



America's Dirty Wars: Irregular Warfare from 1776 to the War on Terror

By Russell Crandall



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This book examines the long, complex experience of American involvement in irregular warfare. It begins with the American Revolution in 1776 and chronicles big and small irregular wars for the next two and a half centuries. Examples taken from the American experience reveal that fighting - and, more so, winning - all types of wars is extraordinarily complex, frustrating, controversial and bloody. What is readily apparent in dirty wars is that failure is painfully tangible while success is often amorphous. Successfully fighting these wars often entails striking a critical balance between military victory and politics. America's status as a democracy only serves to make fighting - and, to a greater degree, winning - these irregular wars even harder. Rather than futilely insisting that Americans should not or cannot fight this kind of irregular war, Russell Crandall argues that we would be better served by considering how we can do so as cleanly and successfully as possible.

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Editorial Review

Review

"Russell Crandall has provided us with an extremely valuable history of America's involvement in "dirty wars" throughout our history - with vignettes of comparison with similar engagements by other nations. He documents events dimly remembered, if at all. He usefully explores the political and ethical difficulty of effectively pursuing such campaigns in a democratic state ostensibly committed to human rights and respect for the rule of law."

Martin L. Cook, Admiral James Bond Stockdale Chair of Professional Military Ethics, US Naval War College

"A fascinating account and analysis, one that displays both a remarkable range of command and includes a steady stream of stories well told. Crandall punctures some of the myths about American counterinsurgency, even while showing why we've never been able to avoid it for long."

Daniel Kurtz-Phelan, Fellow, New America Foundation; former member of the Secretary of State's Policy Planning Staff

"Although waging irregular wars has become unpopular of late, such conflicts cannot be wished away. Russell Crandall's America's Dirty Wars provides an exhaustive historical account of the United States' successes and failures in combating elusive foes. He demonstrates that although success in these wars is hardly assured, neither is it impossible."

Thomas G. Mahnken, Jerome E. Levy Chair of Economic Geography and National Security, US Naval War College

"Russell Crandall's gracefully written America's Dirty Wars not only provides a clear and valuable account of the many irregular conflicts in which the United States has been entangled since its eighteenth-century Revolution, it also shows how the country has learned - and failed to learn - from its own history."

Michael Mandelbaum, Christian A. Herter Professor of American Foreign Policy, The Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies, and author of The Road to Global Prosperity

"Russell Crandall has quickly established himself as a leader in a new generation of social science/foreign policy analysts. His latest book is a sweeping but focused overview and analysis of one of the more fascinating aspects of American history - counterinsurgency warfare. Crandall's goal is to provide a panoramic view of the US experience in dirty wars - lessons learned, lessons forgotten. Through his sophisticated research and effective presentation, Crandall fully offers the most comprehensive work of its kind to date. I recommend this volume without hesitation."

Riordan Roett, Professor and Director of the Latin American Studies Program and Western Hemisphere Studies, The Johns Hopkins University

About the Author

Russell Crandall is a Professor of International Politics and American Foreign Policy at Davidson College. His previous books include *The United States and Latin America after the Cold War* (Cambridge, 2008); *Gunboat Democracy: US Interventions in the Dominican Republic, Grenada, and Panama* (2006); and *Driven by Drugs: US Policy Toward Colombia* (2008). Interwoven with his academic career, Crandall has held high-level foreign policy appointments within several sectors of the US government, including the Joint Chiefs of Staff and Office of the Secretary of Defense at the Pentagon and the National Security Council at

the White House.

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