



Waging Modern War: Bosnia, Kosovo, and the Future of Combat

By General Wesley K. Clark

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The Supreme Allied Commander who directed and won NATO's war in Kosovo offers a unique behind-the-scenes look at how the war was actually fought, and explains the conflict's surprising implications for how war will be waged in the decades to come. Ugly, shocking, frightening, war came to Europe once more in March 1999. The world watched in dismay as Yugoslavia's military machine attacked its own citizens in the province of Kosovo. Pictures of refugees fleeing and stories of murder and rape flashed to the top of the news. But this time, the United States and its allies intervened. Using an innovative, high-technology air operation, NATO brought modern military power to bear against Serb forces in the field and the machinery of repression that backed them up. It was modern war-limited in scope, measured in effect, extraordinarily complex in execution. The American commander who oversaw this massive military effort and managed the often incompatible demands of NATO's nineteen governments was General Wesley K. Clark. In *Waging Modern War*, Clark recounts not only the events that led to armed conflict, but also the context within which he made the key strategic decisions. He also describes, for the first time, the personal conflict he felt as he walked the tightrope of high diplomacy and military strategy and navigated the crushing restraints of domestic politics. Laying out the new realities of war-fighting and war-planning, Clark reveals how the American military infrastructure will have to adapt if it is to meet new threats. This is the story of war today, and as it will be fought tomorrow.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

U.S. Army General Clark describes this account of his tenure as commander of the 1999 Kosovo operation as a personal memoir. But the book, Clark's first, uses a narrative of the campaign as the springboard for a provocative analysis of contemporary war. Clark, in contrast to other American military leaders, places protecting human rights among U.S. vital interests. By the time diplomatic and political options have been exhausted and armed force is employed, he notes, the stakes have become too high for defeat or withdrawal to be acceptable. The military effort is thus impelled by political factors (and political failures), which in turn renders difficult the application of traditional "principles of war" that focus on quick, decisive victory.

Military options are further restricted, Clark notes, by dynamics within both the general public and the armed forces that make unacceptable both taking casualties and inflicting them in any number. Clark correspondingly regards air campaigns, along the lines developed in Kosovo but with improved technology, better intelligence and a more sophisticated public-relations element, as the most generally acceptable future form of large-scale military action. Ground operations, he declares, are currently too slow, too costly, too indecisive and too unpredictable to be a first choice in the complicated political and diplomatic matrices of modern warmaking. Instead, Clark favors developing a more mobile, more deployable U.S. army, and urges considering Europe's relatively successful experience in constabulary-type missions. In the same context, Clark disparages the prospects of unilateral action, instead arguing for the overriding importance of maintaining integrated, allied military operations. Clark's affirmation of the continued importance of NATO is, however, balanced by his demonstration that, as supreme allied commander, Europe, he still retained ample authority to protect U.S. interests. Complex and controversial, this work merits wide public discussion for its analysis of a superpower's role in a regional conflict the sort the U.S. will most likely continue to face in the coming decade.

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About the Author

General Wesley K. Clark, U.S.A. (Ret.), was Supreme Allied Commander, Europe, from 1997 to 2000. He served previously as director of strategic plans and policy for the Joint Staff at the Pentagon from 1994 to 1996 and was the lead military negotiator for the Bosnian Peace Accords at Dayton in 1995.

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