



TWT Gazette

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TWT

Trans World Technologies (TWT) is a commercial network with contacts and project experience in many countries around the globe

Besides consulting, project development and foreign marketing support TWT is working on analysis, studies and articles concerning current economic, technological and political topics

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Failing Rules of War

or one reason why the West and especially the US & NATO are at risk of loosing the competition of ideas internationally

This month a Pentagon spokesman after US missile attacks on state installations in Syria said “*the U.S. took extraordinary measures to avoid civilian casualties and to comply with the Law of Armed Conflict*”. Emotionally a very understandable measure in view of most likely chemical weapons use. To state however compliance with rules of war is not only hypocritical but damaging good intentions and reputation. Especially the USA, but with it also its allies, meaning more or less the majority of the western world and others, are running great risk to loose altogether their moral legitimation and advantage in the world. The inflationary application of the 2001 US Authorization for the Use of Military Force (AUMF) needs to be stopped and changed. Of course one can challenge that Syria in its current situation no longer is a sovereign state and that the Syrian Government no longer represents the country. But if so, then such needs to be agreed internationally and made publicly known. As such is not the case Syria like any other state remains a sovereign country. There might be rebellion, revolution, terrorism and whatever institutional havoc going on, but for regular foreign armed forces it globally must become again an absolute red line and no-go threshold to operate on foreign territory unless invited by this state’s government or unless there is a formal declaration of war requiring the broadest public support. Direct mingling and intervention into the domestic affairs of other people and states in past years has become too fashionable. At the same time the effects and results in no way provide any legitimacy for such policies. The criticism here does not concern any specific country or event

now but is a principle observation. In the West we like to think that we have better arguments and more moral rights to back up our decisions and actions concerning not only us but also others around the globe. It is true that in modern history the western world has influenced humanity like no other group of people. We need however to be very careful to better safeguard our generally good position and reputation. Our military always shall play an important role in this but only, if publicly it can be recognized as a temperate and just force. The currently developing new customs we see for armed forces interventions not necessarily are in line with the armed conflict principles and conventions we think to have and want to see. On the opposite some are counter-productive and a threat to justice. After 1945 and with the establishment of the United Nations there was the idea that declarations of war should become obsolete because of national defensive or UN authorized “use of force” actions only. Looking at today’s reality clearly naive thinking. There might be ever more national laws and multi-national authorizations globally but in end all what they do is to water down transparency, responsibilities and legitimacy. The West’s intervention politics after 9/11 are not successful and part of the main reasons why we now more often fail to compete more effectively in the global competition of ideas. If we decide to intervene in domestic affairs of another sovereign state and we decide to send armed forces, then it should be done either again on basis of an old fashioned, clear declaration of war (which then obviously does not segregate different groups in a population) or UN resolution. All other venues discredit our good standing and in the end of the day AUMF advocates and users need to ask themselves the question, if in reality they are not so much part of the solution but more part of the real problem the West today has in keeping, developing and defending its values and attractiveness globally.

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