analysis by policymakers before they act: raising tension between armed opposition groups, disrupting the distribution of scarce resources, fostering long-term dependency on outside powers, and perpetuating the harmful optic that the United States is the self-appointed global cop.

Gordon uses the example of Libya to illustrate just how dangerous security vacuums can be. When Muammar Qadhafi's successor, Abd al-Hakim Belhaj—former head of the al Qaeda–affiliated Libyan Islamic Fighting Group—declared himself the leader of all liberation forces, other Western-oriented opposition leaders became infuriated and competing militias began killing each other. By June 2014, Libya had two competing governments backed by competing militias, and the country had descended into a multi-sided civil war with no end in sight.

Gordon is also equally damning about the ripple effect the moral hazard created in Libya had on Syria's rebel groups. The latter believed that by escalating violence, the world's most powerful militaries would intervene on their behalf. Sadly, instead of leading to Bashar al-Asad's ouster, it caused, "the greatest humanitarian catastrophe since World War II, a refugee crisis, the destabilizing of Syria's neighbors, the growth of the [so-called] Islamic State, and political spillover into Europe and beyond."
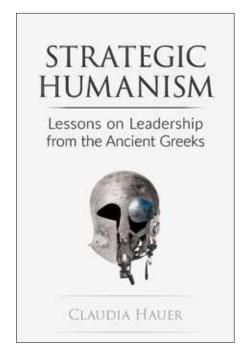
Gordon believes the following factors contribute to regime change failures: inadequate planning for what comes after regime collapse; U.S. forces being viewed as occupiers instead of liberators; not recognizing that local actors will pursue their interests first; regional neighbors seeking to destabilize new regime leadership; moral hazard created elsewhere; a general lack of U.S. knowledge about the Middle East; the difficulty of staying committed after intervening; unrealistic expectations about transplanting democratic values abroad; and a mistaken belief that throwing more money and troops at a problem will make it better. Unfortunately, these factors can become intertwined and unleash their own dynamics that neither the White House nor Pentagon can control.

The book's overall thesis would have been strengthened had Gordon discussed the limitations of regime change—a means to a higher end—within the context of U.S. grand strategy. Here, introducing G. John Ikenberry's idea of a "liberal hegemonic order" would have helped readers better understand why U.S. leaders of all stripes feel the messianic urge to spread democratic values around the globe—even if they can only be imposed by force and by violating other countries' sovereignty and right to self-determination.

After taking the reader on a journey of tears, the author recommends a policy alternative to regime change. It is a hybrid approach of practical measures including a mix of containment, deterrence, diplomatic engagement and support for partners, selective military action, arms control, and economic investment and "the restoration of the United States as a respected, prosperous, and democratic alternative [that] will produce better results than the pursuit of costly, quixotic and unrealistic campaigns to overthrow regimes."

Perhaps. But even if policymakers adopt the author's more robust menu of soft and smart power policy options, the temptation to undertake regime change will remain irresistible as long as America fails to internalize the hard lessons of the Middle East and remains wedded to a misguided sense of exceptionalism. **JFQ**

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Reviewed by Christopher Kuennen

At some point between the legendary Greek siege of Troy and the infamous defeat of Athens at Syracuse, the philosopher Heraclitus rather astutely discerned that *Éthos anthrôpôi daimón* (Character is fate). His assertion might be thought of as a pithy distillation of the practical wisdom of ancient Greece. In *Strategic Humanism*, Claudia Hauer urges leaders to engage with this tradition; military officers and defense policymakers stand to gain not only theoretical insights from an attentive reading of the Greek classics, but also a way of perceiving the world and its conflicts as beyond total human mastery and yet shaped by the virtues and vices of human character.

Hauer's presentation of the value of humanistic study is especially compelling in light of the evolving implications of

artificial intelligence (AI) for the profession of arms. In February 2020, the Department of Defense (DOD) officially adopted five ethical principles to guide its ongoing development and use of AI: namely, that it be responsible, equitable, traceable, reliable, and governable. Though these principles are meant to embody "existing and widely accepted ethical and legal commitments," DOD has nevertheless recognized its need to better understand how to actually apply the principles. It is this perennial and important challenge of putting principles into practice that Hauer addresses in *Strategic Humanism*.

The primary obstacle to imposing ethical norms on the technical development and operational application of AI is the infinitely complex context in which practical choices occur. The finite aims and mechanisms of a given technology pose inherent obstacles to unfettered appreciation for the range of morally relevant factors surrounding its use in any particular situation. In the crowning chapter of Hauer's book, she emphasizes this fundamental lesson of Aristotelean ethics: "As something essentially interactive, moral action cannot be worked out in advance, prior to our immersion in whatever situation calls for our response." This condition of moral decisionmaking should influence not only the objectives of algorithmic design but also the manner in which tech developers and operators are trained in ethics. If there are no "categorical imperatives"—no universally applicable rules for judgment—then moral action demands a character capable of discerning what is best in any given situation. AI cannot be "ethical" if the human beings designing it and employing it lack a virtuous ethos, an excellent character.

Strategic Humanism presents Homer, Herodotus, Thucydides, and Aristotle as partners in an ever-fruitful dialogue aimed at educating such a character. Hauer argues that these thinkers provide an important check on the somewhat ironic, though widely influential, Cartesian prejudice against the role that human subjectivity plays in even the most rigorously scientific analysis. She

draws on the account of King Croesus in Herodotus's *Histories*, for instance, to illustrate the danger of interpreting situational ambiguity according to a framework constructed of one's own preconceived hopes and biases. Herodotus recounts how around 550 BCE a mounting Persian threat prompted the Ionian Greeks to prepare for conflict. For his part, King Croesus of Lydia offered sacrifices to the Delphic Oracle for divine counsel. The oracle answered Croesus's supplications by predicting that if he attacked the Persians, a great empire would be destroyed. Croesus proceeded to begin a campaign against Persia—but in the end, it was his own empire that was ruined. According to Hauer, Croesus's failure exposes the limits of his interpretive imagination; he failed to consider how the particularities of his situation bore on the information at his disposal.

Since technology too has the effect of not only solving problems but also framing them in a specific way, our tools can sometimes impede our interpretive imagination, our ability to perceive all the factors relevant in making ethical decisions: "If all you have is a hammer, then everything looks like a nail." Indeed, reducing unintended bias (for example, for race or gender) is already one of the foremost topics in the discipline of AI ethics, and DOD directly addresses such bias in its own "equitable" principle. *Strategic Humanism* offers a strategy for expanding the moral imagination of its readers—including military AI developers and users—by putting key themes of the profession of arms in dialogue with the Greek humanists.

Hauer accomplishes her intended goal—"to familiarize the reader with a Hellenic way of seeing the world, in which character displays itself in action"—by exploring how the Greeks wrestled with such diverse and timely topics as vengeance, intercultural competency, and violent deterrence. Running through the collection of six essays that constitute *Strategic Humanism* is an insightful metanarrative that connects the fate of the ancient Greeks to their character, socially and individually. The power of Greek city-states grows as they use

a common language to share stories of virtue and notions of the common good, and withers as utilitarian nihilism drives them to act out of self-interested fear. Hauer successfully demonstrates how engaging with the Greek classics can help broaden one's moral imagination, even as the technology one depends on might otherwise limit it.

Strategic Humanism draws on Hauer's time as a visiting humanities professor at the Air Force Academy, and though her work lacks explicit connections to many of today's most prominent defense issues (for example, warfighting in the space and cyberspace domains), her perspective manifests a perspicacious and broadly applicable awareness of the poverty of a technocratic approach to forming military minds. Especially as AI rapidly alters the pace and nature of our decisionmaking, we should take seriously the ability of the Greek classics to "liberate human judgment to reflect strategically on what we are doing."

Readers convinced by Hauer's account of the relationship between human character and technology can find additional insight in the work of AI ethicist Shannon Vallor, including in her *Technology and the Virtues: A Philosophical Guide to a Future Worth Wanting* (Oxford University Press, 2016). But even if you do not read Hauer or Vallor, heed their advice: read the Greeks. **JFQ**

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