



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

*By Rupert Smith*

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**The Utility of Force: The Art of War in the Modern World** By Rupert Smith

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.

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### Editorial Review

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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*

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### Review

"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 Review*

"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.

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