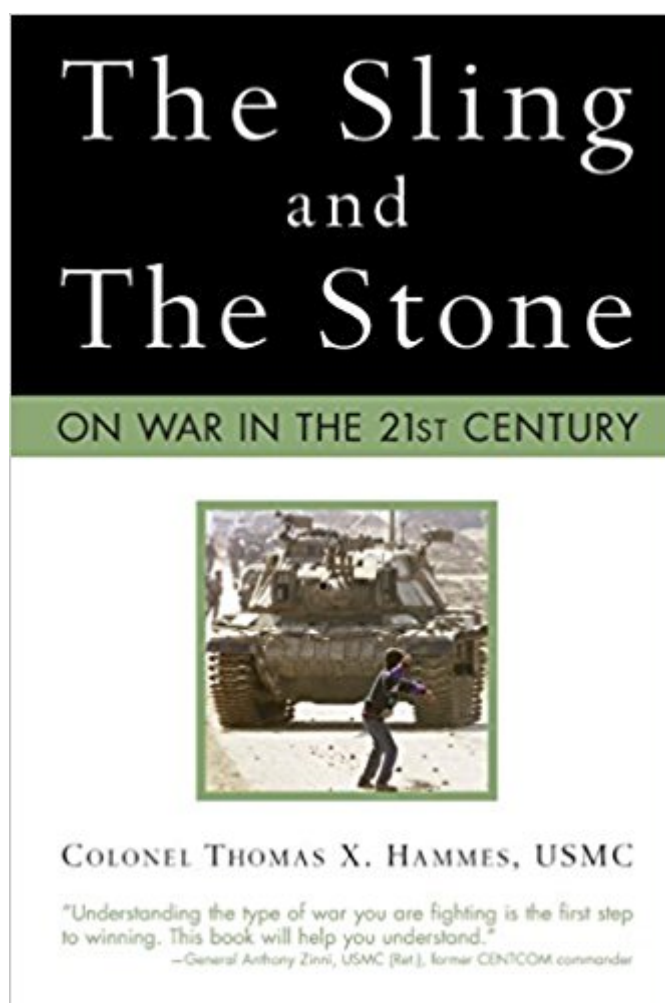


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# The Sling And The Stone: On War In The 21st Century (Zenith Military Classics)



## Synopsis

4GW (Fourth Generation Warfare) is the only kind of war America has ever lost. And we have done so three times - in Vietnam, Lebanon, and Somalia. This form of warfare has also defeated the French in Vietnam and Algeria, and the USSR in Afghanistan. As the only Goliath left in the world, we should be worried that the world's Davids have found a sling and stone that work." - Chapter 1, *The Sling and the Stone: On War in the 21st Century*. The War in Iraq. The War on Terror. These types of "asymmetrical" warfare are the conflicts of the 21st century - and show how difficult it is for the world's remaining superpower to battle insurgents and terrorists who will fight unconventionally in the face of superior military power. This change in military conflict may seem sudden.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Hammes is a career Marine Corps officer, and with this selection, he argues that the U.S. has adapted poorly in response to the new generation of guerrilla warfare. Fourth-generation warfare, as Hammes calls it, is what American forces encounter in Iraq and Afghanistan and Israelis find in Palestine, and it is the way of the future: guerrilla warfare characterized by political acumen and patience, using communications networks and strategic strikes to demoralize and exhaust conventionally superior militaries. For many military strategists, including those presently running the Defense Department, this new world order amounts to a call to newfangled technological arms, but for Hammes, smart bombs and spy drones are not the answer. The solution is to study our enemies as they have studied us and build a networked, flexible, and, here's the kicker, less

hierarchical military structure that employs humans to fight the humans fighting us. As few as five years ago, such analysis would have had limited appeal, but in today's political climate, this concise, surprisingly readable book will attract a broad readership. Brendan Driscoll  
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Military Review, March/April 2007  
“Can a two-and-one-half-year-old book be reviewed as a classic? It can, and should, if it says the kinds of smart, prescient things that Hammes had to say in 2004. The Sling and the Stone was written to appeal to a vast and diverse audience. It provides numerous jewels of information for the general reader as well as senior military leaders, military operational planners and supporters, interagency personnel, and U.S. political leaders who are looking for a provocative read to aid them in making informed decisions in support of U.S. national security. Since its first publication, this visionary book has ignited others in public and private life to read, research, write, and advocate for the United States to change its defense posture in order to meet the challenge posed by the advent of 4GW. Many of Hammes's ideas have now been adopted by the military and are currently in practice in Iraq and Afghanistan. Other ideas are being studied extensively within the Washington Beltway. U.S. homeland security and counterinsurgency doctrines have also been strongly influenced and shaped by this book. Hammes has truly been a catalyst for change. Hammes's book is truly an enlightening must-read for Military Review's readers, particularly those attending career military schools. It should remain so for many years to come.  
Parameters: U.S. Army War College Quarterly, Autumn 2005  
“This is a stimulating, nay, provocative book that should cause military readers and all associated with the security of the United States to question their fundamental assumptions. It is also a gutsy book because the author, a serving officer, asserts in effect that the Secretary of Defense, his team in the Pentagon, and the Joint Chiefs of Staff are wrong in the way they are fighting the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. He further contends that the United States stands a good chance of losing its wars in the future unless the forces confront the realities of warfare in this century.”

A very interesting account of the history of war and how war has evolved. It puts in context the motives and intents of terrorists that affect so much of the modern world. Quite important to understand this in coming to decisions on how to respond to terrorism, because if you don't know what they are trying to accomplish you cannot effectively thwart them. I really appreciated this viewpoint as they always seemed like angry but ineffectual criminals, but now I better see what their

aim is so I can choose actions that help oppose them.

USMC Colonel Hammes provides a general education about fourth-generation warfare (4GW) and its implications for our future. Hammes describes this form of guerrilla warfare and devotes chapters to modern experiences. He analyzes the current situation and gives a prognosis for the future. I found the best chapters on historical 4GW the ones on Mao in China and the Sandinistas in Nicaragua, although all the chapters were unique and instructive. In both of these instances, guerrilla wars were run by practical leaders, not idealists as they projected themselves. They were simply ambitious and disciplined leaders using 4WG tactics over a long time horizon to gain the prize - ultimate political power. Once in power, 4GW leaders renege on promises made to followers and populations that supported them at great risk. The degree of sacrifice demanded by such leaders versus our own politicians distinguishes them. Think about how many people work for a presidential campaign full-time based on the promise of a federal job and the relatively small percentage that actually get the promised federal job. Guerrilla leaders are no different in that regard except their followers often risked their lives fighting for them. Despite all the rhetoric, successful 4GW campaigns are fought over years by ambitious practical leaders. 4GW succeeds best against bureaucratic political-military organizations that throw great resources at winning non-strategic victories with short-term planning horizons. For example, the U.S. could theoretically win a battle or some territory and declare victory for local press within the U.S. This, however, does not impress enemies of the U.S. or make them lose their will to fight. That's an example of the threat. Colonel Hammes demonstrates that technological innovation tends to favor guerrilla fighters more than conventionally organized and heavily resourced military hierarchies. This is almost counterintuitive because one naturally understands how technology will favor oneself, but we have to work very hard at understanding the enemy and how the enemy sees things. According to Hammes, we are not going to find salvation in technological advancement, important as it is. We're must take a lot of time to develop human resources. We must fight the enemy strategically as long as it takes and forget about using the military to win reelection. 4GW plays out over many years, perhaps decades. *The Sling and the Stone* is a revolutionary treatise on warfare. It has already influenced our next generation of military leaders. Hammes inspired a new cadre of military intellectuals. There will be more books to build on Hammes' concepts, and military courses with updated training and enlightened instructors. We must change the game which is currently based on using ever-increasing sums of public funds to finance weapon systems that power political campaigns and promise lucrative retirement of top-ranking officers, according to the author. We

have to change, adapt, and become flexible and smarter.

Even if you disagree with things in this book, it serves as a starting point to understand why the foreign/military policies of the US are dismal failures - and why they will continue to be. They can bomb anyone but can't end most insurgencies. Quick and easy answers are desired while the situations call for patience, wisdom and diplomacy.

Very informative book by a former USMC officer. Provides insight into long term insurgent plans in the middle east, and reasons for the necessity of continued persistence. Begins with a short review of the evolution of modern warfare into forth generation war, and the adaptation of 4GW in the twentieth century by various revolutionary groups. Also gives a brief but very good history of the Jewish and Palestinian conflict. If you think its time to just get out of the middle east this book might change your way of thinking. The book gets a little boggy toward the end, but overall an excellent read.

The crux of this book, in a nutshell is that we need to look closely at the way we think about doing battle, about how we do battle. Mr Hammes brings that point to the forefront and I commend him highly for doing so. Our military, our country has been manipulated by well meaning, but mis guided folks that seem to think that everyone in the world will attempt to stand toe to toe with us and embrace the ensuing slaughter. We could reduce the bloated defense budget with a little common sense, and focus on what would allow us to kindly defeat our adversaries. Failure to embrace new techniques of warfare are one of the reasons that we are a free country today. They stood up and and we hid behind trees, they lost the colonies, we became a sovereign nation. Now our adversaries are throwing the entire toolshed at us, along with the kitchen sink, and all that we seem to be able to do is try and determine why they do not drop to thier knees and relent. We need to look at the culture of warfare, the culture of military personnel and take a radical approach at correcting it before we become insignificant. You can't hit what you can't see, brings new meaning to modern warfare. More of us with the capability to change the military need to read this and take some of the change on board, at least personally, and professionally.

Col. Hammes has taken the original thesis of "we make war the way we make money" presented by the Toffler's in "War and Anti-War" and fleshed it out with real examples. He provides a useful background of he various "generations" of war or the evolutions that war has made as economy and

cultures have changed, moves on to a description of Fourth Generation warfare (4GW) and then provides detailed examples including present date. It's important to understand that although this book is about 4GW or insurgency warfare, it is also about the direction warfare is taking. The United States must be ready for conflicts that span the spectrum from 2GW to what will become 5GW. 4GW is like any insurgency...it requires lots of human skill, good communications, and interagency support...and something that Americans are not known for....patience. If you are a soldier interested in insurgency and how it is evolving this is a MUST READ book. If you are a civilian you'd better read this book if you want to understand how the world is unfolding around you. This book gets Mike Barr's 6 Star Rating.

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