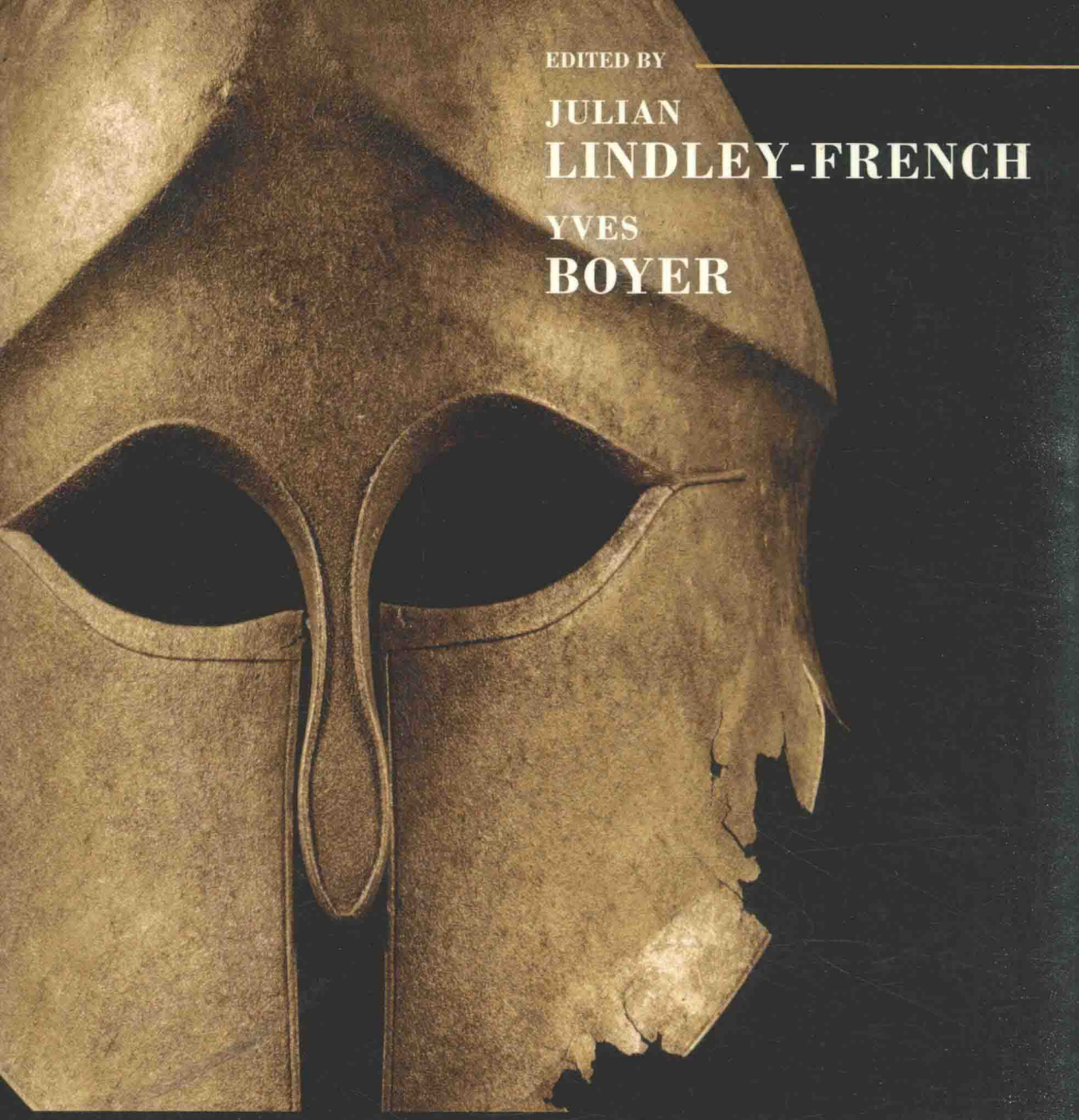

EDITED BY

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The Oxford Handbook *of* WAR

THE OXFORD HANDBOOK OF

WAR

Edited by

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and

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Foreword

War is now regarded by 'civilized' societies as an exceptional, indeed a pathological condition, to be studied only in order to be prevented. But throughout most of human history war has been accepted as entirely *normal*: as normal as famine, poverty, and disease. Peace, when it has existed at all, was only a temporary and precarious interval between recovery from the last war and preparation for the next. Prolonged peace was made possible only by the existence of empires strong enough to impose their will internally and defend themselves externally over generations. When their capacity to do so disappeared, the *pax imperium* disappeared with them.

The creation and maintenance of peace demanded a far greater degree of political skill than did the waging of war. It still does. But since on the successful waging of war depended the prosperity and independence, if not the very survival, of political communities, those groups who proved most adept at it tended to dominate their societies. In order to wage war more effectively societies developed increasingly complex forms of political organization; in Europe evolving from tribal to feudal structures, from feudal to monarchical, and eventually from monarchical to the bureaucratic-national states that by the end of the nineteenth century divided Europe between them and today make up the global political system in which we live.

In Judaeo-Christian eschatology, 'perpetual peace' has always been seen as requiring divine intervention. The belief that it can be created as the result of purely human endeavour dates back no earlier than the 'Enlightenment' in eighteenth-century Europe. The Enlightenment was itself the consequence of a period of political stability and economic prosperity that resulted, exceptionally, not from imperial rule, but from the development of states whose elites shared a common culture, and the emergence within them of *philosophes* who questioned the necessity for war at all and attributed its existence to those who profited by waging it. As the basis for political consent broadened, so they believed, the necessity for war would evaporate, and peace would become ubiquitous and eternal. Like famine, disease, and poverty, war could be abolished by rational planning and endeavour.

The next two centuries did little to justify these assumptions. Famine, disease, and poverty were indeed slowly mastered in the more fortunate parts of the world. But war, so far from dying out, became infinitely more terrible—so terrible indeed that by the mid-twentieth century the development of nuclear weapons made it likely that, so far from ensuring the survival of political communities, war would result in their mutual and total destruction. This has led industrialized states to redouble their efforts to avoid internecine warfare, but their efforts cannot resolve all the global political and ideologi-

cal conflicts, international or domestic, that seem insoluble except by armed struggle. Indeed, in consequence of the political confusion into which the world has been thrown as the ideals of the Enlightenment have become global, dissolving traditional political loyalties and creating new communities demanding statehood, armed conflict in one form or another has become increasingly hard to avoid.

By slow degrees a global community may be coming into being whose members share the common culture and degree of rationality needed to resolve all their conflicts without recourse to armed force. Meanwhile, war in one form or another is likely to persist, if only between those who profit from a stable and peaceful world in spite of its imperfections, and those who do not. A 'Handbook to War' is thus needed, not so much by those responsible for waging or aspiring to abolish it, but for everyone interested in understanding the world into which they have been born and in which they hope to survive.

Professor Sir Michael Howard

Oxford University
September 2011

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Professor Sir Michael Howard gave of his time to write the Foreword for an old Oxford student who listened in awe to his breadth of both knowledge and wisdom in his study in All Souls College, Oxford. The book is graced with his Foreword and the editors hope the book in some small way honours Sir Michael for his efforts over many years to squeeze sense out of academic stones.

Dominic Byatt, Elizabeth Suffling, and Sarah Parker at Oxford University Press have been a constant source of support, advice, and encouragement. It has been a real pleasure to work with such a professional team, who are now as much friends as colleagues.

Our respective wives, Corine and Isabelle, have tolerated and supported their rather mad husbands as they have used this book to explore the Anglo-French relationship to the full, albeit thankfully fortified with French liquid culture, rather than British. Whilst we both understand war somewhat better after the experience, we certainly better understand each other. Above all, we much appreciate two partners who believed in both the project and the pair of us from the outset and maintained that belief throughout the intellectual rambling that marked the long road to this book.

However, we must reserve special thanks for our forty-six senior and very busy authors all over the world who gave of their time so generously and made this book into a unique piece of literature that combines high-level insight, knowledge, and experience in a manner never before tried.

We thank you all.

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Contents

PART III THEORIES ON THE PRACTICE OF WAR

PART IV THE STRATEGIC CONDUCT OF WAR

PART V NON-WESTERN WAYS OF WAR

PART VI THE MILITARY CONDUCT OF WAR

PART VII TECHNOLOGY, ECONOMY, INDUSTRY, AND WAR

PART X DOES WAR HAVE A FUTURE?

INTRODUCTION

JULIAN LINDLEY-FRENCH AND YVES BOYER

Only the dead have seen the end of war.

Plato

All that is necessary for the triumph of evil is that good men do nothing.

Edmund Burke

Orator, philosopher, and politician (1729–97)

Introduction

Understanding change and continuity in the broad domain that is war is the mission of *The Oxford Handbook on War*. It is thus a study of a political, military, and social phenomenon that seems destined sadly to scar the twenty-first century, much as it did the twentieth. To consider war in the round, therefore, the book brings together some of the most respected senior academics, policy-makers, and practitioners to consider two simple questions that challenged the ancients, such as Clausewitz and Sun Tzu—how to avoid war, but if war must be fought, how to end it quickly? The Handbook is indeed a book of global scope and ambition, spanning scholars and practitioners alike. As such the contrasting traditions of thought apparent in the work are also reflected in the different modes of expression that can be found herein. That is a key strength of the volume and we have therefore made every effort to adhere as closely as possible to the style of expression sought by each author.

Whilst systemic war is happily absent from today's world the scale of contemporary conflict suggests that Plato was indeed correct when he said (or was purported to have said) that only the dead have seen the end of war. Indeed, if there is a core message from this book it is the following: war cannot be wished away but nor is it inevitable. War is unpredictable.

War will continue to be prepared for, but few states will actively seek it. However, when war starts the only consequence that is inevitable is the unintended. Still, there remains a fatalistic quality to war, even in the twenty-first century. Be it human nature so critiqued by Hobbes or the flawed international system of flawed states so analysed by the likes of Carr, Morgenthau, and Waltz, war is deep in the human psyche. Indeed, born of a potent cocktail of partnership, aspiration, friction, need, instability, and conflict, for all the post-modern will to wish war away it is still so often the dangerously classical reality that is war which prevails as the most compelling change agent in human affairs.

Therefore, the need for war to be better understood, not just from one political, cultural, or technical angle, but from many, pertains and persists. Thus, *The Oxford Handbook on War* purposely seeks to bring together many different and differing perspectives and experiences to consider war. As the American theorist Graham T. Allison once famously said, 'Where one stands, depends on where one sits.'

The Handbook is divided into ten analyses of war: the fundamental causes of war; the moral and legal aspects of war; theories on the practice of war; the strategic conduct of war; non-Western ways of war; the military conduct of war; technology, economy, industry, and war; civil–military cooperation and war; war and society; and, finally, the future of war. Whilst contemporary war and its ugly sister conflict certainly inform the Handbook it deliberately takes a 'helicopter view' by seeking to identify durable and enduring fundamentals. As such, this is a reference work in which there is no central narrative, but rather a series of perspectives on key elements and aspects of war. Certainly, the Handbook is designed to be read as a book by those interested in the subject; but it can also simply be dipped into by the interested student as and when the need arises. The purpose of this Introduction is thus to offer the student informed vignettes of each chapter.

The Fundamental Causes of War

What causes war? The opening section of the Handbook explores the political, economic, and social drivers of war, as well as the ideological and systemic imperatives that create the conditions for war. The authors collectively consider how tensions become war, how power, threat, and interests are calculated, and the criteria for the launching of war. For Sir Lawrence Freedman wars of any length invariably lead to unintended consequences. Indeed, whilst war is on the one hand a purposive activity, geared to the demands of personal, group, and national identity and security, it also concerns the grim consequences of those purposes being followed to a destructive end. War has thus always been as much about conflict within states as between states. Moreover, there can be no war without acts of warfare. Hew Strachan reinforces the tenuous link between intention and consequence by suggesting that whilst the Age of Reason saw strategy more as science than art such ancient and often geometrical certainties contrast with a today in which science and art, strategy and tactics are often confused. Paradoxically and critically, strategy

(of which war should be a most-considered part) is ultimately more important for those in decline who must match ends and means. For Strachan there is a profound contrast between those who seek strategy and thus war as an agent of change and those who seek stability to defend a status quo.

George-Henri Soutou is to the point; war, history, and the objectives of war are intrinsically linked because an understanding of previous wars (well-grounded or not) plays a powerful role in preparing for the next crisis and indeed future conflict. As Soutou poignantly says, 'Wonderfully prepared for the last war' described France in 1940 but could equally apply to many other countries in different places and eras and may be no less eloquent today in explaining why states seem unable to adjust effectively to change. Christopher Coker, on the other hand, emphasizes what for him is a dangerous disconnect between a 'modern' past and a post-modern future. For Coker war has traditionally reflected a fundamental Hegelian principle: the idea that man could become free through his own efforts. However, what is post-modernity if not a response to the unfulfilled promises and thwarted hopes of the modern era and thus recognition that there can be no final resolution to the dilemmas of life? War may thus still be necessary, but it is no longer redeeming. Therefore, in the collision between the modern and post-modern worlds war has become a potentially futile effort at the risk management of a global disorder that has become the norm.

For Yves Boyer alliances are diverse: at their most simple providing supplementary forces to balance a hostile power, to offer 'a positive correlation of forces against the unknown', or a formal coalition against an opposing country or group of countries. Alliances also exist across both strategy and geography, having shape as well as function designed to achieve diplomatic gains or successful military outcomes. By their very nature alliances therefore range in both scope and role, from mere entanglements to the most compelling of formal agreements (e.g. NATO during the Cold War). Alliances are at their most efficient when political preconditions and modus operandi reflect positive political will unconstrained by 'any kind of unfriendly pressures'. Such 'plasticity of the concept of alliance' explains the duration of many pacts throughout history beyond the initial *casus belli*. However, the very efficiency of NATO has gradually led to the debatable notion that a shared belief in democratic institutions is as important to the Alliance as effective military organization. It is an evolution in the concept of alliance that is today proving increasingly and unexpectedly inconvenient to the allies.

Alfredo Valladão is the first author to take us beyond the concerns and concepts of the West and looks at war from the point of view of emerging powers. Such powers by and large lack the strategic culture that the heirs of Machiavelli take as read. For Valladão such powers are fundamentally defensive and essentially parochial, and only keen to make sure that international relations favour their national 'emergence'. Still uncertain in the exercise of 'influence', their strategy is concerned primarily with the need to prevent any impediment to their 'rise'. Instinctively conservative as international actors whilst the peaceful pursuit of power and wealth favours them, systemic war is seen by such powers as extremely dangerous.