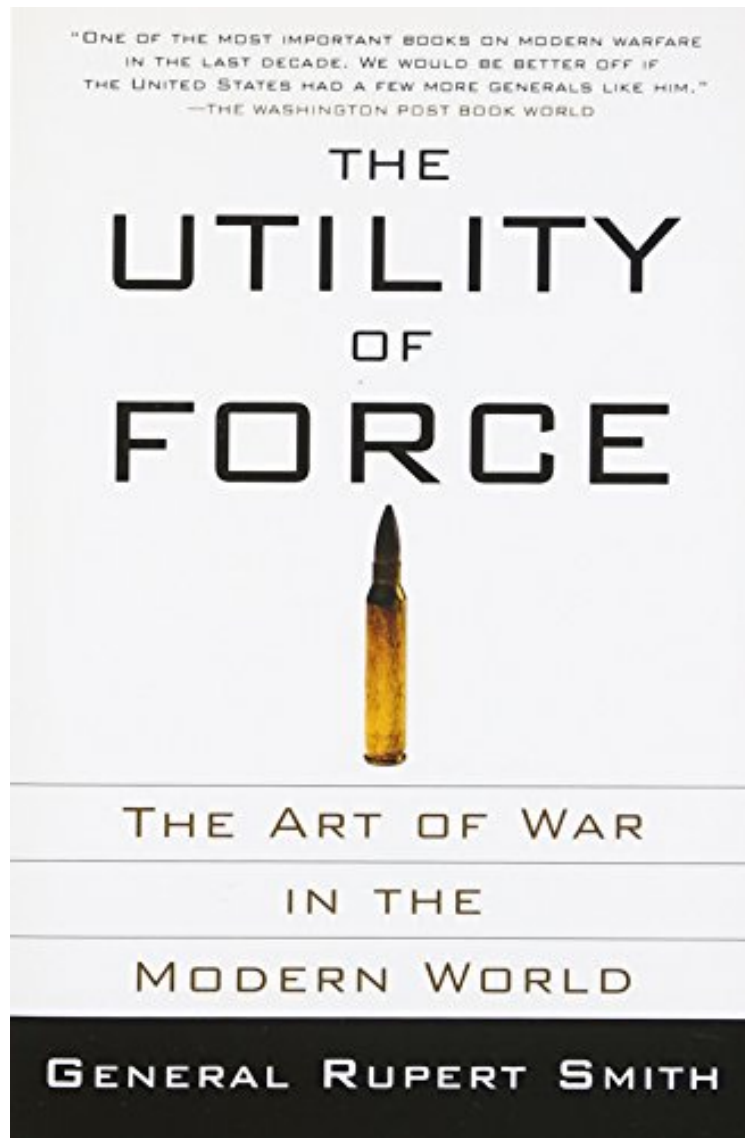


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## The Utility of Force: The Art of War in the Modern World

*Rupert Smith*

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#127146 in Books Rupert Smith 2008-02-12 2008-02-12 Original language: English PDF # 1 8.00 x .90 x 5.201, .83 #File Name: 0307278115448 pages The Utility of Force The Art of War in the Modern World | File size: 61.Mb

**Rupert Smith : The Utility of Force: The Art of War in the Modern World** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Utility of Force: The Art of War in the Modern World:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Good perspective, creative way of thinking, minor mistakes about Clausewitz's theory By Fernando Belmonte Archetti Mr. Rupert Smith's book's an easy read, very coherently organised and provides a general picture of the state of military affairs today, making a sound use of Kuhn's paradigm concepts,

in quite an interesting fashion. He describes the interstate industrial paradigm, its formation, the conditions that made it possible, its climax in the world wars of the XX<sup>th</sup> century, the anomalies that followed and the new paradigm of war, that of war amongst the people. My main complaint is that Mr. Smith doesn't appear to be a Clausewitz expert or even to have ever read Clausewitz work properly. He made the common mistake, when it comes to interpreting Clausewitz theories, of referring to a secondary set of elements as the actual trinity (wunderliche dreifaltigkeit). His use of the trinity is not properly clausewitzian, but summersian - colonel Harry Summers Jr. -, which might be interesting and useful in some situations, but doesn't correspond with Clausewitz's actual theory. One should be aware of it when reading his book. As in Summer's work, I believe that it is quite an interesting use of the concept, very useful in the context, but largely misses the point of the clausewitzian trinity. I don't believe this compromises his book in any way. It's worth the read, especially if you aren't very familiar with the subject, and his use of the paradigms of war doesn't differ fundamentally from some of Clausewitz ideas, it's, in fact, in great accordance with the changing nature of war as described by the Prussian thinker. 10 of 10 people found the following review helpful. Incredible

Observations on History of War - Muddled Prescriptions for the Future By Dianne Roberts Hindsight is always going to be more clear than trying to predict the future, and in this book where General Smith traces the history of war from the Napoleonic to the current age it is no surprise that he is far more clear and insightful looking backward than he is in looking forward. The major thesis of his book is that war has shifted from what he calls "War Between the People," typified by separate nation-states fighting till decisive victory on a distinct battlefield, to what he calls "War Amongst the People" which will feature conflict including non nation states, waged indefinitely and indecisively on an amorphous front that includes both physical lands and intangible ones such as the media. The book is very strong in several regards. First, General Smith's elucidation of Clausewitzian strategy, as well as providing the historical backdrop for when, how and why it was developed, is simply first rate. The biggest lessons drawn from Clausewitz that are still relevant today are that force must be applied to achieve some pre-determined purpose (hence the "utility of force," it is not merely the destruction of your opponent), and the concept of the trinity of government, military and the people. The best way to defeat an enemy is to break this trinity. In War Between the People this could be done conceptually more simply by flat out destroying the enemy military or their government, or perhaps more elegantly by dissolving the people's allegiance to the policies of their government and military, more effective against a democracy such as North Vietnamese efforts to reinforce and inflame the anti-war movement. Second the book's military history from Napoleon to the end of the Cold War is truly outstanding, worth the price of the book itself. Smith is certainly not alone in sensing a major shift in the type of wars we have found ourselves in for the past nearly two decades now, and in pointing out the intellectual bankruptcy of our "Revolution in Military Affairs," more a techno-advertisement than a strategic realignment of our military forces based on an understanding of our current world and the permanence of human nature. In his new War Amongst the People the Clausewitzian trinity of government, military and people still exists, clearly and distinctly for state actors, but in a much more diffused and malleable way for non state actors such as terrorists. Therefore breaking their trinity becomes a much more confusing and difficult thing to achieve, -but none the less necessary- and much of the military theory for fighting the wars of the past are no longer applicable. Unfortunately his prescriptions for how to fight our current and future wars, beyond the simple and now hopefully universally agreed upon maxim that your war must have a vision of peace you want to achieve by expending your blood and treasure, are complex and ultimately confusing. Due to being deployed to the Middle East and out of internet access for 6 months I have had to wait that long to write my review for this book, and can barely remember any of his concepts and suggestions for fighting and winning future wars, which doesn't bode well for someone trying to develop a new conceptual framework for our warriors and our society for facing the future. The biggest thing I do remember though is a much more coordinated effort needed between the military, the state department, aid groups, and especially the media. He also appears fatalistic that Wars Amongst the People are essentially intractable and will require a practically permanent peacekeeper presence like we have in the former Yugoslavia, where he commanded forces during the fighting, and developed and employed much of his thinking, and where his final chapters focus. (There is little direct application of this thinking to Iraq and Afghanistan.) The Utility of Force is an excellent work nonetheless, and highly recommended for people trying to understand the current state of the world and what we can actually do to protect ourselves. For counterpoint the works of Lt. Col. Ralph Peters are suggested too. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. The Utility of Force By James This book provides a good summary of the nature of the use of military power in the international system since the 19th century. It is not written by a historian, but by a soldier that served in several conflicts up to the highest level of command. The crux of the book is on how warfare changed from inter-state industrial war to war among the people with all the complications attached to it. His personal experience as well as his wide range of reading on the subject provides an insight into especially the conflicts of the the last three decades and provides pointers to the future and what military commanders must plan for. It is a good book for serving soldiers to read and reflect on in terms of their future tasks. The only point of criticism is that the impression is created that large armies fighting conventionally is outdated. It is too early to make a categorical statement in this regard. The history of warfare has demonstrated to phenomenon can recur. Thus, the safest option is to be prepared to conduct operations along the whole spectrum of conflict.

From a highly decorated general, a brilliant new way of understanding war and its role in the twenty-first century. Drawing on his vast experience as a commander during the first Gulf War, and in Bosnia, Kosovo, and Northern Ireland, General Rupert Smith gives us a probing analysis of modern war. He demonstrates why today's conflicts must be understood as intertwined political and military events, and makes clear why the current model of total war has failed in Iraq, Afghanistan, and other recent campaigns. Smith offers a compelling contemporary vision for how to secure our world and the consequences of ignoring the new, shifting face of war.

From Booklist In his opening remarks, Smith provocatively states, "war no longer exists." Of course, he does not mean that mass organized violence has ended; rather, he refers to the end of large-scale industrialized warfare characterized by the use of massive tank columns supported by the application of intensive air power. Smith, who spent 40 years in the British army, including service in the first Gulf War, Bosnia, and Northern Ireland, maintains the development of nuclear weapons has essentially made such warfare obsolete. Current and especially future wars fought by Western powers are likely to be low-intensity conflicts, often waged against stateless opponents. Because it is not practical or even possible to win these struggles through the application of purely military force, Smith insists a revolution, or new paradigm, must occur in our conception of these struggles. As a start, we must understand the political context in which our adversaries act. Once identified, political objectives must always drive the military efforts, Smith insists, even at the expense of "sound" military strategy. Jay Freeman Copyright American Library Association. All rights reserved One of the most important books on modern warfare in the last decade. We would be better off if the United States had a few more generals like him. The Washington Post Book World An impressive and absorbing work of military analysis. . . . Smith is the Clausewitz of low-intensity conflict and peacekeeping operations. . . . He brilliantly lays bare the newfound limits of Western military power. The New York Times Book It is hard to overstate the devastating nature of this book as an indictment of almost everything the West has done in recent years, and is doing today. The Sunday Telegraph A closely argued, searching textbook on strategy and the efficient use of military power in the post-Cold War era. The New York Times About the Author General Rupert Smith spent 40 years in the British Army, commanding the UK Armoured Division in the Gulf War, general in charge in Northern Ireland, commander of the UN forces in Bosnia and Deputy Commander of NATO. He lives in London.