In the globalised world of the twenty-first century, security policy in Western societies is driven by a wish to prevent future threats from becoming reality. Applying theories of ‘risk society’ to the study of strategy, this book analyses the creation of a new approach to strategy. The author demonstrates that this approach creates new choices for policy-makers and challenges well-established truths within the study of security and strategy. He argues that since the seventeenth century the concept of strategy has served to rationalise new technologies, doctrines and agents. By outlining the history of the concept of strategy in terms of rationality, Rasmussen presents a framework for studying strategy in a time of risk and uses this framework to analyse how new technologies of war, pre-emptive doctrines, globalisation and the rise of the ‘terrorist approach to warfare’ can formulate a new theory of strategy.

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The Risk Society at War

Terror, Technology and Strategy in the Twenty-First Century

Mikkel Vedby Rasmussen
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I developed the ideas for this book in order to answer questions. The new strategic agenda which was unfolded after the end of the Cold War, but perhaps most visibly after that terrible day we have come to know as 9/11, has created a great public interest in security issues. When I have been asked to tell about the strategic issues of today to my students at the University of Copenhagen, in public lectures or in the Danish media I found that I had to reassess traditional concepts of strategic studies and develop new understandings of strategic issues. This book is the result. Thus elements of the ideas in this book have been presented on numerous occasions and I thank everyone who challenged my ideas for unwittingly helping me to sharpen the argument and directing my attention to areas that needed further research.

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Any mistakes or misconceptions in what follows are my sole responsibility.