

question of the ICTY's impact on victims make it a model for future research in this area.

**Pursuing Moral Warfare: Ethics in American, British, and Israeli Counterinsurgency.** By Marcus Schulzke. Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2019. 256p. \$110.95 cloth, \$36.95 paper.

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The long wars of the early twenty-first century have re-inspired just war thinking in our era, just as the Vietnam War sparked Michael Walzer to pen *Just and Unjust Wars* (1977), leading to a reinvigoration of the academic debate about the ethics of war conducted more than 40 years ago. The challenges of this generation's counterinsurgency wars in particular have raised practical questions about what tactics work best in such conflicts, as well as what the ethical implications of such tactics might be. Marcus Schulzke takes on these weighty issues from an essential, but relatively unexplored, angle by examining how the military ethics education of the American, British, and Israeli forces maps on to the real-life ethical challenges those forces have faced.

Drawing on an analysis of military publications and interviews with some 90 soldiers in three countries—the United States, Great Britain, and Israel—Schulzke develops a clear theoretical framework to compare the approaches to military ethics taken by each state, a device that enables a systematic comparison of the three. The US Army, he argues, uses a “rule-bounded virtue ethics” approach, emphasizing the importance of good character for good ethical decision making (p. 75). This approach frees soldiers to seize the initiative and to make independent decisions, but this very freedom sometimes leaves soldiers unsure as to what they should do in certain cases. American soldiers reported feeling a mismatch between the values taught in training, which were framed to address conventional warfare, and the counterinsurgency campaigns in which they found themselves. Furthermore, because virtue ethics are transmitted primarily through social interactions, the quality of leadership becomes an essential determinant of the ethical behavior of subordinates, meaning that ethical standards may vary between units. Lastly, a virtue ethics approach leads many soldiers to feel a sense of moral exceptionalism vis à vis civilians both at home and abroad, which can lead to a troubling lack of empathy.

Although aspects of virtue ethics can also be found in the British approach to military ethics, Schulzke finds that British soldiers are encouraged to “make decisions with an eye to what will be most effective in achieving political objectives” (p. 5). Drawing on experiences from past counterinsurgency efforts, British soldiers exercise

restraint not necessarily because it is the right thing to do, but because they believe it works. This pragmatic approach has certain benefits in counterinsurgency warfare, encouraging restraint and respect for cultural differences. Indeed, British soldiers felt prepared, ethically and practically, for the sorts of missions they were asked to undertake during counterinsurgency efforts in Afghanistan and Iraq. However, when real-life conditions on the ground did not match those for which the principles were developed—when British forces were too few in number or the local civilian population was inclined to be hostile—British soldiers reported feeling simultaneously unsure about what action would be appropriate and trapped by overly restrictive rules. One might also question whether a restraint that emerges from a sense that it works tactically can truly be called an ethical approach at all, a point Schulzke could have perhaps explored in even greater depth.

Schulzke describes the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) as using a deontological approach to military ethics, inculcating soldiers with a strict set of rules. Interestingly, Schulzke finds that Israeli soldiers more clearly remember their ethics classroom training than do their American and British counterparts and that they are practiced at conversations surrounding the ethical implications of their actions. However, the degree to which these rules minimize harm against civilians is somewhat offset by the pervasive sense within the IDF that every war Israel faces is an “existential crisis,” triggering an ethical analysis akin to Michael Walzer's “supreme emergency” concept (p. 154).

Schulzke's study moves beyond an analysis of the theoretical approaches to military ethics taken in each country to a discussion of how soldiers encounter these ethical structures. Drawing on interviews with soldiers, Schulzke attempts to tease out how much these theoretical approaches to ethics affect how soldiers think and behave. To this end, Schulzke is interested both in exploring how military ethics are taught (and what soldiers recall of that experience) and in piecing together how soldiers attempt to apply those ethical frameworks in practice. He finds that soldiers across the board face situational constraints on their ability to put ethics into practice, particularly because of “epistemic challenges associated with clearly identifying enemy combatants” (p. 45). Although all the militaries in the study experienced this problem to some extent, American soldiers in particular faced a troubling disjuncture between their training and the situations in which they found themselves in Afghanistan and Iraq. The virtues and rules they had learned were designed with conventional conflicts in mind and were not easily and straightforwardly adaptable to the challenges of counterinsurgency.

The implications of Schulzke's book for those interested in the more theoretical side of just war thinking are evident. He writes, “An ethic that fails to account for [situational and cognitive] constraints would hold soldiers

to unreasonable standards and fail to provide effective guidance” (p. 45). Effective rules must be clear and easily understandable, but must also be practicable. Rules that are overly constraining or that require access to information that soldiers simply cannot reliably acquire in combat are likely to be ignored.

Another implication of Schulzke’s study of particular interest to just war thinkers is his finding that the fear of feeling guilty in the future leads soldiers to exercise more restraint, whether by holding fire or by choosing to expose themselves to more danger, rather than risking civilian lives. Thus, moral emotions appear to play a significant role as motivators of ethical action in the real world and, hence, are worthy of further study.

Finally, Schulzke also finds cross-national agreement that self-defense is of primary importance. Civilian protection, in practice, is often ranked as more important than combating insurgents but not as important as self-defense. This suggests that, regardless of the ethical training soldiers receive, many rank these three disparate goods in the same way: self-preservation as primary, protection of civilians as secondary, and the killing of the enemy as tertiary. Future research into the origins and robustness of this moral hierarchy could be fruitful.

In an ideal world, Schulzke might have conducted even more interviews, particularly because drawing on a random sample is not possible. However, this small methodological shortcoming should not discourage those interested in the interplay between theory and practice in the world of military ethics from reading this fascinating book. As a work probing the adequacy of military ethics training in preparing soldiers to face the intense challenges of counterinsurgency warfare, Schulzke’s book provides rich food for thought for those interested in both ethical and practical questions.

#### **On the Brink: Trump, Kim, and the Threat of Nuclear**

**War.** By Van Jackson. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018. 248p. \$24.95 cloth.

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Three years of the Trump presidency have revealed a dramatic turn in the United States’ relations with North Korea from a possible nuclear collision course to the historic summit meetings with Kim Jong Un. In 2017 the United States and North Korea were dragged deep into a crash course heading for a possible nuclear exchange. In September of that year, North Korea conducted its sixth nuclear weapons test, which was allegedly a hydrogen bomb; two months later, it test-fired a Hwasong-15, an ICBM that could reach North America. Meanwhile, a war of words between Trump and Kim further heightened a sense of imminent crisis, as the two leaders provoked

each other with extreme rhetoric: “Rocket Man is on a suicide mission for himself and for his regime,” “a mentally deranged dotard,” “a lunatic old man,” and so on. North Korea’s provocation and the confrontation between the two idiosyncratic leaders took the world close to the danger of a nuclear war, a perilous moment that was comparable with the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962.

In his book *On the Brink*, Van Jackson, previously a policy strategist in the Office of the Secretary of Defense under the Obama administration and a current academic at Victoria University of Wellington, details the danger of the US–North Korean nuclear confrontation and examines its political and historical origins. In the past decade alone, numerous books on North Korea have been published, and *On the Brink* is the most recent and up-to-date version that focuses on Trump-era US policies toward North Korea. The first two chapters explain the historical origins and evolution of North Korea’s nuclear strategy and articulate how nuclear weapons fit into Pyongyang’s long-term strategic thinking. Ensuing chapters keep track of the United States’ North Korea policies since the early Obama administration, Trump’s strategy of maximum pressure, the escalating threat of a nuclear war, and how the crisis became quickly subdued in 2018. In this midst of this narrative chapter 4 offers a counterfactual analysis to argue that Hillary Clinton’s presidency would not have been much different from Trump’s with respect to North Korea policy. The concluding chapter critically evaluates Washington’s policy approach to denuclearizing North Korea and presents policy recommendations.

Van Jackson’s book is a first-rate research product that comprehensively analyzes both North Korea’s survival strategies and Washington’s responses and how the relationship almost resulted in a nuclear war. The author suggests that, although Pyongyang’s primary goal has always been self-preservation—both state and regime security—through nuclear weapons, Kim Jong Un’s weapons of mass destruction (WMD) program quickly became much more dangerous than those of most other nuclear weapon states when it was combined with North Korea’s long-lasting “reputational theory of victory,” a view built on coercion and the threat of force. North Korea believes that “showing strength and resolve prevents war, while showing weakness invites war” (p. 39). Jackson suggests that a nuclear North Korea would embolden its leader to go beyond mere regime survival and to pursue more aggressive policy goals on its own terms. Moreover, the nuclear crisis quickly escalated to the point of imminent nuclear war when Donald Trump put maximum pressure on North Korea and openly threatened military operations to dismantle nuclear and missile facilities—and when Kim Jong Un flatly defied the threat with more belligerent provocations; indeed, the Trump administration put all possible options on the table from total war to a “bloody nose.” A nuclear war could have