



New York Times, Law of War, and Congressional Intervention in U.S. Military Operations

Monday, November 7th, 2022

1:00 – 2:30 pm ET

via Zoom

Controversy sparked by recent high-profile media coverage of U.S. military combat operations abroad has ignited a movement among civil society and a coalition of legislators to justify increasingly assertive efforts by Congress to intervene in U.S. military combat operations abroad. In a letter addressed to Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin earlier this year, for example, a group of more than 40 lawmakers cited a series of New York Times coverage that reportedly “brought to light substantial flaws in the US military’s procedures to prevent, investigate, and respond to civilian deaths in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Syria” in support of pending legislation intended to address DoD civilian harm mitigation practices.

This webinar examines ways in which high-profile media coverage of military combat operations shapes public opinion and supports narratives demanding increasingly assertive congressional interventions intended to address persistent and systemic flaws seemingly exposed in media reporting. To give shape to the inquiry, three specific case studies form the foundation for the discussion – New York Times coverage involving the drone strike that punctuated the close of U.S. military ground operations in Afghanistan in August of last year; airstrikes on ISIS positions in Baghuz, Syria in 2019; and a series of attacks on and around Tabqa Dam in Syria in 2017.

Panelists will engage with these and related examples of high-profile reporting to explore the virtues and limitations inherent in depictions developed in media coverage of military combat operations. With the relative merit of narratives derived primarily from media reporting in focus, panelists will consider the implications of developing impressions of apparent military accountability deficiencies on representations derived from media coverage in the context of legislation that is currently being considered before Congress.

Speakers:

- **Lt Col Peter Combe** (moderator) – USMC, Plans & Innovation Branch
- **Brian L. Cox** – Cornell Law School, US Army (ret.)
- **Dr. Sarah Kreps** – Department of Government, Cornell University
- **Dr. Sophie Rondeau** – Canadian Red Cross

Registration for this online webinar is free and open to the public at www.asil.org/events.

This session is organized by ASIL’s Lieber Society on the Law of Armed Conflict and co-sponsored by the National Security Law and Policy Society of Cornell Law School.