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[How Everything Became War and the Military Became Everything: Tales from the Pentagon.](#) Rosa Brooks. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2016.

In June 1945, 850 delegates representing 50 nations gathered in San Francisco to start the process of drafting what would eventually become the [Charter of the United Nations](#). This wasn't some exercise in bureaucratic protocol; this was a desperate attempt by humans to bring about stability to a world ripped apart by war, to draw distinct lines between war and peace, and to keep war inside its box. For the ashes were still smoldering on the continent of Europe, and the war in the Pacific wasn't yet over. Sixty million of the planet's sons and daughters perished during World War II with another twenty five million wounded. The work of these delegates and their staffs took two months to complete, and by October 24, 1945 the U.N. officially came into existence. For the last 71 years, the Charter, this international body, and the norms they have established for warfare, have contributed to the prevention of the level of destruction experienced in the early 20th century.

But as the norms and character of warfare change with globalization, the rise of non-state actors, and the proliferation of lethal technologies, the lines between war and peace are constantly blurring. For the first time in mankind's history, a single person can unleash mass destruction through the creation of biological weapons. As Ian Goldin and Chris Kutarna recently pointed out in their book [Age of Discovery](#), "The DNA equipment needed to synthesize small pox is available today in every advanced country and costs the same as a top-end office copier did thirty years ago." It no longer takes a foreign government to launch an attack on U.S. soil. Fifteen hijackers representing a non-state actor were responsible for the attacks on 9/11. Hackers have brought down major media sites, [financial institutions](#), [impacted air travel](#), and [exposed the inner workings of political parties during an election season](#).

War no longer wants to stay in its box.

In her newest book, [How Everything Became War and the Military Became Everything: Tales from the Pentagon](#), Rosa Brooks examines the phenomenon of warfare's changing character and its impact on society, the state, and the relationship between the two. The book is a mixture of autobiography, history, current events, and anthropology. Her observations, woven together, argue that the modern state and the values for which Americans stand for are at risk because of the path that the current global state of affairs is leading us down. The crux of her argument is that if we can't tell what is war and what is not, we will be unable to figure out which rules apply. Thus, the U.S. will set precedents that could have negative consequences for stability and human rights as move further into the 21st century. The book is divided into five parts, each examining the legal, technological, and societal transformations from the last fifty years.

Brooks uses the War on Terror and role of the U.S. military and intelligence agencies in fighting this threat as the jumping off point for the book. She argues that we are witnessing the militarization of everything, from foreign policy to local policing. Her arguments are supported by vast a number of statistics, open source media reports, and published budgets. For example, Brooks points out that the number of SWAT teams and raids has expanded dramatically since 9/11. Within six years after the twin towers fell, raids increased from 50,000 to 80,000 across the entire United States. Police departments have also purchased many of the same technologies used by the U.S. military in Iraq and Afghanistan.

One of the major strengths of the book rests upon the author's experiences as a professor of

international and constitutional law at Georgetown and as a former Counselor to the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy. These experiences gave her key insights into the way in which the U.S. is maneuvering between war and peace. Throughout the book she points out discrepancies between the law of armed conflict and U.S. actions. For instance, Brooks discusses at length the interrogation practices in the last decade. Additionally, she examines the systems of checks and balances for drone strikes and the precedents they set for human rights, individual liberties, and the rule of law.

Brooks presents her evidence of the blurring of war and peace with the skill of a courtroom lawyer. Then she argues that unless we reexamine the laws and institutions built following the end of World War II, and create new ones, we will continue to move down a slippery slope and set precedents that do not bode well for international stability in the 21st century. For instance, we have yet to see the long term impacts of drone strikes on sovereign soil or intelligence collection programs like Prism.

Over the last several years, Lieutenant General H.R. McMaster, one of the Army's top thinkers, has [beat the drum for U.S. political and military leaders to understand the continuities of war](#). He has repeatedly pointed out that in order for us to understand the future of warfare and how it is changing we must first understand those aspects of war that have not changed. While he is correct, we cannot stop there.

Rosa Brooks beats the drum for the other, yet complementary, side of the coin. *How Everything Became War* points out those aspects of war that have changed or are changing due to globalization, technology, and society. One of the more frightening aspects of the book is her description of the trend of the individualization of warfare and its implications moving forward. She explains how bioweapons, hacking efforts, and the use of facial recognition software in drones may allow governments or non-state actors to target specific individuals or their family members in conflict.

This book is an important addition to the professional body of literature on the evolution of warfare, providing readers with ideas on the future of warfare and the required institutions, legal frameworks, and strategies that need to be in place to maintain stability against an increasing number of threats to the post World War II order. While the nature of war has remained unchanged, the character of warfare is continuing to evolve and as Brooks points out, if we fail to act, we run the risk of unraveling the very fragile norms of warfare and human rights developed in that momentous summer of 1945.

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