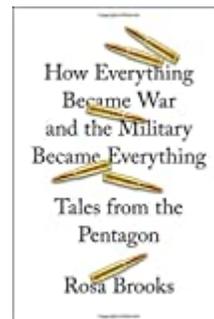


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Rosa Brooks. *How Everything Became War and the Military Became Everything: Tales from the Pentagon.* New York: Simon & Schuster, 2016. 448 pp. \$29.95 (cloth), ISBN 978-1-4767-7786-3; \$17.00 (paper), ISBN 978-1-4767-7787-0.



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Every once in a while, a book comes along that should be read by everyone who teaches, practices, or thinks about national security. This is one of those books. Now a Georgetown law professor, Rosa Brooks reflects on her time at the Pentagon as counselor to Michelle Flournoy, the undersecretary of defense for policy. In twenty-six months at the Pentagon, Brooks came to the realization that the US military has become the tool of first resort for the government, often to the detriment of the very people who are put in harm's way. An underlying theme of the book considers the international legal ramifications of the use of the US military in current and future wars.

The book is an enjoyable collection of anecdotes of her time as a civilian in the Pentagon. She uses humor and flowing prose to recount her assimilation into the military jargon, protocols, and some of the stranger rituals surrounding US military service cultures. As a civilian teaching in the military, all of her stories resonated with me. On the surface, it is a book about service culture, written in a way that is accessible and interesting for any reader.

But the deeper value of the book lies in the excellent analysis and nuanced approach on the nature and character of war in the twenty-first century, the ethical and

moral implications of violence and killing, and the legality of the use of the US military, especially within the international system. Ranging her discussions from anti-piracy to Unmanned Aerial Vehicle strikes, to counterinsurgencies and major combat operations, Brooks wrestles with the nature and character of war in the modern era. Drawing from ancient texts to the present concepts on Hybrid war and New War theory, Brooks unpacks the current debate on the nature of war with academic rigor. She continues with the moral and ethical arguments of war and violence in the modern era, and the insight that the military is being used in new (and deadly) ways, often counter to previous US international laws, rules, and norms. Furthermore, she argues that ethics and morals may not have even caught up with current technology; drones (Unmanned Aerial Vehicles) and cyber power present new challenges for existing understanding. Underpinning all of the arguments is the strength of the book, often overt, at other times subtle, of the role of law in war and peace, specifically when it comes to the military. Her expertise as a law professor shines through in her analysis and critique.

Brooks argues that the US military is used (to the point of overuse) for a number of reasons. The military is big, well funded, organized, and hierarchical, and

thus becomes the tool most often wielded by the civilian overlords, often without an appreciation for the military's limits and constraints. The US military is applied in obvious settings for violent change as the appropriate means to an end. But the government can overextend the military, looking for solutions to every problem great or small. Brooks contends that the military is often assigned to tasks for which it is partially or wholly inappropriate, simply because it is funded and manned. She mentions nation-building efforts in the Middle East specifically. Then, there is the discussion of the use of the military and the normalization of killing and violence. Whereas targeted killing used to be covert and marginally legal, strikes against individuals in a number of areas around the world, including sovereign states where the United States is not at war, are now routinized and normalized. The combination of precision, air supremacy, and unrivalled ISR (Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance) has allowed the United States to target individuals virtually anywhere on the globe, without significant repercussion. And the use of drones and targeted killing has become so routine that it is reported on a daily basis in the media. Accordingly, Brooks asks the question: is this how the military should be used? In response, Brooks considers the argument that this use of the military may be redefining international law now and into

the future. Her follow-on analysis questions whether or not that is a good idea.

On the surface, a casual reader will appreciate and chuckle at the use and abuse of the military in the modern era. Brooks's Pentagon anecdotes are worth the effort to read the tome. But the educated, attentive reader will appreciate the logic and argument in *How Everything Became War*. It is rich with the history of the concepts of war and peace, as well as a deep and comprehensive understanding of international law. With an in-depth analysis of modern events, anecdotal and archival evidence of military employment, and an academic's understanding of the inner workings at the Pentagon, this book has something for everyone to enjoy. But this is an especially important book for the national security professional for the critique of the use and abuse of the US military in the modern era, as well as the legal implications of the employment of violence in a technological age. Although I was initially put off by the title, I recommend this book to everyone. It has value for the initiate who is trying to understand the military and its relationship to the government, but it is even more important for the professional (soldier, scholar, politician) who is struggling with how and why the military is used, and subsequent legal ramifications of violence in the twenty-first century.

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