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The Law of War: A Detailed Assessment of the U.S. Department of Defense Law of War Manual

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acting on the British government during this period are given scant attention. Equally, the work would have benefited from a deeper dive into the effectiveness of the military advice to the politicians, something that the loss of the service ministries in 1964 did little to improve.

Although broadly chronological, the book is perhaps best examined in terms of its three main themes: the carrier operations themselves, the ongoing innovations to overcome operating constraints, and the political considerations surrounding carrier acquisition. As explained above, the author is perhaps least successful with the last of these, where his experiences at the front line have tended to cloud his objectivity. Where, for example, is a balanced assessment of any opposing political constraints? Luckily, though, Hobbs is at his best with the other two, which makes the work valuable in its own right and tends to carry it through any shortcomings elsewhere. The day-to-day coverage of the main carrier operations is detailed but easy to follow and clearly fulfills the need to demonstrate the ongoing relevance of this capability to a maritime nation with global interests, such as Great Britain. Likewise, the coverage of the British innovations that have made carrier airpower the formidable asset it is today is comprehensive. The angled deck, the mirror landing aid, the steam catapult, the development of helicopter carriers, and the ski jump—all are given the prominence they deserve, along with some other ideas that were less successful.

In the end, the ongoing relevance of a discussion over the viability of carriers, particularly given the expense of the new *Ford* class and their perceived vulnerability to a new generation of antiship weapons, is sure to encourage a wide

interest in this book, particularly from within the U.S. Navy. This is a good thing, since many of the constraints that Great Britain had to face are essentially cyclical in nature and tend to recur in similar forms over time. In particular, though, I commend this book to the acquisition community, if only to gain an appreciation for how out of step with each other politicians and operators can become.

ANGUS ROSS



The Law of War: A Detailed Assessment of the US Department of Defense Law of War Manual, by William H. Boothby and Wolff Heintschel von Heinegg. Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2018. 479 pages. \$150.

Perhaps no recent document published by the Department of Defense (DoD) has been more studied, reviewed, and criticized than its *Law of War Manual*. Initially released in June 2015, it already has received multiple updates. These updates occur partly because of the flurry of well-considered criticism from both academics and practitioners. However, no effort at reviewing the manual has been more exhaustive than this recently published book by two of Europe's most eminent international law scholars.

The Law of War represents a remarkable effort and should occupy a spot on the bookshelf of anyone seriously studying international law as it applies to military operations. However, readers also should be careful to understand what it is. It is not a traditional treatise on the law of war; rather, it is a deliberate—paragraph-by-paragraph—review of DoD's *Law of War Manual* and must be read alongside that document. Those readers lacking an existing

understanding of the law of armed conflict will find the book difficult and cumbersome. However, the scholar trying to place DoD's manual within the context of coexisting understandings will have found an indispensable guide.

This view of *The Law of War* should not be understood as a criticism. No book can be all things to all readers. Had the authors attempted to craft the book in such a way that it aided the reader in learning the fundamentals of the law of armed conflict, there would have been little space for their in-depth critiques of DoD's positions. Indeed, the authors are up-front about the book's intended audience: "[m]ilitary lawyers, commanders, specialists in military doctrine, military staff colleges, ministry and military policy staffs, academics," and those with an interest or professional involvement in the subject. Although this list may be a bit broad, given the nuanced legal arguments covered throughout the book, the authors are correct in identifying the need for previous experience in the subject matter.

In truth, the study of international law applicable to military operations can be a vexing enterprise. In addition to treaties that often vary in interpretation and applicability, international law places heavy reliance on legal custom—that is, the combination of state practice and that state's understanding of when its actions are constrained or required, as the case may be, by legal obligations. Therefore, it is unsurprising that widely divergent views on the law of armed conflict exist. The book is at its best when it identifies where the position stated in the DoD manual is inconsistent with some—or even most—other states' interpretations. The authors also perform an excellent service in

pointing out when DoD's position is either vague or inadequately sourced.

An example of the strength of *The Law of War* is the discussion of the proportionality rule as it applies to conducting military attacks. The authors correctly point out the differences between the manual's definition of the rule and that of Additional Protocol I to the Geneva Conventions (API). Although the United States is not a party to API, the majority of its allies and partners are. Additionally, the United States does hold that API's targeting provisions generally constitute customary law binding on the United States. Thus, any study of the rule limited to examining DoD's definition and interpretation would be deficient in any academic review. By using *The Law of War* alongside the manual, researchers easily can avoid such mistakes.

If any criticism of the book is valid, it is that the work occasionally displays the same opaqueness and repetitiveness for which it criticizes the DoD manual. The authors seem to take such pains to present a balanced review of the manual that it becomes difficult to ascertain the precise parameters of their criticism. Additionally, much of their criticism appears to stem from a desire that the DoD manual be something it is not. The DoD manual is not an academic treatise; it is a U.S. practitioner's guide to advising on military operations. The DoD manual continually references U.S. policy documents that, while perhaps not relevant to a purely academic view of the law, are vital to a practitioner looking to place the law in context.

The Law of War is an invaluable contribution to scholarship in the field. The next move of any researcher studying the DoD manual's position on any topic should be to review *The Law of War* for analysis regarding where the

manual is lacking or what additional views exist. For this herculean effort, the authors should be commended.

JEFFREY BILLER



Soldiers and Civilization: How the Profession of Arms Thought and Fought the Modern World into Existence, by Reed Robert Bonadonna. Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2017. 336 pages. \$35.

A former Marine colonel with a PhD from Boston University and the retired director of the ethics and character development program at the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy, Reed Bonadonna makes the daring assertion that the profession of arms and the culture of Western civilization are inextricably bound together in a symbiosis of mutual influence. The subtitle wittingly captures the central thesis of his book: how the profession of arms thought and fought the modern world into existence. Although it may seem contradictory to suggest that military service and civilization are in any way constitutive of each other in an interdependent relationship, Bonadonna carefully illustrates how warriors can be destroyers yet, ironically, guardians of civilization as agents of both continuity and change. Once the book has been read, Bonadonna's daring assertion seems less daring and quite reasonable, given the skillfully presented historical evidence. In this respect, Bonadonna successfully defends his thought-provoking thesis and achieves a balance of overarching generalization and sufficient detail to deliver a compelling examination of the role of the military in the development of Western civilization.

Whereas Bonadonna furnishes in the main body of his work a historical narrative delineating the advance of the profession of arms, in the conclusion he ventures to offer strategies for emerging trends in the twenty-first century. One among the several fascinating topics explored is the issue of humanitarian assistance (HA). At the 2005 World Summit, the United Nations adopted the doctrine of "responsibility to protect" as a moral imperative for multinational forces to intervene in countries where humanitarian crises are egregious, thus in effect amending the nation-state sovereignty established by the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648. Bonadonna observes that HA operations have become increasingly important initiatives for addressing global problems of hunger, genocide, and disease in the twenty-first century.

While the need for HA seems apparent, Bonadonna rightly highlights the complications of intervention: the threat of imperialistic encroachments on the territorial sovereignty of nation-states by "helping" neighboring states; the resentment of local authorities to the intrusion of outside aid; the disruption of the existing, albeit fragile, order; and miscalculations, as a result of misinformation, that prompt violent resistance. Bonadonna cites the relief campaign in Somalia as an HA operation that backfired and achieved the opposite of the intended results, pointing to the Black Hawk helicopter incident in the battle of Mogadishu in 1993. Since that time, a number of military leaders have come to believe that other government organizations and nongovernment organizations can take the lead more effectively on such campaigns, with limited military support.