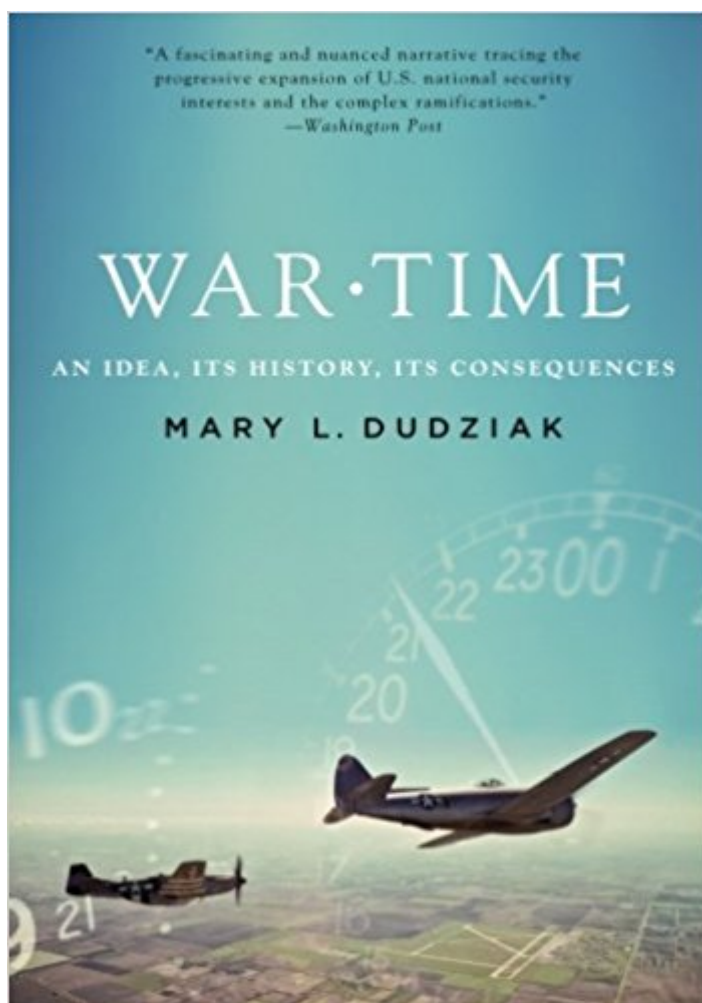


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# War Time: An Idea, Its History, Its Consequences



## Synopsis

On the surface, "wartime" is a period of time in which a society is at war. But we now live in what President Obama has called "an age without surrender ceremonies," where it is no longer easy to distinguish between times of war and times of peace. In this inventive meditation on war, time, and the law, Mary Dudziak argues that wartime is not as discrete a time period as we like to think. Instead, America has been engaged in some form of ongoing overseas armed conflict for over a century. Meanwhile policy makers and the American public continue to view wars as exceptional events that eventually give way to normal peace times. This has two consequences: first, because war is thought to be exceptional, "wartime" remains a shorthand argument justifying extreme actions like torture and detention without trial; and second, ongoing warfare is enabled by the inattention of the American people. More disconnected than ever from the wars their nation is fighting, public disengagement leaves us without political restraints on the exercise of American war powers.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

The greatest strength and weakness of *War Time* is Dudziak's tendency to treat her subject as more complicated and hazy than it actually is. In its most compelling passages, the book is a vaguely postmodernist riff on the ragged edges of its titular concept, with a wealth of intriguing digressions. — Charles Homans

"[Mary Dudziak's] essential argument is persuasive and her contribution is significant. She helps explain why national security continues to have such influence on American politics, why the US

continues to field such a large military establishment, and why this country exercises such influence and engages in such frequent interventions in world politics."--Journal of American History

"Thoughtful, compelling, and concise."--H-War

"Closely argued and clearly written, this is a scholarly work with popular appeal."--Publishers Weekly

"For over a decade since 9/11, U.S. forces have been waging war. Yet is the nation itself 'at war'? In this timely and provocative book, Mary Dudziak shows why this question has become so difficult to answer--and warns of the dangers inherent in our failure to do so." --Andrew J. Bacevich, author of *Washington Rules: America's Path to Permanent War*

"War Time turns our notions of both 'war' and 'time' upside down. This thought-provoking book forces us to realize that war is not an exception to 'normal' peacetime, but rather that wartime has become the norm. The implications of perpetual wartime are profound, for law, politics, and daily life. Mary Dudziak has again brought her keen cultural, historical and legal insights to bear on a subject of critical importance."--Elaine Tyler May, Regents Professor, University of Minnesota

"Taking law as her focal point but ranging much more widely, Mary Dudziak's provocative meditation on what we mean in speaking of a 'time' of war invites readers to reflect on how we think about war itself. It should change our understanding of what-and when-war 'is' for Americans."--Mark Tushnet, William Nelson Cromwell Professor of Law, Harvard Law School

"War Time is one of those rare books that can entirely reorient how one thinks about the world. By showing the reader what Americans have meant-and have come to mean-by 'wartime,' Mary Dudziak shows us assumptions about war and peace that govern political and legal thought without anyone noticing. This is an intellectual tour de force, and beautifully written to boot."--H. Jefferson Powell, George Washington Law School

"[T]his is a book well worth reading."--New York Journal of Books

"A slim and engaging volume, wonderfully written and carefully wrought, War Time is a fascinating meditation on the perils of clinging to a myth of national identity that increasingly bears only a glancing resemblance to modern life."--H-Diplo

"Mary Dudziak's new book, *War Time: An Idea, Its History, Its Consequences*, is a crucial document. Her smooth foray into legal and political history reveals that in not just the past decade but the past century, wartime has become a more or less permanent feature of the American experience, though we fail to recognize it....Dudziak assembles an intellectual Rubik's Cube, playing with ideas of time, law, killing and politics, and arranging them into a pattern that all but eliminates the distinctions we long assumed to have existed between war and peace."--The Nation

"Humanists will regard much Dudziak's text as an anecdotally rich and sprightly written reestablishment of the threshold claim that culture and society affect temporal categories and experience....For humans, at least, individual and collective experience is not that of the clock ticking equivalent seconds but the packaging of meaning through

temporal definition. 'Wartime,' Dudziak can therefore add, is not an objective fact about history but a fashion of assigning significance with its own cultural style and political implications. Dudziak reveals and exploits this truth beautifully."--Lawfare.com"Drawing thoughtfully from the literature of legal studies, political science, history and sociology, Dudziak crafts a fascinating and nuanced narrative tracing the progressive expansion of U.S. national security interests and the complex ramifications."--Washington Post"This is an intriguing little book...[A] thoughtful and original take on the concept of war."--Foreign Affairs "This is an important book...It has the potential to reshape how we interpret post-1945 American History."--Journal of American History

Mary Dudziak's "War Time" examines war time and peace time with an analysis that threads through this country's wars and numerous expeditionary adventures taking the reader from the "good" wars, with finite beginnings and ends, through those which largely went unnoticed. Implicit in this examination are the strategic issues faced by the United States and the suggestion that the long wars we are fighting have become the centerpiece of both U.S. strategic policy and culture. But the country has not mobilized for open ended war and the long term strain on our military, national resources and cultural fabric was not anticipated. The U.S. is the last remaining global power but we may have reached our limits. Dudziak's "War Time" will provoke your thoughts and reveal challenging concepts which cannot be ignored. It's all about time.

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