

COPYRIGHT NOTICE:

**David Kennedy: Of War and Law**

is published by Princeton University Press and copyrighted, © 2006, by Princeton University Press. All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced in any form by any electronic or mechanical means (including photocopying, recording, or information storage and retrieval) without permission in writing from the publisher, except for reading and browsing via the World Wide Web. Users are not permitted to mount this file on any network servers.

Follow links for Class Use and other Permissions. For more information send email to: [permissions@pupress.princeton.edu](mailto:permissions@pupress.princeton.edu)

## INTRODUCTION

### War Today

War is a profound topic—like truth, love, death, or the divine. Intellectuals from every field have cut their teeth on it: political scientists, historians, ethicists, philosophers, novelists, and literary critics. But war is not one thing, always and everywhere. People write about the wars of their own time and their own country.

The wars of my time and my country—the America of the “postwar” half century—have been varied. We have fought a cold war, postcolonial wars, and innumerable metaphoric wars on things like “poverty” and “drugs.” Our military has intervened here and there for various humanitarian and strategic reasons. The current war on terror partakes of all these. When framed as a clash of civilizations or modes of life—secular and fundamentalist, Christian and Muslim, modern and primitive—the war on terror is reminiscent of the Cold War.

Like the Cold War, the war on terror seems greater than the specific conflicts fought in its name. It transcends the clash of arms in Iraq or Afghanistan. On their own, those wars resemble postcolonial and anticolonial conflicts from Algeria to Vietnam. When we link the war in Afghanistan to women’s





















