Killing Machines

What causes a Western democratic leader to stop even feigning to value the law of war? Unlike past US presidents, who at least paid lip service to the law of armed conflict, Donald Trump has openly flouted it: pardoning war criminals, denigrating the Geneva Conventions, praising torture, and discarding military norms of restraint. This gripping account depicts how Trump has upended assumptions about America's outward commitment to the law of war, exposing the conditions that make such defiance possible. Drawing on in-depth case studies and original survey analysis, Thomas Gift explains how Trump has relied on right-wing media and allies in Congress to attack the law of war – not in the shadows, but in broad daylight. *Killing Machines* cautions that Trump's approach is not an aberration – it's a playbook other leaders could follow. This title is also available as Open Access on Cambridge Core.

THOMAS GIFT is Associate Professor and founding Director of the Centre on U.S. Politics at University College London. He has published extensively in top scholarly journals, authored popular articles for outlets such as the *Wall Street Journal*, *Washington Post*, and *Newsweek*, and is a frequent contributor to major media venues including the *BBC*, *CNN*, and *Bloomberg*. He has held fellowships and visiting appointments at Harvard, Yale, Stanford, Notre Dame, Oxford, and LSE.

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Killing Machines

Trump, the Law of War, and the Future of Military Impunity

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