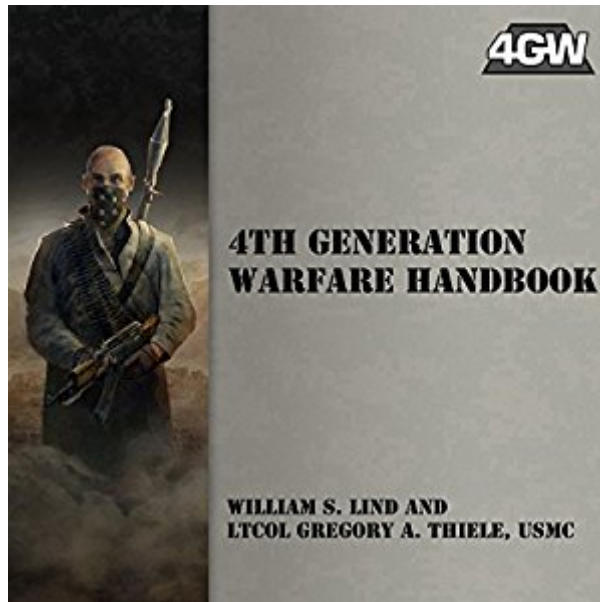


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4th Generation Warfare Handbook



Synopsis

Written by the author of the *Maneuver Warfare Handbook* and an active-duty USMC officer with experience in Iraq, *4th Generation Warfare Handbook* is the doctrine for a new generation of war. Over the last 40 years, the world has gradually entered into a post-Clausewitzian state where the wars are undeclared, the battlefields can be anywhere, the uniforms are optional, and the combatants as well as the targets are often "civilian." Conventional militaries have repeatedly attempted to utilize technology to meet the new challenges posed, but even the most advanced technology has provided little more than meaningless short-term victories rendered futile in months, if not weeks. This inability of Western governments and militaries to come to terms with the changing nature of modern warfare has led to failed interventions, failed occupations, and now even failed states everywhere from Eastern Europe to Africa, Asia, and the Middle East. And with the recent mass movement of peoples around the world, 4th Generation Warfare can be safely expected to appear in Western Europe and the United States before long. Drawing on their decades of experience with military history and military action, the authors have distilled 4GW theory into a short, concise, easily accessible handbook that provides the soldier, the military analyst, and the civilian observer with a guide to understanding and responding to the changing realities of this challenging new form of war.

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Customer Reviews

All American troops posted to overseas theaters would benefit from reading this manual. But it is the

generals and higher-ups who most need the lessons contained in it. 4th generation warfare represents a crisis of the legitimacy of the state, and the first step towards fighting them successfully is a mindset shift: to recognize that military force is incapable, by itself, of restoring legitimacy to a state. The standard American practice of firepower on targets is simply not effective in 4GW.

“Great states must learn how to preserve enemy states at the same time that they defeat them. This is obviously a central lesson from the Iraq conflict, where this axiom was violated in spades. This manual sets about to correct those mistakes and provide a roadmap for success in the new type of conflict we face. The manual introduces a new paradigm for dealing with conflicts involving non-state actors. Along with the traditional view of war as involving three levels: the tactical, the operational and the strategic, the authors introduce a new tripartite lens for understanding 4G war: the physical, the mental and the moral. In each case, a higher level trumps a lower level. Indeed, the authors describe the central dilemma of 4GW as the fact that “what works for you on the physical (and sometimes mental) level often works against you at the moral level. A corollary of this is that “it is more important not to kill the wrong people than it is to kill armed opponents. Enemy bodycounts may merely present media and PR victories for your opponents, while demoralizing our own troops, and turning public opinion against you. Among the central concepts and topics discussed in this book are:-- De-escalation: More often than not, our military goals are furthered by de-escalating, whereas most troops have “escalation as a default reaction to most situations. This concept goes hand in hand with the idea of preserving the state, and keeping the local populace on our side, or at least not against us.-- “51% solutions, rather than total victory are desirable in 4GW.-- Integrating with, and not alienating, the local populace as key to success.-- Openness with the press, and admitting to mistakes.-- Intelligence as a bottom-up rather than a top-down affair. They give the memorable example of the Swedish word for military intelligence, which translates as “corrections from below.-- Retraining line infantry as “light infantry. Troops must become flexible, independent, self-reliant, self-disciplined, less “orderly and hierarchical, and focus on achieving goals rather than merely carrying out orders. Perhaps the greatest challenge for the American military (outside of special ops and SEALs that already have this mindset) is to move away from the 2G, centralized, command-based, top-down approach, towards a 3G model that emphasizes nimbleness, lightness of footprint, quick reaction times, and that learns to use the

techniques of the enemy against him, rather than relying on firepower alone. The authors make a strong case that Western militaries (and the American military in particular) are stuck in a 2nd generation mindset: "Firepower on targets" is what war is about to them, and it is a hopelessly dated concept. Indeed, it was dated in WWII when the 3G German military defeated a technically superior 2G French army. Implicitly if not explicitly, the manual focuses on our experience in the Middle East. It is a useful thought experiment to contemplate conflicts in other regions: e.g. the Mexican drug war, the Tamil rebellion in Sri Lanka, the Muslim separatist movement in the Philippines, etc., and to imagine the concepts introduced here applied in those situations. In any event, given that our military most needs a manual for dealing with the Middle East, this manual is the right tool for our era. This is a manual for soldiers. Given the events of 11/13/15 in Paris as well as the pervasive low-level civil wars that are taking place across the West, perhaps the publishers can consider producing another manual: 4th Generation Warfare Handbook for the Civilian. Many more of us will be faced with the question of how to defend ourselves against 4GW invaders and hostiles in the places we live than will be posted overseas as soldiers. The proper responses for civilians dealing with conflict within Europe will be very different than the solutions for soldiers fighting in the Middle East. This manual was not written to address that question, but there will certainly be demand for solutions to that challenge in the decades to come. The author's pronouncement that "Fourth Generation war at home is significantly easier to win than Fourth Generation war abroad" will be cold comfort to the families of the victims of 11/13/15 in Paris, to rape victims in Sweden and Rotherham or victims of racist gang crime in Baltimore or LA. Again, this is not a criticism of this book, which achieves what it set out to do, but a call for a complementary volume.

Over the last decade, there's been a lot of discussion of 4th Generation warfare. Two schools of thought have formed - one touting 4GW as the latest in modern warfare, the other regarding 4GW as an adaption of classical low-intensity warfare methods to modern communications and propaganda methods. I'm personally an adherent of the latter position, but it doesn't matter. This book presents useful information on modern low-intensity conflict techniques, but the nuggets are buried in parable-like stories and require sifting to find. But the nuggets are real gold, not fake. The comments about the need to afford an enemy an honorable surrender are particularly true - in retrospect, one of the greatest mistakes of the Iraq campaign in 2003 was the decision to demobilize the Iraqi Army and throw many thousands of trained fighting men onto the street. The observation about the desirability of using bribes is also spot-on. I think this book has several

shortcomings. First, it was written assuming that the reader is thoroughly conversant with 4GW terminology and arguments. A review of basic concepts would have been welcome. Second, there was very little presented on employment of the assets available to a high-end military in low-intensity conflict. And the intelligence and logistic capabilities that can be brought to bear can be very useful. Finally, I think the material would have been much more useful had it been integrated more fully into something like the classic Small Wars Manual that the U.S. Marine Corps developed prior to the Second World War. This is a good start, but not the definitive work on the subject.

Terrorism at home and Other, domestic developments point toward Fourth Generation war within a growing number of states. As citizens transfer their primary loyalty away from the state, two recipients of that loyalty are also likely bases for Fourth Generation war. The first is gangs, which are becoming more powerful all over the world. Many are successful in illegal economic enterprises, which means they have the money for war. How we approach adversaries must have focus that consider how strategy operations and tactics effect the moral, mental and physical levels of conflict. We must make deescalation our priority and escalation of force is to be used only when reasonable and necessary and its impact considered. Bill Kind gives us a simple tool he calls the GRID which when used prior to operations helps you consider options that leave the lighter footprint which so important in developing trust with the uncommitted. Policing here at home could learn a lot from this book as it would greatly improve community, fair and impartial policing. I highly recommend this book it's an eye opener that gets you thinking about how the world has changed when it comes to conflict violence and war and how we must adapt our methods if we truly aim to make a difference.

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