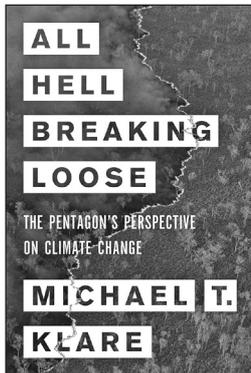


# Book Review



## **All Hell Breaking Loose: The Pentagon's Perspective on Climate Change** *by Michael T. Klare*

Metropolitan Books: New York, 2019, 304 pp.

**Reviewed by Brig. Gen. W. Chris King, Ph.D., P.E., U.S. Army, Ret.**  
*Dean Emeritus, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College*

*All Hell Breaking Loose: The Pentagon's Perspective on Climate Change* is a well-researched and clearly written book concerning an important topic in strategic defense analysis, explaining how climate change is threatening U.S. National Defense. It is sometimes a confusing task for the Department of Defense (DoD) to recognize the emerging threats to U.S. national security, particularly when they are not related to fighting forces and existing conflicts. The knowns are easy, such as the growing power of China, the rise of terrorist threats around the globe, or proliferation of nuclear weapons.

Michael Klare addresses a futuristic threat to the security of the United States – climate change—which is much harder to interpret, but of no less a concern to our nation and the world. He has taken an interesting approach in establishing climate change as a national security threat to the United States. The author makes his case by examining the ongoing activities within the DoD to demonstrate the deep concern within the intelligence community, military strategic planners, and even combatant commanders for how climate change threatens peace and security on a global scale. He uses the products of our strategic planning process to show how global warming, sea level rise, extreme weather, water as a scarce resource, loss of snow and ice cover, and other climate change drivers are impacting human security today and into the future. The book does not enter into the climate denier debate. Like the rest of the world community, the author recognizes that that discussion contradicts all existing scientific information and climate changes already recorded. The data compiled by the author to establish the threat-risk scenario of climate change includes open source reports directly from the military services, the Global Combatant Commands threat assessments, the Joint Staff analyses, and findings from key independent research centers. He also looks at intelligence assessments published by our national intelligence organizations. All the data he references leads the author to the same conclusion – the dire impacts of climate change must be considered in our national security strategy and defense planning. There are numerous additional studies the author could have included, however, none of these would contradict the author's findings that climate change is a major threat to our security.

*All Hell Breaking Loose* is not written as a scientific analysis of climate change, which may be a relief for many readers, because too many of those books have been written to impress other scientists. Rather, the author approaches the subject following the model applied in strategic security analysis where a risk assessment approach is used to rank threats based on probability of occurrence and magnitude of the consequences. For readers who not familiar with the impacts of climate change, this may make understanding some of the linkages between climate drivers and security more difficult. For readers who want a more basic understanding of the science behind the concept, this reviewer published an article in the *InterAgency Journal* (Vol. 9, No. 4, 2018), which provides more detail into how climate change impacts become security issues. That article also uses case studies to tie the issues to real world problems we are seeing today. Interestingly, both that article and this book independently concluded that the risk of loss fresh water resources within the Tibetan watershed, an area with 3.2+ billion people and four of the largest nuclear armed militaries in the world, represents one of the most dangerous future high level risk threats. It is this highest level of strategic security risk that the author refers to in his title as, “All Hell Breaking Loose.”

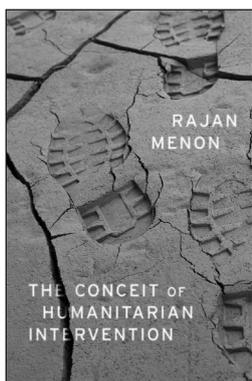
In seven chapters the author takes a staged risk/threat assessment approach to describe how the Pentagon has assessed the impacts of climate change on world security. He also shows the work being done within the DoD to address impacts to our Homeland Security, including the many climate induced risks posed to DoD facilities and operability of our forces. At the strategic level, the impacts of climate change causing the most damage are shown to include food shortages, water scarcity, loss of ice in the Arctic, the spread epidemic/pandemic disease, mass migrations of people evicted from their homes by climate change, and conflicts over dwindling resources. He completes his thesis by connecting these threats to the military/security responses that will be required in the interest of our National Security. He shows ever increasing demands on military forces for worldwide humanitarian response, crisis management, peace keeping and support to failing states. In Homeland Security, the author placed a special emphasis on how extreme weather events, particularly hurricanes which are a growing threat to our security. He used recent historical data to show how military forces are necessarily diverted from primary threats and military training to support an increasing number of major disasters such as the hurricanes hitting the U.S. and Puerto Rico in recent years. He did not try to look future scenarios based on current climate change research. “On Global Warming: A Center of Gravity Analysis of Atlantic Based Tropical Cyclones,” a masters thesis by Major Ian Kent prepared at the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College (available online from the College’s library, the Ike Skelton Combined Arms Research Library), looks at the future of these storm events based on the best available climate science. Major Kent’s strategic analysis of the risks posed by future Atlantic hurricanes concluded that in the future this issue will be much more damaging to our national security than Michael Klare described, with damage costs going into the trillions and massive additional demands for military support. Klare presents a compelling discussion concerning how an Arctic region without sea ice presents never before considered perils on our northern border.

The last two chapters of the book describes, first, the risks climate change poses to military facilities and operations, and then discusses some of the actions the DoD is pursuing to go Green in response to climate change. He shows that several Navy and Air Force bases near the oceans are already being damaged by sea level rise and storm events. He found that the cost to mitigate these impacts is going to be enormous and even then some bases cannot be saved. The going green initiatives discussed are noted as a model of the smart way to do business. In one example, the author demonstrates that reducing operational use of fuel saves money and lives when deployed.

Reducing energy at posts, camps, and stations is an ongoing mission of every service; it is smart business and contributing to climate change mitigation.

The only caution I would offer to anyone reading this book is to recognize that climate change as a national security threat is a whole of government issue. This book is generally written with a military centric view of the problem. The military can/must advise the civilian leaders appointed as secretaries of the services and defense, but the final authorities rest with those senior civilians. Further, consider that this is not a fight where the military is in the lead. The military is in support of the climate crisis conflict, but many/all other elements of our national power are requisite to defeat this adversary to peace and security. Otherwise, the result is as Michael Klare warns in his introduction, “the American military will lose its capacity to defend the nation”.

In summary, *All Hell Breaking Loose* is an excellent book that would be a valuable read for anyone interested in military planning or national security analysis. It is written in a non-military style where anyone (i.e., civilians) wanting to understand how climate change is impacting human security and peace would learn much from this book. **IAJ**



## **The Conceit of Humanitarian Intervention**

**by Rajan Menon**

Oxford University Press: Oxford, 2016, 256 pp.

**Reviewed by David Oakley**

*Assistant Professor, National Defense University*

In 2005, the United Nations (UN) adopted the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) principle that requires each individual state “to protect its populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing, and crimes against humanity.”<sup>1</sup> The document describes UN “collective action” to ensure states abide by this principle, but it does not prescribe military intervention as an enforcement tool; nor does the document forbid it. Although the UN document does not explicitly call for military action, many R2P supporters argue it is the responsibility of the international community to intervene, by force if necessary, if a country fails to protect its citizens.<sup>2</sup> Despite humanitarian interventionists’ enthusiasm for military force, there are questions regarding the effectiveness, limitations, and potential risk with embracing violence to end violence. Rajan Menon’s latest book, *The Conceit of Humanitarian Intervention*, challenges the activist zeal, while exploring the effectiveness, limitations, and potential risks of intervention. Although focused on humanitarian intervention, his book raises broader questions about the utility of force and the consequences of actions that every practitioner should consider.

Menon’s main point is that supporters of humanitarian intervention, fueled by “moral fervor” and “hubris,” push for military action to end human tragedies without acknowledging potential

consequences or appreciating that intervention might result in greater human tragedies.<sup>3</sup> Menon is not arguing against the principle of human rights, nor trying to diminish the tragedy of genocide or other mass atrocities. He is merely challenging the idealism of humanitarian interventionists and their belief that intervention will lead to better conditions. This is an important question for any nation considering military force in an attempt to create a better future.

Menon's book challenges two foundational principles of the interventionist argument—the existence of universal values and the belief that intervention leads to a better tomorrow. He eloquently questions the notion of universal values and highlights how western countries often subjectively decide when to defend these values. This subjective enforcement not only undermines the notion that there is clear agreement over what constitutes a humanitarian crisis, but also highlights how nations often embrace humanitarian intervention for self-interest and not high-minded principles. As he points out, what “is” and “is not” acceptable is usually influenced by broader national security interests. For example, the United States often ignores when key allies suppress dissent, but raise human rights concerns when non-allies employ similar tools of repression. This inconsistency, which every nation is guilty of, highlights not only the subjectivity of “universal values,” but how they are often ignored or embraced for political expediency.

More compelling than his challenge to universal values is Menon's discussion on the efficacy of intervention. Even if one accepts the concept of universal values, embracing these values does not mean intervention will lead to a better tomorrow. As Menon points out, there are numerous examples of humanitarian intervention resulting in worse conditions. For example, it is hard to argue that the average Libyan is safer today than she was prior to the 2011 overthrow of Muammar Gaddafi. Although Gaddafi was a brutal dictator, his overthrow, which was supported by humanitarian arguments, resulted in worse conditions for the Libyan population and helped further destabilize the region.<sup>4</sup> As Menon cogently argues, should not humanitarian interventionists be judged on whether their interventions actually create more humane conditions and not greater tragedies? It might not be palatable to see ruthless dictators like Gaddafi in power, but the interventionist remedy is often worse than the illness.

Menon does a fantastic job combining theory, legal concepts, and historical examples to make a compelling argument. For example, his discussion on the differing views of sovereignty and state legitimacy are particularly engaging and important. As Menon points out, “legalists and realists” often view international law as managing the behavior between states to limit inter-state conflict, while humanitarian interventionists believe the focus should be protecting the individual. By focusing on the individual, many humanitarian interventionists argue that international law and institutions should be more concerned with how states govern domestically.<sup>5</sup> These differing views affect how each side interprets the concept of sovereignty. The traditional “statist” view is that sovereignty “protect(s) the rights of states” to govern domestically without “external interference.” Basically, what they do within their borders is their responsibility and not subject to external intervention. The revised “interventionist view” believes that states have a moral obligation to protect their citizens, and if unable or unwilling, it is the international community's responsibility to intervene.<sup>6</sup> These differing views do not merely shape good parlor debate, but have significant repercussions on when one believes intervention is acceptable, and more importantly, on what is the basis of international order.

*The Conceit of Humanitarian Intervention* is a great read for anyone interested in the efficacy and limitations of military force in humanitarian interventions. Although focused on humanitarian

intervention, Menon raises broader questions about the utility of force and the consequences of actions that every practitioner should consider. Grappling with these questions is particularly important after nineteen years of war, the expenditure of six trillion dollars, and the loss of so much life.<sup>7</sup> **IAJ**

## Notes

1 [https://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/generalassembly/docs/globalcompact/A\\_RES\\_60\\_1.pdf](https://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/generalassembly/docs/globalcompact/A_RES_60_1.pdf)

2 Rajan Menon, *The Conceit of Humanitarian Intervention* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), p. 6.

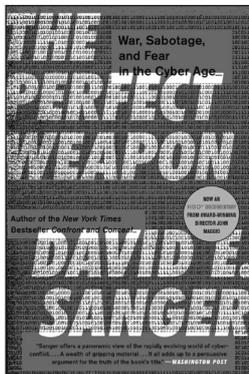
3 Menon, p. 3.

4 <https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-8314>; Menon, 117-120.

5 Menon, p. 55.

6 Ibid, pp. 3-6.

7 <https://watson.brown.edu/costsofwar/costs/human/>; Despite the significant cost in treasure and blood, Afghanistan and Iraq remain in the top fifteen of the most “fragile states.” See <https://fragilestatesindex.org/data>.



## **The Perfect Weapon: War, Sabotage, and Fear in the Cyber Age** *by David E. Sanger*

Crown Books, Random House Publishers: New York, 2018, 384 pp.

### **Reviewed by Col. Todd Schmidt, Ph.D.,**

*former Battalion Commander and Goodpaster Scholar in the Army Strategic Planning and Policy Program, School for Advanced Military Studies, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas*

David Sanger is the national security correspondent for the *New York Times*, a 2017 Pulitzer Prize winning journalist, a bestselling author, a member of the Council on Foreign Relations, and a seasoned and experienced observer of “Washington’s swamp creatures” with which he comfortably cavorts. I met David at a Security Conference at the University of Kansas while he was on book tour, promoting this book. To a skeptical Midwesterner, he gives off an air of faux humility, while name-dropping his prominent contacts and hinting at his inside-the-beltway status among Washington’s elites.

Taking the product of years of intrepid journalism, Sanger weaves together a fascinating

book that captures the attention of civilian readership like a great spy novel. *The Perfect Weapon* provides an insightful and, at times, sensational peek and preview into cyber warfare—a revolution in military affairs that the world continues to explore, experiment, and endeavor to understand. Sanger’s dauntless investigation and research, at times pushing the envelope of revealing national security secrets, provides readers with an understanding of the strategic threats the U.S. faces in the domain of national security. He couples this with the unveiling of bipartisan failures of multiple presidential administrations intellectually ill-equipped to understand the profound environmental changes slowly engulfing and threatening the nation.

The temporal scope of the book covers the early 2000s to present-day. He provides background and description of U.S. cyberwars with Iran, North Korea, Russia, and China. However, it is clear from the author’s focus, that he, and the American public, were not fully queued to the unconventional and asymmetric impact of the cyberwar phenomena until the 2016 Presidential Election of President Donald Trump. To fathom and explain President Trump’s election, Sanger spends several chapters catching himself and the reader up on the history of cyber war. With an historical foundation set, Sanger then rehashes the 2016 presidential campaign, election results, and the impactful role of U.S. adversaries in it. The implications of the historical narrative Sanger composes are that Trump’s election is the culminating consequence of failed leadership and policy that have over-estimated U.S. cyber capabilities and defenses and under-estimated the cyber capabilities and ambitions of U.S. adversaries.

Political beliefs, emotion, and opinion aside, Sanger’s book awakens readers to a complex, future operational environment in which several competing, dynamic threats collide. First, quoting General James Mattis, Sanger reveals that “America’s competitive edge has eroded in very domain of warfare” —America is strategically vulnerable. Second, “Cyber conflict remains in the gray area between war and peace,” a persistent, unending contest between great powers that threatens both full-scale war and existential consequences. Third, “deterrence,” once the policy domain of strategic, nuclear war theorists, now requires decision-makers and national security elites to think multi-dimensionally. Fourth, the rapid and revolutionary pace of competition, conflict, and change “outpaces the ability of politicians” and civilians to comprehend the threat; devise comprehensive, whole-of-government response; protect and pursue U.S. interests; and dominate in great power competition.

Sanger’s conclusions and recommendations are underwhelming. He is a part of the Washington elite that he aptly describes in his own work. However, he is able to both understand and sound the alarm that the current and future strategic and operational environments no longer afford or allow for the critical decision space needed for novice civilian, political leaders to adequately understand and make decisions in times of real crisis. Clear, timely, flexible options that are comprehensively understood by civilian decision makers and socialized in diplomatic and military consultation with allies are no longer achievable. In the view of senior military officers, anyone that understands the requirements of aggressive “great power” competition also knows that the U.S. lacks any viable civil-military framework that prioritizes civilian control. Civilians are perceived as being risk averse, irresponsible, and incapable of rapid decision-making and response in the gray zones of persistent great power competition that reside below the threshold of kinetic conflict.

Sanger’s recommendation is clear. The international community is seeing a revolution in military affairs with the development of advanced technologies that include unmanned aerial system capabilities, hypersonic vehicle technologies, cyber-based capabilities, autonomous weapon systems,

artificial intelligence, and cloud-enabled capabilities that inform and drive rapid decision-making and initiative. Aggressive, great power competition in this environment requires development of new international legal frameworks of authority that provide for de-escalation and reliable deterrence.

Sanger also insinuates that when escalation continues and deterrence fails, domestic legal frameworks must allow for rapid response, as well as command, control, and accountability. Revolutionary change in military technologies and capabilities require requisite changes in the roles, responsibilities, and authorities of U.S. military elites. These organizational and process adaptations that challenge legacy civil-military command and control relationships may be disconcerting to students of historic civil-military relations. Regardless, competition and performance at the speed of relevance require it. **IAJ**