

Saving Soldiers or Civilians?

Concerns for the lives of soldiers and innocent civilians have come to underpin Western, and particularly American, warfare. Yet this new mode of conflict faces a dilemma: these two norms have opened new areas of vulnerability that have been systematically exploited by non-state adversaries. This strategic behaviour creates a trade-off, forcing decision-makers to have to choose between saving soldiers and civilians in target states. Sebastian Kaempf examines the origin and nature of this dilemma and, in a detailed analysis of the US conflicts in Somalia, Afghanistan and Iraq, investigates the ways the US has responded, assessing the legal, moral and strategic consequences. Scholars and students of military and strategic studies, international relations and peace and conflict studies will be interested to read Kaempf's analysis of whether the US or its adversaries have succeeded in responding to this central dilemma of contemporary warfare.

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*Casualty-Aversion versus Civilian Protection
in Asymmetric Conflicts*

Sebastian Kaempf

University of Queensland



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To my parents, Ulrike and Michael

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War: New Critical Essays, pp. 79–97. Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press.

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Abbreviations

ARVN	Army of the Republic of Vietnam
AWSS	allocated weapons storage sites
CENTCOM	United States Central Command
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
Delta	Forces Army's First Special Forces Operational Detachment-Delta
DEVGRU	Naval Special Warfare Development Group
DMZ	Demilitarised Zone
DOD	Department of Defense
FRY	Federal Republic of Yugoslavia
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IDP	internally displaced people
IHL	international humanitarian law
INGO	international nongovernmental organisation
JCS	Joint Chiefs of Staff
JDAM	Joint Direct Attack Munitions
JSOC	Joint Special Operations Command
JWT	just war tradition
LIC	low intensity conflict
MACV	Military Assistance Command, Vietnam
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NGO	nongovernmental organisation
NLF	National Liberation Front
NSC	National Security Council
OAF	Operation Allied Force
OEF	Operation Enduring Freedom
PAVN	People's Army of Vietnam
PLO	Palestine Liberation Organisation
POW	prisoner of war
Psy-Ops	Psychological Operations
QRF	Quick Reaction Forces
RMA	revolution in military affairs

List of Abbreviations

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RoE	rules of engagement
RPG	rocket-propelled grenade
SNA	Somali National Alliance
SNM	Somali National Movement
SOF	Special Operations Forces
SSA	Somali Solution Alliance
TFR	Task Force Ranger
UNITAF	United Task Force
UNOSOM	United Nations Mission in Somalia
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
UNSCR	United Nations Security Council Resolution
UNSG	United Nations Secretary General
USAF	United States Air Force
USC	United Somali Congress
USN	United States Navy

Interviewees

Bacevich, Andrew	26 January 2005
Bearden, Milton	21 June 2005
Bergen, Peter	4 December 2005
Borchini, Charlie	17 June 2005
Bowden, Mark	14 November 2004
Conetta, Carl	4 December 2004
Dobbins, Jim	18 December 2004
Durch, Bill	30 November 2004
Finel, Bernard	30 November 2004
Garstka, John	18 December 2004
Gray, David	28 February 2005
Grissom, Adam	2 December 2004
Hammes, TX	21 December 2004
Hartley, Aidan	12 February 2005
Hirsch, John	15 January 2005
Howe, Jonathan	6 January and 21 June 2005
Ikins, Chuck	30 November 2004
Ishimoto, Wade	18 December 2004
Johnston, Robert	11 January 2005
Jones, Seth	2 December 2004
Kennedy, Kevin	1 March 2005
Miller, Reid	12 March 2005
Montgomery, Thomas	16 March and 24 June 2005
Oakley, Robert	30 November 2004 and 15 June 2005
Pirnie, Bruce	21 December 2004
Pudas, Terry	17 June 2005
Rababy, David	21 December 2004 and 13 January 2005
Radcliffe, David	30 November 2004
Richburg, Keith	12 March 2005
Starr, Jeffrey	15 June 2005
Wright, Ann	12, 19 March and 31 May 2005