

# The Way of the Knife: The CIA, a Secret Army, and a War at the Ends of the Earth<sup>1</sup>

Reviewed by Major Theodore B. Reiter\*

*Drones are the drug of choice . . . there is a seductive quality because of the feeling there are no risks. But when something is easier to use, you use it more. What is our standard . . . what [is] the threshold for the United States going to war?<sup>2</sup>*

## I. Introduction

With the World Trade Center in New York City in ruins, President George W. Bush signed an order that lifted the Central Intelligence Agency's (CIA) restriction on the use of lethal force. This order began the CIA's transformation from an "espionage service devoted to stealing the secrets of foreign governments" into "a killing machine . . . consumed with man hunting."<sup>3</sup> Mark Mazzetti's new book, *The Way of the Knife*, unveils the "shadow war" that has taken place since 2001 in undeclared war zones around the world. He also highlights the two primary U.S. actors to advance those operations: the CIA and the Pentagon's Joint Special Operations Command (JSOC).<sup>4</sup> With the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq already thoroughly covered, Mazzetti provides a glimpse into the less widely-known realm of lethal operations occurring elsewhere, to include in Pakistan, Yemen, Somalia, and the Philippines.<sup>5</sup> Mazzetti focuses on the U.S. government's proliferation and increased use of unmanned aerial vehicles (drones)<sup>6</sup> over the past decade;<sup>7</sup>

the negative ramifications for the CIA in their ability to collect and analyze intelligence because of their overemployment of drones; and the United States' involvement with Pakistan at the strategic and tactical level.

The book covers the years 2001 to 2012 and is organized by interweaving topics in lieu of by chronology, such as sections on the marriage between the CIA and Pakistan's Directorate for *Inter-Services Intelligence*, and then the unraveling of the relationship.<sup>8</sup> Other chapters focus mainly on the use of the drones.<sup>9</sup> Elsewhere, though, Mazzetti discusses multiple subjects in a single chapter despite the subjects having little connection to one another.<sup>10</sup> Though it increases the ease of readability, such an unsystematic organization style disrupts the author's logical analysis. Notwithstanding this flaw, the book is manifestly well researched by an author experienced in both his subject-matter and published writing.<sup>11</sup> While Mazzetti's prior professional experience and published works have assisted him in completing the book, the lens by which he views these topics may have contributed to one of the main weaknesses of the *The Way of the Knife*: a lack of objectivity.

\* Judge Advocate, U.S. Army. Student, 62d Judge Advocate Officer Graduate Course, The Judge Advocate General's Legal Center and School, U.S. Army, Charlottesville, Virginia.

<sup>1</sup> MARK MAZZETTI, *THE WAY OF THE KNIFE: THE CIA, A SECRET ARMY, AND A WAR AT THE ENDS OF THE EARTH* (2013).

<sup>2</sup> Interview by Bob Schieffer with Mark Mazzetti, Author of *THE WAY OF THE KNIFE: THE CIA, A SECRET ARMY AND A WAR AT THE ENDS OF THE EARTH*, *Face the Nation* (CBS News television broadcast Apr. 7, 2013), <http://www.cbsnews.com/video/watch/?id=50144342n> (quote by Mark Mazzetti).

<sup>3</sup> MAZZETTI, *supra* note 1, at 4.

<sup>4</sup> *Id.* at 82, 128–35. The author mentions Pentagon and Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) operations in Iraq and Afghanistan as well, but to a limited degree and only to buttress explaining the "secret war." He also uses the terms "secret war" and "shadow war" interchangeably throughout the book.

<sup>5</sup> *Id.* at 5. The author includes only one paragraph in the book on the secret war taking place in the Philippines, though U.S. Special Forces have had troops in the country since 2002. See Wyatt Olsen, *U.S. Troops See Terrorism Threat Diminish on Philippine Island of Mindanao*, STARS & STRIPES (Sept. 28, 2012), available at <http://www.stripes.com/news/us-troops-see-terrorism-threat-diminish-on-philippine-island-of-mindanao-1.191126>.

<sup>6</sup> Throughout the book, the author uses the more colloquial term "drones" to describe unmanned aerial vehicles. For that reason, the term is also used throughout this review.

<sup>7</sup> See generally U.S. DEP'T OF ARMY, REG. 95-23, UNMANNED AERIAL FLIGHT REGULATIONS (14 May 2004). The regulation provides that an unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) is an "aircraft capable of flight beyond visual line of sight under remote or autonomous control for military

purposes, primarily for reconnaissance, surveillance, and other intelligence gathering missions." The aircraft may be used for aerial target identification, or "for the adjustment of artillery and mortar fire." In addition, UAVs may be equipped to carry weaponry. *Id.* at 39.

<sup>8</sup> MAZZETTI, *supra* note 1, ch. 2, 14.

<sup>9</sup> *Id.* ch. 5, 16.

<sup>10</sup> At times the book feels akin to dozens of independent short stories that the author was only able to combine using weak mortar. As an example, a chapter that discusses how Joint Special Operations Command (JSOC) and the CIA began synchronizing their efforts also contains the following: the Pentagon not trusting CIA's intelligence; the lack of a standard operating procedure to obtain approval for lethal operations in countries outside of Iraq and Afghanistan; discussion of the CIA's interrogation techniques and detention operations; and the attempted outsourcing to Blackwater U.S.A. of lethal operations. *Id.* at 115–37.

<sup>11</sup> Mazzetti is currently a national security correspondent for the *New York Times*, and since 2001 has reported on military affairs for the *Los Angeles Times* and *U.S. News & World Report*. MARK MAZZETTI—*Biography*, <http://markmazzetti.net/biography/> (last visited May 14, 2014); see also Interview by Charlie Rose with Mark Mazzetti, *Bloomberg TV* (interview conducted on Apr. 10, 2013), available at <http://www.bloomberg.com/video/author-mazzetti-on-cia-book-the-way-of-the-knife-IodnNJ84RiyDhuQHgTNh~g.html> (information provided by Mark Mazzetti). In 2009, Mazzetti shared a Pulitzer Prize for "reporting on the intensifying violence in Pakistan and Afghanistan, and Washington's response thereto." Mazzetti also investigated and broke the story of the CIA's destruction of interrogation videotapes. MAZZETTI, *supra* note 1, biography on jacket.

## II. The Secret War

The *Way of the Knife* is derived from a phrase used in 2010 by John Brennan, then Assistant to the President for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism, to describe President Obama's desired mechanism for waging war in the future. Brennan stated during a speech that "we will exercise force prudently, recognizing that we often need to use a scalpel, not a hammer to accomplish the mission."<sup>12</sup> In lieu of the "messy, costly wars that topple governments and require years of American occupation," the nation would now employ special operation forces and armed drones to defeat its enemies.<sup>13</sup> The author declares without explanation that Brennan's "analogy suggests that this new kind of war is without costs or blunders—a surgery without complications."<sup>14</sup> Mazzetti continues that the "way of the knife has created enemies just as it has obliterated them. [The secret war] has fomented resentment among former allies and at times contributed to instability even as it has attempted to bring order to chaos."<sup>15</sup> Moreover, he writes that these secret operations have "lowered the bar for waging war, and [that] it is now easier for the U.S. to carry out killing operations at the ends of the earth than at any other time in its history."<sup>16</sup> The clear inference is that Mazzetti disapproves of use of the "scalpel" to wage this war,<sup>17</sup> and he supports that inference by discussing previous and ongoing military operations in undeclared war zones.

<sup>12</sup> MAZZETTI, *supra* note 1, at 5; John Brennan, Assistant to the President for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism, Speech at the Center for Strategic and International Studies: Securing the Homeland by Renewing American Strength, Resilience and Values (May 26, 2010) [hereinafter Brennan Speech] (complete transcript is available at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/remarks-assistant-president-homeland-security-and-counterterrorism-john-brennan-csi>).

<sup>13</sup> MAZZETTI, *supra* note 1, at 5.

<sup>14</sup> *Id.* at 5–6. Interestingly, the subsequent sentences to the cited Brennan quote acknowledge that the secret war is not without collateral damage, and issues a warning of prudence when using force for that very reason. He states,

When we know of terrorists who are plotting attacks against us, we have a responsibility to take action to defend ourselves—and we will do so. At the same time, an action that eliminates a single terrorist, but causes civilian casualties, can, in fact, inflame local populations and create far more problems—a tactical success, but a strategic failure. So we need to ensure that our actions are more precise and more accurate than ever before. This is something the President not only expects, but demands.

Brennan Speech, *supra* note 12 (quote by John Brennan).

<sup>15</sup> MAZZETTI, *supra* note 1, at 6.

<sup>16</sup> *Id.*

<sup>17</sup> For another book review that draws the same conclusion on this point, see Richard T. Willing, *The Way of the Knife*, *Studies in Intelligence*, vol. 57, no. 3 (Sept. 2013), available at [https://www.cia.gov/library/center-for-the-study-of-intelligence/csi-publications/csi-studies/studies/vol-57-no-3/pdfs/Studies%20in%20Intelligence\\_57-3%20Sep2013.pdf](https://www.cia.gov/library/center-for-the-study-of-intelligence/csi-publications/csi-studies/studies/vol-57-no-3/pdfs/Studies%20in%20Intelligence_57-3%20Sep2013.pdf).

## III. The Angry Bird<sup>18</sup>

As the primary means of carrying out the secret war, substantial attention is afforded to the U.S. government's use of drones in various Middle Eastern countries. Mazzetti provides an insightful explanation on early drone research and development. The military made technological advances in drone flight in the 1990s, but the platform still lacked the ability to fire a weapon at that time.<sup>19</sup> In September 2000, when the CIA began flying drones in Afghanistan, it quickly became apparent a weaponized version was needed after one of the flights spotted Osama bin Laden at a training facility. Even if the President had wanted to kill Osama bin Laden at that time, he was unable to because of a lack of capability.<sup>20</sup> Moreover, pre-9/11, there was little appetite for covert operations. Neither the President nor the CIA felt confident in employing such tactics after President Ford rescinded the authority to conduct lethal operations in the 1970s.<sup>21</sup>

But after September 2001, "thorny questions about assassination, covert action, and the proper use of the CIA in hunting America's enemies were quickly swept aside" and the Nation fully embraced its new "ultimate weapon for a secret war": the drone.<sup>22</sup> Of interest to judge advocates, the author discusses the legalities and morality of using this weapon outside of declared war zones. To highlight this issue, Mazzetti discusses the use of the drone inside Yemen to kill "the renegade American cleric," Anwar al-Awlaki,<sup>23</sup>

<sup>18</sup> The Angry Bird is the title of chapter 5, which discusses drone development and implementation.

<sup>19</sup> MAZZETTI, *supra* note 1, at 91.

<sup>20</sup> *Id.* at 93; see *The Central Intelligence Agency's 9/11 File*, National Security Archive Electronic Briefing Book No. 381 (Barbara Elias-Sanborn ed., Jun. 19, 2012), available at <http://www2.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB381/>. The declassified CIA documents provide that "[t]wice in the fall of 2000, the Predator [drones] observed an individual most likely to be [Osama] bin Laden; however, [the CIA] had no way at the time to react to this information." Furthermore, "American unmanned aerial vehicles did not have sufficient weapons capabilities at the time . . . to fire on the suspect using the UAV." *Id.*

<sup>21</sup> MAZZETTI, *supra* note 1, at 9, 88–94. Regarding this point, the author writes, "[By] the late 1990s, [a] generation of CIA officers, who had jointed the agency after the revelations of the Church Committee and President Ford's ban on assassinations, had ascended to leadership positions at Langley." As a result, "the agency's paramilitary branch had been allowed to wither . . . [and pre-9/11, the] CIA was even divided about whether it could justifiably kill Osama bin Laden." *Id.* at 88.

<sup>22</sup> *Id.* at 99.

<sup>23</sup> Born in New Mexico, Anwar al-Awlaki was a preacher "who had evolved from a peddler of Internet hatred to a senior operative in Al Qaeda's branch in Yemen." Mark Mazzetti, Charlie Savage, & Scott Shane, *How a U.S. Citizen Came to Be in America's Cross Hairs*, N.Y. TIMES (Mar. 9, 2013), [http://www.nytimes.com/2013/03/10/world/middleeast/anwar-al-awlaki-a-us-citizen-in-americas-cross-hairs.html?page-wanted=all&\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2013/03/10/world/middleeast/anwar-al-awlaki-a-us-citizen-in-americas-cross-hairs.html?page-wanted=all&_r=0). Coming to the Federal Bureau of Investigation's attention in 1999, Awlaki was questioned after the September 2001 attacks for his associations with three of the airplane hijackers. He achieved

in lieu of “capturing him or bringing him to trial.”<sup>24</sup> The author is also concerned that the CIA and JSOC (at least in Yemen) maintain independent kill lists and are “carrying out nearly the exact same mission.”<sup>25</sup> Lastly, he is uneasy about the ad hoc nature of the killings. At the time of the book’s publication, the U.S. government had not yet produced a written national level guideline for the use of lethal force outside of declared war zones.<sup>26</sup> It appeared President Obama shared the author’s concern. Recently, he approved what is colloquially called “the drone playbook,” a classified policy that “institutionalizes the Administration’s exacting standards and processes for reviewing and approving operations to capture or use lethal force against terrorist targets.”<sup>27</sup>

Mazzetti concludes that drones have changed the nature of war, primarily because we can “flex American muscle without putting American lives at risk,” and, therefore, the “bar for [waging] war had been lowered.”<sup>28</sup> The author’s implication is that such technological advances used in this manner are detrimental to U.S. interests.<sup>29</sup> Mazzetti extends

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international attention in 2009 when U.S. Army Major Nidal Malik Hasan killed thirteen people at Fort Hood, Texas. Though Awlaki had not directed Major Hasan to act, the two had exchanged e-mails beforehand, and Awlaki encouraged such actions following the shooting. Also in 2009, Awlaki personally directed and aided Nigerian-born Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab to “blow up an airliner as it approached Detroit.” Mr. Awlaki subsequently increased his involvement with terrorist attacks, “including the attempted car bombing of Times Square in May 2010 by Faisal Shahzad . . . and the attempted bombing by Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula of cargo planes bound for the United States that October.” *Id.* Culminating years of intensive intelligence work, in September 2011 the CIA eliminated Awlaki in Yemen by missiles fired from drones. The legal debate concerning whether it was lawful under international and domestic law to kill a U.S. citizen in such a manner continues to the present day.

<sup>24</sup> MAZZETTI, *supra* note 1, at 302–10.

<sup>25</sup> *Id.* at 310–14. As evidence of the supposed dysfunction associated with two organizations running lethal drone operations, the author cites to the accidental death by a JSOC drone of al-Awlaki’s “sixteen-year-old Denver-born son” in Yemen, who died two weeks after his father. *Id.* at 311–12. But the articulated analysis of exactly how having both organizations running intelligence and lethal operations resulted in an accidental death is absent, and is one more example of how the author submits conclusions without the desired analysis.

<sup>26</sup> Interview by Jon Stewart with Mark Mazzetti, *The Daily Show with Jon Stewart* (Comedy Central broadcast Apr. 18, 2013), available at <http://www.thedailyshow.com/watch/thu-april-18-2013/mark-mazzetti> (information provided by Mark Mazzetti).

<sup>27</sup> Letter from Eric H. Holder, Jr., U.S. Attorney Gen., to The Honorable Patrick J. Leahy, Chairman, Committee on the Judiciary, U.S. Senate (May 22, 2013), available at [http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2013/05/23/us/politics/23holder-drone-letter.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2013/05/23/us/politics/23holder-drone-letter.html?_r=0); see also Michael Crowley, *Holder: Obama’s New Drone-Strike ‘Playbook’ Has Arrived*, TIME (May 22, 2013), available at <http://swampland.time.com/2013/05/22/holder-obamas-new-drone-strike-playbook-has-arrived/>.

<sup>28</sup> MAZZETTI, *supra* note 1, at 99–100.

<sup>29</sup> By only offering one side of the argument without acknowledging the benefits to the U.S. government in its use of drones, the reader is left with the impression that Mazzetti lacks objectivity in addressing the debate surrounding use of these weapons. A counter-argument is that the United

the potential harm as well to the CIA, that their covert targeted killing program has undermined their ability to act as the premier national intelligence collection agency.

#### IV. The CIA’s Atrophy

The author clearly rejects the concept that the CIA should be involved in lethal operations, arguing that, to a large degree, they have abandoned their traditional mission of collecting national-level intelligence. He states the agency was “established with a relatively simple mission: collect and analyze intelligence so that American presidents could know each day about the various threats facing the United States.”<sup>30</sup> Finding the “opportunity costs of a muscle-bound CIA . . . evident,” he cites as support the agency’s failure to know North Korea’s Kim Jong Il had died before the rest of the world,<sup>31</sup> the attack on the Libyan diplomatic compound,<sup>32</sup> and the Arab Spring.<sup>33</sup>

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States is accomplishing the same mission using fewer troops and with a smaller foreign footprint. Another is that lethal drone operations are preventing future September 2001 attacks. As an example, before 9/11 and before the CIA had armed drones, a drone spotted Osama bin Laden in Afghanistan. The CIA lacked the ability to eliminate him using available resources. *Id.* at 93–94. An argument is available that the CIA may have prevented the attacks of September 2001 had they possessed armed drones at that time.

<sup>30</sup> *Id.* at 44.

<sup>31</sup> *Id.* at 315; see also Jonathan Marcus, *Kim Jong-il Death: Did U.S. Intelligence Fail?*, BBC NEWS (Dec. 21, 2011), <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-16287506> (providing that “U.S. analysts were still uncertain of Kim Jong-il’s death some 48 hours after his demise”).

<sup>32</sup> After the fall of Muammar Gaddafi from power in Libya, the CIA had established a small base in an attempt to prevent “Gaddafi’s arsenal of shoulder-fired missiles from getting into the hands of the militant groups.” On 11 September 2012, the CIA operatives received “a frantic call from the American diplomatic compound just a mile away.” MAZZETTI, *supra* note 1, at 316. Though responding immediately, they arrived too late to save the life of Ambassador J. Christopher Stevens. The CIA operatives departed the scene and returned to the CIA base, which soon also fell under armed attack. All told, four Americans died during the incident. Regarding the attack and citing the “decade-long pivot toward paramilitary operations,” Mazzetti states that “the attack had, quite literally, blinded the CIA inside Libya.” *Id.* at 317.

<sup>33</sup> In December 2010, a Tunisian street vendor set himself on fire in protest. His act “unleashed a wave of anger about poverty, unemployment and repression that built into nationwide protests across the Middle East and North Africa—in Tunisia, Egypt, Yemen, Bahrain, Libya and Syria—that became known as the Arab Spring.” Marie-Louise Gumuchian & Laura Smith-Spark, *Arab Spring Three Years On*, CNN (Mar. 15, 2014), <http://www.cnn.com/2014/03/14/world/meast/arab-spring-three-years/>. The events caught the CIA “flat-footed” because they did not have enough spies doing actual spying . . . whose job it was to collect intelligence.” The CIA lacked enough spies because “both President George W. Bush and Barack Obama had decided that hunting and killing terrorists should be the agency’s top priority.” MAZZETTI, *supra* note 1, at 253–54. The author’s argument is potentially undermined by pre-September 2001 CIA intelligence failures, to include Operation Eagle Claw, or, for that matter, the attacks on 11 September 2001. *Id.* at 69.

Furthermore, Mazzetti argues that the agency's use of drones has "made the CIA the villain in countries like Pakistan, where it should be the spy agency's job to nurture relationships for the purpose of gathering intelligence."<sup>34</sup> Appropriately so, he debates whether the agency's excitement for targeted killing is diminishing its ability to provide unbiased analysis on "broader subjects like the level of support al Qaeda [has] in the Muslim world," or whether our military operations in the Middle East are "radicalizing a new generation of militants."<sup>35</sup> Finally, he argues that the CIA's intelligence capabilities have atrophied because of a "decade-long pivot toward paramilitary operations." This pivot created "a generation of CIA officers" who "have *only* experienced man hunting and killing."<sup>36</sup> New agents have "felt more of the adrenaline rush [of killing] than the patient, 'gentle' work of intelligence-gathering and espionage."<sup>37</sup> For these reasons, the author advances the legitimate argument that the CIA should extract itself from targeted killings and return to intelligence duties. This debate about the CIA's proper role continues to the present.<sup>38</sup>

## V. A Missed Opportunity

The author's clearly discernible and overly repeated thesis is that since 2001, the "lines between soldiers and spies" have blurred, with the CIA taking on "tasks traditionally associated with the military," and the Pentagon expanding into the CIA's human intelligence operations.<sup>39</sup> Disapproving of this fact, Mazzetti constructs his at times shaky conclusions with nefarious tones,<sup>40</sup> instead of providing the more rational reason for why such a blurring occurred during the decade-long war. The fact of the matter is that the blurring occurred because of practical considerations, including the organizations having to operate under different legal authorities and the difficulty of engaging in lethal operations in foreign countries.<sup>41</sup> These

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<sup>34</sup> *Id.* at 318.

<sup>35</sup> *Id.* at 14.

<sup>36</sup> *Id.* at 318.

<sup>37</sup> *Id.*

<sup>38</sup> See Ken Dilanian, *Debate Grows Over Proposal for CIA to Turn Over Drones to Pentagon*, L.A. TIMES (May 11, 2014), <http://www.latimes.com/world/middleeast/la-fg-yemen-drones-20140511-story.html> (discussing "the White House proposal for the CIA to eventually turn over its armed drones and targeted killing program to the military").

<sup>39</sup> MAZZETTI, *supra* note 1, at 4–5, 314.

<sup>40</sup> For example, in describing Raymond Davis's detention in Pakistan in 2011, the author states, "the bloody affair seemed to confirm all the conspiracies . . . in Pakistan: that the United States had sent a vast secret army to Pakistan, men who sowed chaos and violence as part of a covert American war in the country." *Id.* at 4.

<sup>41</sup> *Id.* at 76–77, 286–87. The author spends too little time describing these authorities, which establish the basic legal foundation for the CIA and Pentagon to wage the secret war; he assumes the reader already understands

issues led both the CIA and the Pentagon to develop overlapping intelligence and kinetic capabilities in order to accomplish their missions.<sup>42</sup>

Mazzetti disapproves of the U.S. government's use of drones for lethal operations in undeclared war zones.<sup>43</sup> But he chooses to raise a problem without offering solutions. While drone use may be negatively impacting U.S. interests around the world, as Mazzetti claims, what are the alternatives? Does he propose that every lethal drone strike is publicly debated before the missile is fired? Does he desire a law enforcement construct in lieu of one centered on the law of armed conflict, such as was used pre-9/11? Does the author suggest that the United States is better served by deploying thousands of U.S. military members to occupy territory in places like Pakistan, Somalia, and Yemen, in lieu of using special operators and drones? How does the United States continue to remain on the offensive to keep the Nation's enemies in a reactionary, depleted condition of offensive capability without JSOC and the CIA engaging in such actions?

The author raises a number of questions worthy of consideration for judge advocates. For example, on the topic of the morality of killing in countries outside declared war zones, why does there exist a "distinction between killing people from a distance using an armed drone and training humans to do the killing themselves?"<sup>44</sup> Or whether a program of targeted killing, conducted without judicial oversight or public scrutiny, is consistent with American interests and values?<sup>45</sup> Lastly, what is the scope of responsibility the U.S. government wishes to entrust to private contractors, if any, to participate in U.S. lethal foreign engagements?<sup>46</sup>

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these concepts. For an explanation of the U.S. Code Title 10 and Title 50 interaction, see Robert Chesney, *Military-Intelligence Convergence and the Law of the Title 10/Title 50 Debate*, 5 J. OF NAT'L SECURITY LAW & POL'Y 539 (2012), available at <http://jnslp.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/01/Military-Intelligence-Convergence-and-the-Law-of-the-Title-10Title-50-Debate.pdf> (discussing the convergence of military and intelligence operations since September 2011).

<sup>42</sup> See generally MAZZETTI, *supra* note 1, at 66–68, 115–17.

<sup>43</sup> For a contrasting viewpoint on the use of drones, see Lieutenant Colonel Shane R. Reeves & Major William J. Johnson, *Autonomous Weapons: Are You Sure These Are Killer Robots? Can We Talk About It?*, ARMY LAW., Apr. 2014, at 25.

<sup>44</sup> MAZZETTI, *supra* note 1, at 125.

<sup>45</sup> *Id.* at 319; see also Steve Coll, *Remote Control: Our Drone Delusion*, NEW YORKER, May 6, 2013, available at [http://www.newyorker.com/arts/critics/books/2013/05/06/130506crbo\\_books\\_coll](http://www.newyorker.com/arts/critics/books/2013/05/06/130506crbo_books_coll).

<sup>46</sup> MAZZETTI, *supra* note 1, at 122–25.

## VI. Conclusion

*The Way of the Knife* is a well-researched, interesting, and timely book concerning the United States' shadow war taking place in countries around the world. To form an opinion on how the nation should move forward on such matters, one must understand how we first arrived in such a predicament. Mazzetti successfully describes the political, military, and legal background behind the necessity for the secret war, to include the tumultuous and often times frustrating relationship between agencies of the United States and Pakistan. That compilation of relevant information is the book's primary value, and it is worth reading for this reason alone. Regardless of criticisms, readers should also bestow a certain degree of deference to the author: he notes, "[it] is a great challenge to write an account of an ongoing war that, at least officially, remains a secret."<sup>47</sup> Overall, Mazzetti tackles this significant challenge well.

Unfortunately for the judge advocate or student of international relations, this book will only provide one small piece of a very large puzzle. Quickly drawn conclusions, a lack of counter-arguments and the resultant analysis,<sup>48</sup> along with an absence of recommendations on how to appropriately use force in the secret war, leaves the reader unsure of alternatives to these dilemmas. Contrary to his intent, a reader armed with the information provided in the book may reasonably extract the opinion that the United States has evolved its capabilities to accomplish a military mission using a smaller, more lethal force, the effect of which is to place fewer U.S. citizens in harm's way. Those studying these issues will have to look elsewhere to fully grasp the pros and cons of the United States' continued use of drones in undeclared war zones, the CIA's role in foreign affairs, and our perpetuation of the secret war.

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<sup>47</sup> *Id.* at 335.

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<sup>48</sup> Any counter-arguments the author does provide are quickly dismissed, such as when Mazzetti asserts that "some senior CIA officials speak with pride about how the drone strikes in Pakistan have decimated al Qaeda . . . and many believe that the drone program is the most effective cover-action program in CIA history." *Id.* at 318. He then immediately returns to the negatives of drone use; therefore, readers should look elsewhere for the multiple military advantages of utilizing drones.