by Gerhard Kümmel, draws attention to the difficulty of mobilizing resources even within a coherent group of allies such as NATO members. Kümmel shows how in contradiction to the assumption that the 9/11 traumatic attack will yield consistency and isomorphism among the military institutions of NATO members, we can identify a gap in resource mobilization. Though there is a semblance of truth to the notion that the US leads and the rest follow, the dominant trend was a real difficulty of other NATO members to offer the same level of military expenditure.

In the next chapter, "The Mobilizing of Private Forces after 9/11: Ad Hoc Response to Inadequate Planning", Deborah Avant explains the rise of private sector participation in war. Avant contests the two leading explanations in the literature for the exponential growth of the private military and security companies in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. She argues that the rise of the contractor soldiers in these battlefields is rooted in an administrative miscalculation of the adequate resources required for the Iraq and Afghan campaigns. This miscalculation was grounded partly in the administration's preference to accept an optimistic assessment for political reasons and shun harsher and more demanding ones. It led to the "on-the-ground" necessity for additional soldiers and the consequent turn to the private sector for a solution. This reason, not a strategic necessity of professional soldiers for the counter-insurgency type of conflict or liberal market ideologies, best explains the trend.

Pascal Vennesson's "Globalization and Al-Qaeda's Challenge to American Unipolarity" highlights the challenges with mobilizing the people's support both by the US and Al-Qaeda.

Venneson offers an alternative interpretation for the 9/11 terror attack and the wars that followed it, identifying them as a hegemonic struggle. This struggle, though perceived as just by its relevant audience, failed to inspire a popular mobilization and was consequently conducted in a limited way. This chapter complements Kümmel and Avant's studies in that they all illustrate the immense difficulty of resource mobilization on the military expenditure level, the enlistment of sufficient soldiers and finally, with the people's support.

While the book offers an outlook over the post-9/11 Western ways of war, presented via the three themes, it is also an examination of the transformation of warfare in the age of globalization, where modern armies face not only battlefield challenges, but also a set of structural challenges and limitations related to the public opinion, and local as well as global political systems and norms. In its concluding chapter, the volume projects from the chapters to the future of the Western ways of war, predicting an adaptation to these limitations of the decision-makers and practitioners of wars. The book's strongest suit is the variety of outlooks, some controversial, offered on this important transformation in a way that challenges one's assumptions and incites critical debate. Furthermore, it sheds light over critical questions in regards to the limitation of contemporary Western warfare and the failure of democracies to provide a military solution in the environment of what is referred to as the "new wars". The book covers a lot of ground, opening a window to essential debates in contemporary conflict studies in light of current global transformations.

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