



Drone: Remote Control Warfare (MIT Press)

By Hugh Gusterson

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"[A] thoughtful examination of the dilemmas this new weapon poses." --
Foreign Affairs

Drones are changing the conduct of war. Deployed at presidential discretion, they can be used in regular war zones or to kill people in such countries as Yemen and Somalia, where the United States is not officially at war. Advocates say that drones are more precise than conventional bombers, allowing warfare with minimal civilian deaths while keeping American pilots out of harm's way. Critics say that drones are cowardly and that they often kill innocent civilians while terrorizing entire villages on the ground. In this book, Hugh Gusterson explores the significance of drone warfare from multiple perspectives, drawing on accounts by drone operators, victims of drone attacks, anti-drone activists, human rights activists, international lawyers, journalists, military thinkers, and academic experts.

Gusterson examines the way drone warfare has created commuter warriors and redefined the space of the battlefield. He looks at the paradoxical mix of closeness and distance involved in remote killing: is it easier than killing someone on the physical battlefield if you have to watch onscreen? He suggests a new way of understanding the debate over civilian casualties of drone attacks. He maps "ethical slippage" over time in the Obama administration's targeting practices. And he contrasts Obama administration officials' legal justification of drone attacks with arguments by international lawyers and NGOs.

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Editorial Review

Review

Gusterson makes it clear why we don't speak clearly about drones. Only by muddying the waters can we bear to acknowledge what we have invented: a new and oddly intimate way station in the mechanization of death.

(Sherry Turkle, Abby Rockefeller Mauzé Professor of the Social Studies of Science and Technology, MIT; author of *Reclaiming Conversation: The Power of Talk in a Digital Age*)

Hugh Gusterson's *Drone* is the most intelligent analysis of drone warfare currently available -- and the most probing critique of how the United States is using drones in places like Pakistan and Yemen.

(Michael Walzer, author of *Just and Unjust Wars*)

With his discerning anthropologist's eye, Hugh Gusterson has simultaneously produced both a wide-ranging and a focused study of the role of drones in current U.S. military policy. No relevant piece of evidence has escaped his attention, but he uses his sources economically to extract the most telling details. He concludes with a choice of dystopian (his word) and utopian (mine) drone futures that would convince me to bet -- however reluctantly -- on the former. Compellingly written throughout, Gusterson's book marks a major contribution to a crucial debate.

(Matthew Evangelista, coeditor of *The American Way of Bombing: Changing Ethical and Legal Norms, from Flying Fortresses to Drones*)

[I]nsightful.

(*Publishers Weekly*)

Among a blizzard of new books probing drone warfare, Hugh Gusterson's slim volume is among the most careful, concise and insightful.... Even anyone who thinks they know all there is to know about drone warfare will profit from Gusterson's rich and penetrating study.

(*Logos: A Journal of Modern Society & Culture*)

In this excellent book, the anthropologist Hugh Gusterson argues that drones have fundamentally transformed the nature of war.

(*Prospect Magazine*)

[A] thoughtful examination of the dilemmas this new weapon poses.

(*Foreign Affairs*)

About the Author

Hugh Gusterson is Professor of Anthropology and International Affairs at George Washington University. He is the author of *Nuclear Rites* and *People of the Bomb: Portraits of America's Nuclear Complex*.

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