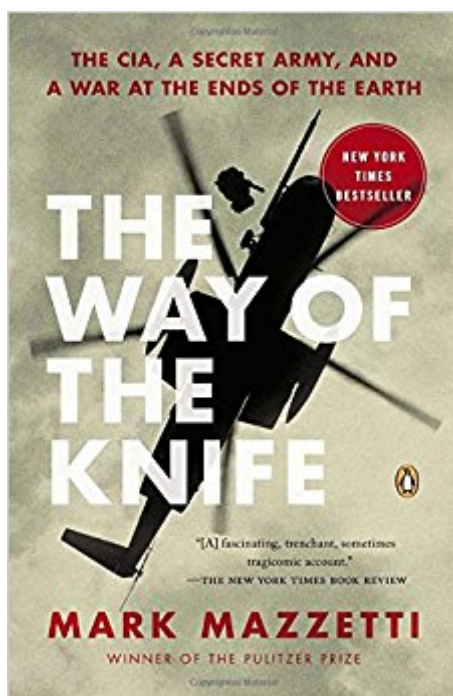


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The Way Of The Knife: The CIA, A Secret Army, And A War At The Ends Of The Earth



Synopsis

A Pulitzer Prize-winning reporter's riveting account of the transformation of the CIA and America's special operations forces into man-hunting and killing machines in the world's dark spaces: the new American way of war. The most momentous change in American warfare over the past decade has taken place away from the battlefields of Afghanistan and Iraq, in the corners of the world where large armies can't go. *The Way of the Knife* is the untold story of that shadow war: a campaign that has blurred the lines between soldiers and spies and lowered the bar for waging war across the globe. America has pursued its enemies with killer drones and special operations troops; trained privateers for assassination missions and used them to set up clandestine spying networks; and relied on mercurial dictators, untrustworthy foreign intelligence services, and proxy armies. This new approach to war has been embraced by Washington as a lower risk, lower cost alternative to the messy wars of occupation and has been championed as a clean and surgical way of conflict. But the knife has created enemies just as it has killed them. It has fomented resentments among allies, fueled instability, and created new weapons unbound by the normal rules of accountability during wartime. Mark Mazzetti tracks an astonishing cast of characters on the ground in the shadow war, from a CIA officer dropped into the tribal areas to learn the hard way how the spy games in Pakistan are played to the chain-smoking Pentagon official running an off-the-books spy operation, from a Virginia socialite whom the Pentagon hired to gather intelligence about militants in Somalia to a CIA contractor imprisoned in Lahore after going off the leash. At the heart of the book is the story of two proud and rival entities, the CIA and the American military, elbowing each other for supremacy. Sometimes, as with the raid that killed Osama bin Laden, their efforts have been perfectly coordinated. Other times, including the failed operations disclosed here for the first time, they have not. For better or worse, their struggles will define American national security in the years to come.

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Customer Reviews

The New York Times: "Superb the best account yet. Foreign Policy: "[An] indispensable CIA history. The Hindu (India): "[A] masterpiece." Dexter Filkins, author of The Forever War: "The story of how the CIA got back into the killing business is as chilling and dramatic as a spy novel--except it's true. Mark Mazzetti has laid out an extraordinary tale, tracking the spies as they track the terrorists. The Way of the Knife is as close as you'll ever get to the real thing." Jane Mayer, staff writer, The New Yorker; author of The Dark Side: The Inside Story of How the War on Terror Turned Into a War on American Ideals: "The Way of the Knife provides a stunning, inside account of the CIA's transformation after 9/11 from an intelligence agency into a global clandestine killing machine. Mazzetti, who is one of America's best national security reporters, has written a frightening, must-read book." Thomas E. Ricks, author of Fiasco and The Generals: "The United States fought three wars after 9/11: Iraq, Afghanistan and the one in the shadows. This is an authoritative account of that third war, conducted by the CIA and military Special Operators in Yemen, East Africa and, most of all, Pakistan. If you want to understand the world we live in, you need to read it." The Week: "The definitive history of how the intelligence agency became something much more like a paramilitary wing--de-evolving, in a sense, back to the days when the agency's adventurism influenced foreign policy around the world. It's a fascinating expose of what information the U.S. was not collecting and how an attempt to fill the gap fell through oversight mechanisms and complicated geopolitics in Pakistan. San Francisco Chronicle: "A highly engaging account that should please the curious and experts alike. Mazzetti manages to give a fresh reading to such oft-told stories as the bureaucratic jousting among White House, CIA and Pentagon officials over killer drones, secret prisons, harsh interrogations and going global with military assassins. The Economist: "The new American way of war is here, but the debate about it has only just begun. In The Way of the Knife, Mr Mazzetti has made a valuable contribution to it. The New Republic: "Essential background reading there

are many signs that the novel *The Way of the Knife* that Mazzetti describes is becoming unacceptably controversial at home and abroad.

(Pakistan): "Mazzetti's is an assiduously compiled account that strings together some of the missing parts in the puzzle." | *The New York Times Book Review*: "A fascinating, trenchant, sometimes tragicomic account." | *The Age* (Australia): "An astounding tale that melds the immediacy of fiction with the authority of fact." | *The Washington Post*: "[A] deeply reported and crisply written account." | While *The Way of the Knife* recounts the important shifts in the architecture of the U.S. military and intelligence communities, it also reveals the many eccentric characters who emerged during this.

Los Angeles Times: "Mazzetti finds new details and tracks the ominous blurring of traditional roles between soldiers and spies, the lush growth of a military-intelligence complex, and what the shift portends for the future....a valuable addition to a canon that is exposing America's use of lethal operations far from declared war zones." | *Foreign Affairs*: "[A] fine account." | Mazzetti describes in compelling detail the agency's turf battles with the Pentagon, its awkward relations with its Pakistani counterpart, and its reliance on a motley collection of freelancers and private contractors.

Popmatters: "Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Mark Mazzetti's *The Way of the Knife* makes for an incisive guide to what he terms the 'shadow war' being waged in multiple countries around the world, away from prying eyes....[W]ith crisp, precision reporting, Mazzetti lays out a chronology of how one thing led to another after al-Qaeda's asymmetric attacks in 2001 and the ruinously bloody and inconclusive invasions that followed exposed glaring weaknesses in both the American military and its intelligence services." | *Kirkus Reviews*: "A well-reported, smoothly written book for anyone who wants to understand contemporary American military might and the widespread hatred for the U.S. that has been the result."

Mark Mazzetti is a national security correspondent for the New York Times. He has received numerous awards, including the George Polk Award, and he shared a Pulitzer Prize for reporting. He lives in Washington, D.C.

This is an interesting book about the evolution of the CIA's and the US military's use of armed force--principally drones--around the world, particularly in areas in which war has not been declared. The author does a good job of describing the various incidents, decisions, and personalities in the years since 9/11 that have shaped these policies, and seems to have interviewed many of the key

players. One of my favorite quotes from the book was from a former CIA operative in Pakistan, who said that the saying went that "every day on station in Pakistan you knew a bit less, until on the last day of your posting, you knew absolutely nothing"--surely a telling description of the fantastic complexity of the situation on the ground there. That said, readers should be prepared for what is mostly an account of bureaucratic infighting within the US security establishment, rather than an account of the hostilities themselves. For instance, in aggregate the positions of CIA and military lawyers took up far more space in this book than an account of the raid on OBL. Another major topic in the book are the fraught relations between the CIA and the Pakistani spy agency and military. Overall a very good book, just more focused on bureaucratic infighting than I expected.

This is an excellent book that traces the evolution of the CIA from a strictly intelligence gathering agency to one which now conducts paramilitary operations, including drone kills, in the war against terrorism. (It also points out that the CIA has previously moved back and forth from pure intelligence gathering to planned assassinations etc.). Not to be outdone, the Dept. of Defense through the development of the Joint Special Operations Command also conducts drone kills and other special ops, even in countries that we are not officially at war with. In some instances the CIA and DOD get in each others way in the same country. The book provides good current information re who is doing what in which countries. One result of the CIA's new emphasis on paramilitary operations has been the deterioration of their intelligence gathering responsibilities. While they've been working closely with the intelligence agencies of Arab countries they missed the fact that the govts. of those countries were becoming increasingly unpopular with their own people. The "Arab Spring" caught them by surprise and they are playing catch-up from Libya and Tunisia to Egypt and Syria. There will most likely be another national debate on what the CIA should be doing in the future - intelligence gathering only or continuing with paramilitary activities. I read the book "Top Secret" by Dana Priest a couple of years ago concerning the growth in govt. agencies that deal with terrorism since 9/11. In both that book and this there are some disturbing stories about some of the contractors who sell technology and manpower services to the govt. Tax money is being shoveled at these companies. In some cases they hire govt. workers who are trained in anti-terrorist and intel gathering skills and who already have security clearances. They pay them more than the govt. salaries they were making and yet use govt. money to pay those salaries. Some of these govt. contractors are an "interesting" bunch of characters. Some have their own agendas they want to carry out for personal or political reasons. Some are in it mainly for the money. They buy and sell influence, have many contacts inside the govt. and are not too scrupulous about how they conduct

their business. They do serve a purpose at times but they can also cause crises in our relations with other countries. There is not much transparency in their activities due to the secret nature of their work. Another issue described in the book is getting increasing public attention. This is the "how and why" of our drone assassinations. We now tend to kill rather than capture terrorists because of the problems encountered with captured terrorists. We no longer want to put them in Guantanamo. There is political opposition to trying them in our court system etc. The current embarrassing hunger strikes among the Guantanamo prisoners will focus even more heat on the issue. Again this book provides very useful background to this type of issue.

This book is about the fundamental changes that have occurred in the CIA and the US govt as to how to wage war against non-state enemies in the post 9/11 world. In presenting a composite picture of these changes, the author shows how the roles of the CIA and the Pentagon have overlapped and even switched. He raises moral and ethical questions associated with conducting 'war' on a country without ever declaring 'war', killing 'enemies' in foreign lands by remotely piloted drones and outsourcing espionage and killing to private firms and mercenaries. These are thought-provoking questions to ponder about. Mark Mazetti traces the philosophy of the CIA over the past fifty years as follows: In the 1960s, the CIA was allowed to carry out assassinations overseas as part of its job. In the 70s, President Ford reversed all that, forbidding the CIA from being a killing machine and instead making it focus on intelligence gathering and spying as its primary job. However, 9/11 changed all that yet again, with the CIA getting into the business of tracking down Islamic extremists, incarcerating and torturing them overseas. The adverse reaction to this practice and the Congressional indictments that followed, made them choose the silver bullet of killing terrorists abroad again through remote-controlled drones without opting for on-the-ground assassination squads. In doing so, the American government has outsourced the basic functions of spycraft to private contractors, making the American way of war morph from clashes between tank columns - into the shadows, outside the declared war zones. In the process, the constraints on who can be killed, where they can be killed and when they can be killed have been conveniently blurred. The author says that the challenge of Al-Qaeda has led the Pentagon, the CIA and the US Govt into paradoxical and inconsistent positions. The Clinton administration, though opposed to the CIA carrying out the assassination of Osama bin Laden through hit-squads, was okay with killing him through Tomahawk missiles. In the same way, President Obama, though a liberal, finds no contradiction in embracing and expanding the killing program through the drones, which has resulted in the deaths of substantial number of civilians, non-combatants and even allies, apart from

suspected terrorists. Mark Mazetti clearly believes that the CIA should not stray away from its primary mission of spying and gathering intelligence. He attributes this 'straying' as the reason for the CIA getting blind-sided by the Arab Spring events in Tunisia, Egypt and Libya in 2010-12. Though it is tempting to agree with this, I remember reading in Tim Werner's book, 'The Legacy of the Ashes', about the CIA getting blindsided by many world events even before 9/11. For example, the CIA did not foresee India going for an atomic blast in 1998. Nor did they foresee the sudden collapse of Communism in 1990-92 or even the invasion of Kuwait by Saddam Hussein in 1991. The CIA has the image of an all-powerful God-like entity in the eyes of developing countries. However, in reality, it is probably just a massive bureaucracy struggling to make sure that its left-hand is aware of what the right-hand is doing. I found the chapters on the CIA's role in Pakistan, Yemen and Somalia quite absorbing and revelatory. The sections on Pakistan show that the US got quite fed up with the 'double game' of the ISI and the Pak army, resulting in giving full rein to the CIA to violate the country's borders. Years before the assault on Osama bin Laden in 2011, the Navy Seals had landed inside Pakistan and conducted operations in Damadola in the Bajaur agency without the Pak army ever being aware of it. This seems to have given the confidence for the later invasion to kill OBL. The US never informed President Musharraf of special operations that were carried out inside Pakistan. During the 2005 earthquake in Kashmir, the CIA slipped in many covert officers into Pak without the ISI's knowledge under the cover of relief efforts. The book paints a dismal picture of Pak-US relations at all levels. There are fascinating accounts of how the CIA pursued al-Shabab in Somalia and killed the American citizen Anwar al-Aulaki in Yemen. After reading the book, I am compelled to think that this spree of 'killing by remote control' could end dangerously, similar to making the atomic bomb and waging cyber-warfare. The atomic bomb was seen as a way to bring fascism to its end in Japan without loss of American lives. But the nuclear weapon has since proliferated and has come to threaten all of us. Similarly, internet viruses like Stuxnet were deployed towards a 'bloodless' destruction of Iran's nuclear program. But, it also got out of control, resulting in more cyber espionage and state-sponsored viruses threatening the highly-networked infrastructures of the advanced industrial nations. We are likely to see in future many countries following the 'US lead' in waging war (without declaring war) and killing citizens of another country through remote controlled drones, exacerbating tensions among nations and power-blocks. It is possible that the US has let another dangerous genie out of the bottle.

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