

country, even among citizens sympathetic to the need for human rights reforms, leading to instances where the human rights groups actually ask for the international pressure to stop. In Nigeria, the naming and shaming by international organizations and domestic human rights activists over the government's decision to stone to death Amina Lawal in 2002, as a punishment for adultery, backfired when it was reported that the international campaign to stop the execution presented incorrect information about the case and stereotyped Muslim and Nigerian culture (p. 61). Local Nigerian activists were accused of working with international human rights groups to spread false information and stigmatize Nigerian laws. Domestic human rights groups became the target of retaliatory acts, which prompted them to request that international pressure stop.

Terman's research challenges the conventional wisdom developed by a long-standing

international relations scholarship about how we understand the effectiveness and implementation of shaming. The book does not ask readers to think of naming and shaming as a hopeless mechanism of human rights enforcement but rather as a more complex phenomenon in which the quality of dyadic relations between shamers and targets greatly affects the likelihood of shaming being employed and ultimately its effectiveness. *The Geopolitics of Shaming* offers practitioners and scholars a compelling analysis of the omnipresent politics behind the efforts to uphold the global human rights regime.

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The Ethics of Special Ops: Raids, Recoveries, Reconnaissance, and Rebels, by Deane-Peter Baker, Roger Herbert, and David Whetham (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 2023), 255 pp., \$110 cloth, \$110 eBook.

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The growing number of irregular, and often politically sensitive, threats to national security has led governments around the world to increasingly rely on remotely piloted aircraft, cyberwarfare, and special operation forces (SOF). While the ethics of conventional military operations, drone warfare, and cyberwarfare have gotten significant attention over the years, the ethics of special operations has remained largely overlooked. *The Ethics of Special Ops: Raids, Recoveries,*

Reconnaissance, and Rebels, by Deane-Peter Baker, Roger Herbert, and David Whetham, remedies this oversight.

The authors start by distinguishing special operations from conventional military operations. Baker, Herbert, and Whetham define special operations as those military operations that are conducted by special forces (p. 12). While this might seem like a vacuous claim, it carries quite a bit of theoretical as well as doctrinal significance

because it explains why the character, selection process, and training of special forces are key to the ethics of special operations (for example, the authors recognize that SOF requires independent decision-makers and creative thinkers) (p. 11). The authors repeatedly stress the idea that understanding special operations requires an understanding of special forces. I will return to this point later in this review. Special operations are further differentiated from conventional military operations by being time sensitive, secretive, or low visibility, as well as high risk. In addition, special operations often have strategic aims, unlike conventional operations, which most commonly involve military objectives. Finally, special operations are different from conventional operations in that they attempt to “overcome war’s chaos and uncertainty by circumventing rather than overpowering the will of the adversary” (p. 19).

Even though the book stresses the differences between conventional and special operations, it nonetheless argues, and persuasively so, that just war theory’s basic tenets (namely, the conditions behind *jus ad bellum* and *jus in bello*—that is, conditions for just resort to war and just fighting in war) can make sense of difficult moral questions that arise in special operations and for special forces. The authors organize those moral questions according to the type of primary mission set special ops usually undertake; namely, raids, recoveries, reconnaissance, and rebels (working with foreign local forces).

Raids “employ SOF in ‘hostile, denied, or politically sensitive environments’ to seize, destroy, capture, exploit, recover, or damage designated targets” (p. 30). They are “high risk, high reward” missions, so it is unsurprising that they give rise to a range of ethical questions, including questions about the just distribution of that high

risk (specifically among special operators and civilians). Particularly ethically challenging are the so-called kill/capture raids, which commonly involve deception and targeted killing. The authors therefore focus their discussion on drawing a line between morally permissible deception and morally precarious treachery, and between targeted killings and assassinations, and they argue that kill/capture raids can be morally justified when operationally necessary, proportionate, conducted without treachery, and when they allow space for surrender. Both in this chapter and throughout the book, the discussion is grounded in rich historical examples, including Operation Neptune Spear, the kill/capture raid that killed Osama bin Laden.

Recoveries, focused on repatriating one’s own citizens (such as prisoners of war or hostages), give rise to some of the same ethical questions as raids (of which they are a subset), including questions on the just distribution of risks. Some famous recoveries discussed include the 1943 Gran Sasso raid by German paratroopers trying to rescue Benito Mussolini and the unsuccessful Operation Ivory Coast mission conducted by the U.S. Army’s SOF in 1970 to recover POWs. Recovery raids also give rise to questions about the duty to rescue hostages and the ethics of alternative courses of action (including paying ransom), as well as to concerns about some of the main tactics of recoveries, such as “close quarter combat” and the danger it poses for both SOF and hostages.

Reconnaissance, often thought of as least ethically challenging, still gives rise to some worries, including the limits of what SOF can do to prevent detection. The authors bring much needed attention to a range of often overlooked ethical challenges that

arise in reconnaissance missions, including discussions about the moral risks that arise with the cover necessary for successful reconnaissance as well as the potential for the strategic importance of the mission to complicate ordinary proportionality and necessity calculations.

In the chapter titled “Rebels,” Baker, Herbert, and Whetham discuss the ethics of unconventional warfare more generally, and the so-called through, with, by (or train, advise, assist) mission sets. They focus on unique ethical challenges that emerge in sponsor-surrogate relationships (principal-agent), including moral hazard and adverse selection. The authors rely on just war theory—explicitly building an ethical framework for unconventional warfare on a continuum conception of just war theory—leaning not only on *jus in bello* but also on *jus ad bellum* and *jus post bellum*, and seeing the conditions of each element of just war not as discrete but as “continually interacting” (p. 122).

In the final few chapters of the book, the authors shift away from discussions of ethical issues that emerge for SOF within various mission sets and focus on government decisions to deploy SOF outside armed conflict, responsibilities around protecting SOF from higher-than-usual risk of moral injury and PTSD, and emerging problems with organizational culture in many SOF communities.

The Ethics of Special Ops offers a thoughtful and detailed look into how the ethics of special operations are different from the ethics of war. The authors provide a persuasive argument that just war theory can, *mutatis mutandis*, help us reason through those unique ethical challenges that arise in typical SOF mission sets. The conceptually hard bits, which the authors tackle skillfully and vividly using historical

examples, include: (1) identifying ethical challenges that are unique to SOF and (2) thinking through what moral theory tools we can apply to make sense of those challenges and how. What stands out the most about this book is how thoroughly grounded the argument is in real-world examples. Each new ethical problem is illustrated with rich historical narratives.

All in all, this book goes a long way in filling a gap in military ethics. Nonetheless, it would be worthwhile to mention a few important topics that are missing from this work and that should be considered in the future. First, technological advances have greatly shifted how SOF operate and how they will continue to operate. These technological advances include both AI-enabled weapons and bioconvergent enhancements. Enhancements, including brain-computer interfaces, exoskeletons, and metabolic enhancers have in the past first been given to special operators and will continue to be in the future. How special operators and forces fight today and will fight in the near future is greatly affected by these advances in technology and will influence not only how we answer some of the key questions in this book, like those about risk, but also what we think of as key ethical dilemmas unique to special operators. For example, the increased reliance on advanced technology will affect both the *selection* of special forces and their *training* as well as key skills and character traits we might seek. The authors, rightly, focus much of the book on the claim that the ethics of special operations is in large part about the character, selection, and training of special forces, but all those levers of ethical risk have increasingly been affected by technological changes and bioconvergent enhancements. In addition, the presence of robotic and AI alternatives

might significantly affect the roles SOF can play, and the situations when special operations meet the conditions of necessity. In other words, whether or not SOF is morally deployable greatly depends, as the authors rightly point out, on alternatives. In a fast-changing alternatives landscape, which includes cyber and remote warfare as well as AI-enabled weapons, instances of justified reliance on SOF might significantly drop.

Second, in addition to neglecting some issues around technological enhancements, the authors do not delve as deeply as they could into considerations of human rights law vs. humanitarian law. They discuss at great length the fact that special operations often aim at strategic goals, unlike conventional warfare. This opens the door to ask

whether human rights laws (and their theoretical underpinnings) rather than humanitarian laws (and just war theory) should play a more important role in our analysis of special operations. These suggestions for further research and analysis should not, however, detract from the overall value of the work. All things considered, this excellent book, replete with historical examples, is a much needed addition to military ethics literature.

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