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Outsourcing War: The Just War Tradition in the Age of Military Privatization

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These contributions to scholarly maritime and policy discourse run deep—but they are not silent. The lessons that *Sea Power* offers should echo around the globe, like pulses of sonar, ready to be received and analyzed by an internationally dispersed community of naval and military strategists in allied and competitor nation-states. In particular, the admiral's clear-eyed warnings and policy prescriptions regarding China, Russia, North Korea, Iran, and ISIS are sure to make waves on distant shores.

Sea Power is the most recent link in a chain of American maritime strategy that connects back to Alfred Thayer Mahan's seminal treatises of the 1890s. Stavridis revisits Mahan's underappreciated work *The Problem of Asia: Its Effect upon International Politics* through a twenty-first-century lens—its discussion of a persistent geopolitical choke point resonates today. In fact, Stavridis invokes Mahan to articulate an updated case for an American naval supremacy and strength that—when closely aligned with the efforts of allied nations—can ensure the U.S. Navy's ability to defend the homeland, project power, deter aggression, and maintain open sea-lanes for global commerce, communications, and freedom of navigation.

Notwithstanding *Sea Power's* ambitious subtitle—*The History and Geopolitics of the World's Oceans*—the book should be comfortably navigable by a broad range of readers, even those less familiar with naval history or maritime strategy. As he did in his earlier book *The Accidental Admiral: A Sailor Takes Command at NATO* (Naval Institute Press, 2014), the author writes with a dry wit and an engaging manner, highlighted by numerous historical insights and cultural references. Moreover, Stavridis's

autobiographical anecdotes draw from his fascinating, globe-spanning naval career that began with service as a surface warfare officer and culminated with a stint as Supreme Allied Commander Europe—the first Navy admiral in history to hold this command. The reader is treated to frequent, self-deprecating life lessons in leadership, including a vignette illustrating how a carton of cigarettes may have determined whether he ran his ship (and future) aground in Egyptian waters earlier in his career.

Dedicated “to all the sailors at sea,” *Sea Power*, like the works of Mahan, is destined to become required reading for midshipmen at the U.S. Naval Academy and the officer candidates in Naval Reserve Officers' Training Corps programs before they embark on careers in the U.S. Navy. It is no accident that this admiral has been a mentor to many men and women who have served with him in the U.S. Navy “wherever the wind and waves have taken them,” buoyed by the wise counsel and leadership lessons evident in *Sea Power*.

PHILIP M. BILDEN



Outsourcing War: The Just War Tradition in the Age of Military Privatization, by Amy Eckert. Ithaca, NY: Cornell Univ. Press, 2016. 183 pages. \$39.95.

In what proves to be both an insightful and informative book, this latest publication on the just war tradition integrates the disciplines of applied ethics, international politics, and military strategy. As associate professor of political science at Metropolitan State University of Denver, Amy Eckert draws attention to the development of

private military companies (PMCs) as nonstate actors in support of warfare. In this provocative work, Eckert sets out to detail the phenomenon of the privatization of the military as a paradigm shift in recent years and its repercussions for strategic programming. Eckert contextualizes the growth of PMCs within the evolving history of just war theory and presents the ethical justification for war as a dynamic core of principles that have been reconceptualized and applied in different time frames. Accordingly, Eckert proposes a series of qualifications to the current use of PMCs through a reformulation of just war principles.

Eckert notes the rapid expansion of PMCs, contrasting the First Gulf War, during which the ratio of contractors to military personnel was one to fifty, with the later U.S.-led Iraq and Afghanistan campaigns, in which PMC contractors outnumbered military members altogether. The end of the Cold War, the reluctance of nations to subsidize large militaries, the lack of public support for foreign endeavors, and the trend toward a market ideology that seeks the cost-effective savings that private corporations can provide explain in part the rapid increase of PMCs within the state's arsenal of logistical and operational support.

The advantages of PMCs, as Eckert outlines, include executive privilege, by which governments generally can hire PMCs without congressional oversight, public debate, or headlines publicizing casualties or losses; the economic savings of military outsourcing, which proponents argue is conducive to fiscal responsibility and a corporate search for the lowest costs in a competitive global market; and deniability, because, while a government may not be involved

in kinetic conflict officially, it can deploy PMCs covertly to accomplish national security objectives. PMCs, observes Eckert, offer "maximum freedom with minimal responsibility."

However, Eckert highlights a number of disadvantages of PMCs. Owing to the private/public divide, corporate contractors have very little accountability to the states that hire them. Travesties such as the Abu Ghraib scandal reflect ethical and legal violations outside the reach of the Uniform Code of Military Justice. High-profile PMC failures, such as the Blackwater incidents in Iraq (2005–2007), can become embarrassing liabilities for the governments that hire PMCs. The government lacks control once the PMC contracts are signed. And PMCs—like any other private company—act out of a profit motivation, and are directly obligated to their corporate shareholders, not the military chain of command.

Consequently, Eckert reformulates the *jus ad bellum* (law of going to war) requirements in ways that address the role of PMCs. For instance, when a state deliberates whether to wage a war, policy makers must evaluate the criterion of proportionality. That is, even for a war with a just cause, the potential gains must outweigh the costs. Eckert argues that, in contrast with their contemporary practice, states that hire PMCs must include the deaths of PMC personnel in past conflicts in their public records, then extrapolate from the public records potential contractor fatalities as a factor in their calculations of whether, in a projected pursuit of war, the gains will outweigh the losses. Equally dramatic in effect, Eckert recommends that for *jus in bello* (the law of conducting war) PMC employees have the status of "civilian

combatants,” with both the protections and restraints implied, and that PMCs, along with the state governments, have a shared responsibility to conduct the war in a way that is consistent with command and control accountability.

Outsourcing War is a compelling analysis of the reemergence of nonstate actors in the implementation of warfare.

With scholarly credibility and political savvy, Eckert displays an understanding of both the past and the present as the just war tradition impacts the future development of PMCs, offering reasonable solutions to the current problems posed by the outsourcing of war. In applying the *jus ad bellum* and *jus in bello* modifications to the status and conduct of PMCs, Eckert’s central assertion in *Outsourcing War* makes us wonder whether these modifications negate the very reasons for using PMCs in the first place. This question raises even further the critical issue of whether it is more important to alter PMC practices to align with just war principles or to alter just war principles to align with PMC practices. Eckert seems to advocate a middle course that balances the time-honored principles of the just war tradition with the reality of contemporary PMC practices through responsible applications, and that balance is one for policy makers, academics, and warfighters to debate in the outsourcing of war to PMCs.

EDWARD ERWIN



Napoleonic Warfare: The Operational Art of the Great Campaigns, by John T. Kuehn. Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger, 2015. 249 pages. \$60.

John Kuehn’s objective is to analyze the Napoleonic Wars “along principally operational lines” (p. xi). Kuehn claims that, of the three levels of war, “the one that is least understood and written about resides in that always uncomfortable middle ground, the operational level” (p. x). He explains that he chose the period of the French Wars (1792–1815) because they lend themselves “particularly well to an operational-level analysis” (p. ix). His goal is to provide “something of an impressionistic result that suggests the operational-level approach adopted here illustrates effectively the more esoteric concept of operational art—how military genius, as best defined by Clausewitz, operated in space and time in the uncertain environment at the operational level during the era of a veritable ‘God of War’” (p. xi). In particular, Kuehn, who holds the General William Stofft Chair for Historical Research at the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, maintains that “an operational examination of Napoleonic campaigns has value because so many of their characteristics resemble current American military thought and practice” (p. 9).

The book begins with an interesting discussion of the evolution of the operational art as a level of war to be studied. Kuehn provides definitions and an explanation of his methodology, which is to analyze Napoleonic operations through the frameworks provided by the Soviet school and by James Schneider, formerly of the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College. Successive chapters generally follow the chronology of the coalition wars that France fought between 1792 and 1815. Chapter 3, which covers the War of the Second Coalition, examines Russian and