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Technology and the Law on the Use of Force

New security challenges in the twenty-first century

Jackson Maogoto

ROUTLEDGE 

Technology and the Law on the Use of Force

As governmental and non-governmental operations become progressively supported by vast automated systems and electronic data flows, attacks of government information infrastructure, operations and processes pose a serious threat to economic and military interests. In 2007, Estonia suffered a month long cyber assault to its digital infrastructure, often described as 'Web War I'. In 2010, a worm – Stuxnet – was identified in the supervisory control and data acquisition systems at Iran's uranium enrichment plant, presumably in an attempt to set back Iran's nuclear programme. These illustrations are testament to the reality that dependence upon telecommunications and information infrastructures puts at risk Critical National Infrastructure, and is now at the core of national security interests.

This book takes a detailed look at new theatres of war and considers their relation to international law on the use of force. Except in cases of self-defence or with the authorisation of a Security Council Resolution, the use of force is prohibited under the *UN Charter* and customary international law. However, the law of *jus ad bellum* was developed in a pre-digital era where current technological capabilities could not be conceived. Jackson Maogoto asks whether the law on the use of force is able to deal with legal disputes likely to arise from modern warfare. Key queries include how one defines an armed attack in an age of anti-satellite weaponry, whether the destruction of a State's vital digital eco-system or the 'blinding' of military communication satellites constitutes a threat, and how one delimits the threshold that would enliven the right of self-defence or retaliatory action. The book argues that while technology has leapt ahead, the legal framework has failed to adapt, rendering States unable to legally defend themselves effectively.

The book will be of interest and use to practitioners, researchers and students of international law generally. Specifically it is of great utility to scholars and practitioners whose interests triangulate use of force, law of armed conflict and the role of established and ascendant technology in these spheres.

Jackson Maogoto is Senior Lecturer at the University of Manchester, UK.

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First published 2015
by Routledge
2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxfordshire OX14 4RN
and by Routledge
711 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10017

First issued in paperback 2016

Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business

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British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Maogoto, Jackson Nyamuya, 1975–

Technology and the law on the use of force: new security challenges in the twenty first century/Jackson Maogoto.

pages cm – (Routledge research in international law)

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-0-415-69433-9 (hardback) – ISBN 978-0-203-71605-2

(ebk) 1. Information warfare (International law) 2. War

(International law) 3. Computer networks – Security measures.

4. Cyberterrorism – Prevention. 5. Malware (Computer software)

– Prevention. 6. Cyber intelligence (Computer security)

7. Computer security – Law and legislation. I. Title.

KZ6718.M34 2015

341.6'3 – dc23

2014021702

ISBN 13: 978-1-138-24522-8 (pbk)

ISBN 13: 978-0-415-69433-9 (hbk)

Typeset in Sabon by

Florence Production Ltd, Stoodleigh, Devon, UK

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Biblioteka Główna
Akademii Sztuki Wojennej

26730/III (CB)



03-026730-000-0

Czyt.
004.056

LAW / MILITARY AND STRATEGIC STUDIES

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ISBN 978-1-138-24522-8



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Taylor & Francis Group
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9 781138 245228