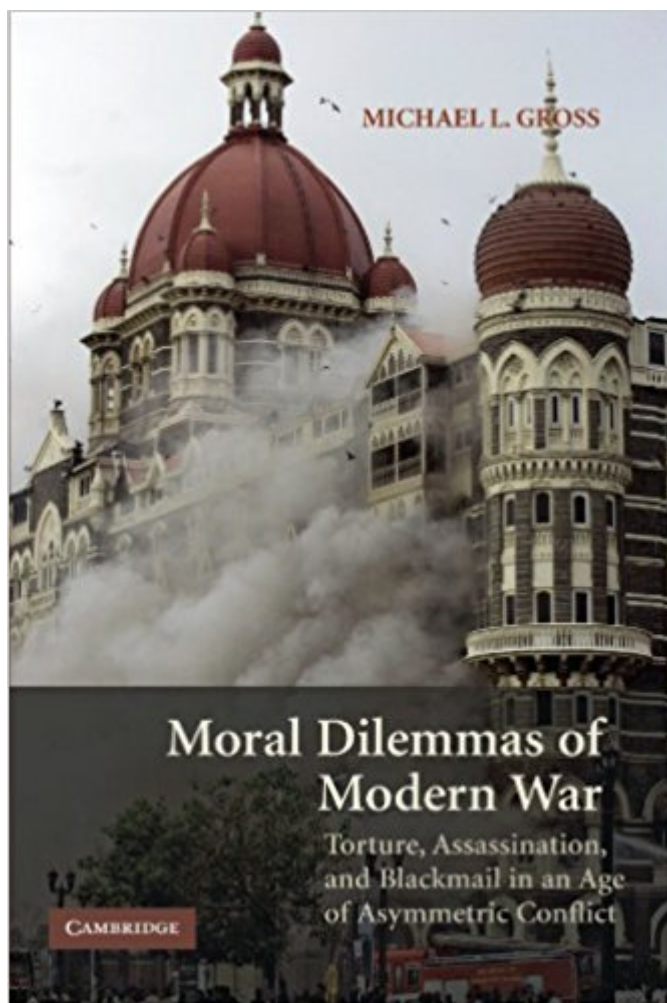


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# Moral Dilemmas Of Modern War: Torture, Assassination, And Blackmail In An Age Of Asymmetric Conflict



## Synopsis

Asymmetric conflict is changing the way that we practise and think about war. Torture, rendition, assassination, blackmail, extortion, direct attacks on civilians, and chemical weapons are all finding their way to the battlefield despite longstanding international prohibitions. This book offers a practical guide for policy makers, military officers, students, and others who ask such questions as: Do guerillas deserve respect or long jail sentences? Are there grounds to torture guerillas for information or assassinate them on the battlefield? Is there room for nonlethal weapons to subdue militants and safeguard the lives of noncombatants? Who are noncombatants in asymmetric war? What is the status of civilians who shelter and aid guerillas? And, do guerillas have any right to attack civilians, particularly those who aid and shelter members of the stronger army? If one side can expand the scope of civilian vulnerability, then why can't the other? To read and comment on Michael Gross's blog article on the UN Human Rights Council Report on Gaza, [click here](#)

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"Michael Gross has written a thoughtful, lucid book about the dilemma of 'asymmetric conflict,' as when a nation confronts a terrorist movement or other insurgency that does not observe the laws of war and, more important, does not have a structure or employ tactics against which conventional military force is fully effective. To be limited in fighting such a group by the conventional laws of war is to fight terror and insurrection with one hand tied behind one's back; and, depending on the gravity of the threat posed by such a group, the question becomes how far if at all the nation should depart from the conventional rules of armed combat. The need to balance military necessity with

humanitarianism, with regard to such practices as brutal interrogation, assassination, and disabling but nonlethal gas, is the theme of the book; and as Gross states in the conclusion, 'dogmatism is not the answer.' - Richard Posner, Judge, U.S. Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit" This is a must-read book for everyone interested in the question of morality and modern war. Gross's focus, asymmetric warfare, is the new face of armed conflict. In contrast to other authors who have written on various aspects of this subject, Gross's treatment includes all the significant ways in which this kind of war is different from the models assumed in the law of armed conflict and in most moral analysis, including changes in the meaning of combatancy and noncombatancy, implications for prohibited weapons and for nonlethal ones, modes of warfare including terrorism, torture, and assassination, and asymmetric warfare in the case of humanitarian intervention. His analysis and argument are thorough, insightful, and challenging. Readers may disagree with Gross's conclusions on various issues, but the importance of this book is that it establishes a baseline from which both agreement and disagreement can point towards better thinking about the moral parameters of such warfare and possible changes in the law of armed conflict." - James Turner Johnson, Rutgers University "Discusses ways of reconciling new forms of warfare with international law, including what is termed "targeted killing" and "enhanced interrogation." --The Chronicle of Higher Education "Gross is known for bringing a sharp intellect and a keen moral sense to the perplexing character of modern war... In this book, Gross considers the prominent role of civilians in contemporary conflicts -- including wars initiated to protect the welfare of oppressed civilians and those in which enemies use noncombatants as shields or targets... this is a book that will keep you thinking." --Lawrence D. Freedman, Foreign Affairs [May/June 2010] "....In this important book, Gross (Univ. of Haifa, Israel) explores the moral dilemmas of postmodern war, focusing on such issues as targeted killing, torture, terrorism, and the use of nonlethal weapons.... This clearly written book will be of general interest to students and scholars of international political ethics and military security and of special concern to government officials responsible for national security policy in the postmodern era.... Highly recommended...." --M. Amstutz, Wheaton College, CHOICE "...With Moral Dilemmas of Modern War, Gross has offered the reader an introduction to the dilemmas facing us in an age where warfare is no longer relegated to skirmishes between national powers but consists of 'wars of occupation, the war on terror, and wars against rogue regimes' (x).... Gross offers an important window-one comprehensive in scope-onto these dilemmas, his voice is invaluable in the discourse." --Jacob Held, University of Central Arkansas, Philosophy in Review "...readers will find the moral model Gross proposes ultimately satisfactory, the book is immensely helpful for the depth and nuance it brings to the ethical discussion of the dilemmas of war in an era of asymmetric conflict." --Daniel M.

Asymmetric conflict is changing the way that we practise and think about war. Torture, rendition, assassination, blackmail, extortion, direct attacks on civilians, and chemical weapons are all finding their way to the battlefield despite longstanding international prohibitions. This book offers a practical guide for policy makers, military officers, students, and others who ask such questions as: Do guerillas deserve respect or long jail sentences? Are there grounds to torture guerillas for information or assassinate them on the battlefield? Is there room for nonlethal weapons to subdue militants and safeguard the lives of noncombatants? Who are noncombatants in asymmetric war? What is the status of civilians who shelter and aid guerillas? And, do guerillas have any right to attack civilians, particularly those who aid and shelter members of the stronger army? If one side can expand the scope of civilian vulnerability, then why can't the other?

I'm biased because it was assigned as a school book. That being said, it was a good school book. A school book nonetheless, however.

very good reading material

Needed this one for a college course on Assassination; was impressed that this was not too ponderous to read, and was DEFINITELY cheaper than the university bookstore. I'm all about that!

Great book that looked at assassination, targeted killing, blackmail, and other events that pose moral and ethical dilemmas for people today. It met my needs for school and was very informative.

This book, unlike many similar titles is a highly enjoyable read. Gross covers the major ethical and moral aspects of modern armed conflict including such subjects as; Combatant equality, collateral damage, assassination and targeted killing, torture, enhanced interrogation, rendition, humanitarian missions and the new norms behind asymmetric warfare. Certainly one of the best titles on these subjects today and certainly well presented by a subject matter expert. Extremely highly recommended reading. This is a particularly useful instrument for those interested in Military doctrine, political science, international relations and global conflict studies.

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