



The Direction of War: Contemporary Strategy in Historical Perspective

By Sir Hew Strachan

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The wars since 9/11, both in Iraq and Afghanistan, have generated frustration and an increasing sense of failure in the West. Much of the blame has been attributed to poor strategy. In both the United States and the United Kingdom, public enquiries and defence think tanks have detected a lack of consistent direction, of effective communication, and of governmental coordination. In this important book, Sir Hew Strachan, one of the world's leading military historians, reveals how these failures resulted from a fundamental misreading and misapplication of strategy itself. He argues that the wars since 2001 have not in reality been as 'new' as has been widely assumed and that we need to adopt a more historical approach to contemporary strategy in order to identify what is really changing in how we wage war. If war is to fulfil the aims of policy, then we need first to understand war.

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- Sales Rank: #106118 in Books
- Brand: imusti
- Published on: 2014-01-20
- Released on: 2013-12-05
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 8.98" h x .59" w x 5.98" l, 1.15 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 335 pages

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Review

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Foreign Policy's 'The Best Defense' blog

"... offers much good sense."

Lawrence D. Freedman, Foreign Affairs

About the Author

Hew Strachan is Chichele Professor of the History of War at the University of Oxford and a Fellow of All Souls College. Between 2004 and 2012 he was the Director of the Oxford Programme on the Changing Character of War. He also serves on the Strategic Advisory Panel of the Chief of the Defence Staff, on the UK Defence Academy Advisory Board, and on the Council of the International Institute for Strategic Studies. Foreign Policy listed him as one of the most influential global thinkers for 2012 and he was knighted in the New Year's Honours for 2013. His books include the first volume of his projected three-volume work *The First World War* (2001), which was awarded two American military history prizes and nominated for the Glenfiddich Scottish book of the year; *The First World War: A New Illustrated History* (2003), published to

accompany a ten-part television series for Channel 4 and nominated for a British Book Award; and Carl von Clausewitz's *On War* (2007). His recent edited volumes include *The Changing Character of War* (2011) and *How Fighting Ends* (2012).

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