



Military Strategy as Public Discourse: America's war in Afghanistan (Cass Military Studies)

Tadd Sholtis

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This book presents the current history of United States military strategy in Afghanistan as an example of dysfunctional policy discourse among the nation's elites.

The legitimacy of a country's military strategy can become a subject of intense public debate and doubt, especially in prolonged conflicts. Arguments typically hinge on disagreements about the values at stake, the consequences of action or inaction, and the authority of those responsible for the plan. As the US entered its second decade at war in Afghanistan, political and military leaders struggled to explain the ends and means of their strategy through internal policy debates, the promotion of counterinsurgency doctrine, and day-to-day accounts of the war's progress.

Military Strategy as Public Discourse considers recent US strategy in Afghanistan as a form of valid and equitable public discussion among those with the ability to affect outcomes. The work examines the dominant forms of discourse used by the various groups of elites who make and execute strategy, and considers how representations of these forms of discourse in news media shapes elite understanding of the purpose of US efforts in wars of choice. The book proposes how policy-makers should address the problems of public discourse on war, which tends to exclude or marginalize relevant elites and focus on narrow questions of validity.

This book will be of much interest to students of strategic studies, US foreign policy, and security studies in general.

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