In his conclusions, Schulte finds that most asymmetric conflict constellations can be subsumed under the existing legal framework of *ius ad bellum* and *ius in bello*. Asymmetric conflict constellations tend to be complex and existing international law has not been drafted with these complex constellations in mind. However, Schulte emphasizes that the regime in place is sufficient to deal with the challenges posed by modern asymmetric conflicts and that the framework is adequate and effective (331). He does suggest that a more homogenous state practice would help to create legal certainty (334). Apparently, for the time being, such a more homogenous state practice seems wishful thinking.

All summed up, and the above criticisms aside, Schulte, in his book, gives an interesting overview of the legal regime governing asymmetric conflicts. “Asymmetrische Konflikte” is a solid study where it analyses the status and rights of states and non-state actors in asymmetric armed conflicts. However, it is not always entirely convincing in passages where the author appears to have worked rather cursorily. Some of the conclusions are debatable, but that is the nature of most of the law of armed conflict. Ultimately, this does not take too much away from this study, and in the end Schulte succeeds in giving a full account of the complex legal framework that governs asymmetric conflicts.

Dr. Daniel Heilmann, LL.M.
Senior Research Fellow at the Max Planck Institute for Comparative Public Law and International Law, Heidelberg, Germany

Eric Engle: Ideas in Conflict – International Law and the Global War on Terror

The attacks of 11 September 2001, killing more than 3,000 people from more than 80 countries was not only a shock for New York, the United States and the entire world, be it Muslim, Christian or atheist, but was also the starting point of a new era in world politics. The reaction of the
United States to the attack has shown its diplomatic power and military might. On the very next day, the UN Security Council reacted with S/RES/1368, reaffirming the right to self-defense, although the attackers were non-state actors. Within a few weeks, an international coalition of more than fifty nations defeated the Taliban that offered a safe haven to Osama bin Laden, the mastermind of the attacks. After the victory, the United States and its allies started to rebuild Afghanistan, promising development, prosperity, peace, democracy and the respect for human rights to a country that has been war torn for decades and that since 1996 had been ruled by a regime that massacred civilians, interpreted the Shari’a in the strictest way, oppressed women and destroyed century-old cultural monuments.

Today, Afghanistan is still a war torn country, and (the threat of) religiously motivated terrorism has become a regular occurrence everywhere in the world. Anti-Americanism is on the rise and islamistic fundamentalism has become an alluring ideology for many, especially young and frustrated men, in First World and Third World countries alike. Obviously, something has gone very wrong. The first blow to the cause of the United States and its allies occurred when reports about torture of prisoners in Guantanamo Bay and, two years later, Abu Ghraib, came up. The pictures that surfaced of mistreated and humiliated prisoners went around the word.

The war against Iraq can be regarded as the second blow to the cause of the United States, leading to the death of more than 600,000 Iraqis according to a report by the renowned Johns Hopkins University.

Although much has been written about the “War on Terror” – a phrase finally dropped by U.S. President Barack Obama – Eric Engle, in this collection of essays written between 2002 and 2012, is still able to add new thoughts to the discussion. He takes up the challenge to explore the deeper reason for all that has gone wrong and embeds his analyses in a description of the history and transformation of public international law.

In Part I he presents a human rights-centered alternative to the International Relations’ theories of realism and atomism. In Part II he concentrates on two aspects – he calls them the key challenges – that the international system faces today because of the “War on Terror”: failed states and terrorism and he proposes changes to the U.S. policy. Engle’s ambition is to “contribute to the extension of peace and prosperity in the First World – created through a peaceful stable international system