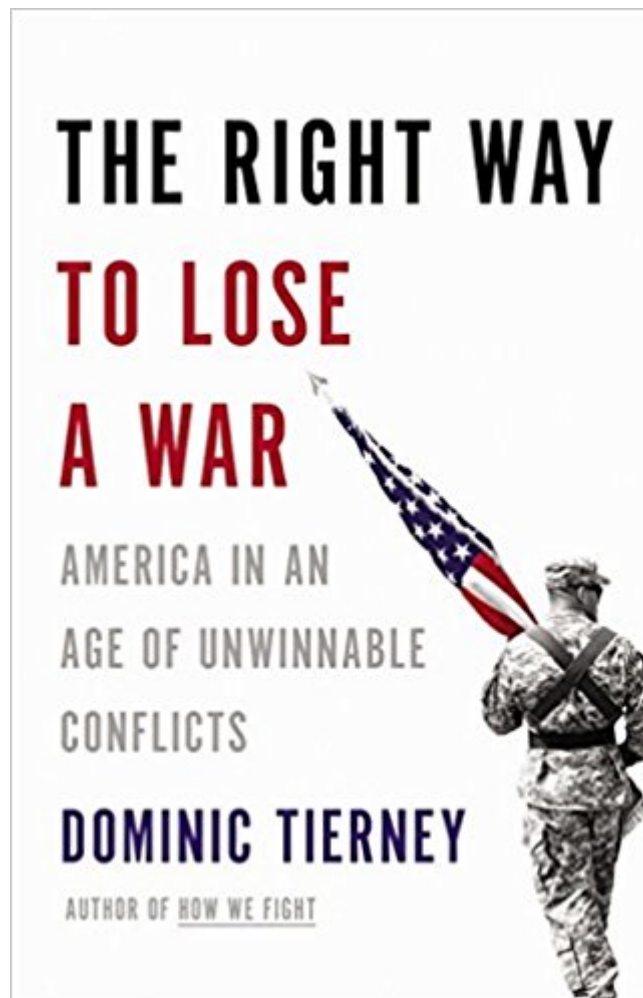




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The Right Way To Lose A War: America In An Age Of Unwinnable Conflicts



Synopsis

Why has America stopped winning wars? For nearly a century, up until the end of World War II in 1945, America enjoyed a Golden Age of decisive military triumphs. And then suddenly, we stopped winning wars. The decades since have been a Dark Age of failures and stalemates-in Korea, Vietnam, Iraq, and Afghanistan-exposing our inability to change course after battlefield setbacks. In this provocative book, award-winning scholar Dominic Tierney reveals how the United States has struggled to adapt to the new era of intractable guerrilla conflicts. As a result, most major American wars have turned into military fiascos. And when battlefield disaster strikes, Washington is unable to disengage from the quagmire, with grave consequences for thousands of U.S. troops and our allies. But there is a better way. Drawing on interviews with dozens of top generals and policymakers, Tierney shows how we can use three key steps-surge, talk, and leave-to stem the tide of losses and withdraw from unsuccessful campaigns without compromising our core values and interests. Weaving together compelling stories of military catastrophe and heroism, this is an unprecedented, timely, and essential guidebook for our new era of unwinnable conflicts. *The Right Way to Lose a War* illuminates not only how Washington can handle the toughest crisis of all-battlefield failure-but also how America can once again return to the path of victory.

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Since 1945, the U.S. has experienced little except military stalemate and loss - the only exception being the Gulf War of 1991. The other conflicts - The Korean War, The Vietnam War, Iraq War II,

and Afghanistan. Author Tierney contends that one of the reasons is that since 1945, America's new strength created a constant temptation to use force, and we've become involved in distant conflicts. Another reason - the nature of warfare has changed in ways that have made military campaigns much more difficult to win. Nuclear weapons have stabilized relations between major powers, while growing international trade has made interstate conflict more costly/irrational. Thus, conflict has shifted from between countries to within countries in which the opponent has home-field advantage and Americans often don't comprehend local traditions, politics, or religions. Example - In 2006 there were 1,000 American officials in the Baghdad embassy, but only 33 spoke Arabic and only six of them were fluent. Another problem - these conflicts have been limited wars for Americans, and total war for those fighting us - we have more power, our opponents more willpower. Thus, Vietnamese insurgents endured continual U.S. punishment until we were no longer willing to fight. American firepower causes collateral damage, loses hearts and minds, and helps recruit more insurgents. Similarly with our economic blockades - eg. vs. Saddam's Iraq. We've also found that getting out of these wars can be far more difficult than getting into them. It took two years to negotiate a truce in Korea, peace talks lasted for five years in the Vietnam war, it took 21 days to capture Baghdad in 2003 - and 3,174 to leave, and we seized Kabul in November 2001 and are still there.

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