



# On War

The collected columns of William S. Lind  
2003-2009



**4GW**



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by William S. Lind

Published by Castalia House  
Kouvola, Finland  
[www.castaliahouse.com](http://www.castaliahouse.com)

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These columns originally appeared as a series written while Mr. Lind was the Director of the Center for Cultural Conservatism at the Free Congress Foundation. Special thanks to Mark Sexton for his contribution to column #325.

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Editor: Vox Day  
Cover Design: JartStar  
Cover Images: Ørjan Ruttenborg Svendsen  
Version 004

## Foreword

To many of those who will read this book, Bill—William S., to be precise—Lind needs no introduction. For years now he has been a familiar figure around the U.S armed forces, the Marines in particular. The list of military issues he has written about is vast; maneuver warfare, fourth-generation warfare (what I, in my book, *The Transformation of War*, later called non-trinitarian warfare), fifth-generation warfare (if there is such a thing), the reasons why going into Iraq was a mistake that would cost the U.S dear, the idiotic attempt to set up a new Iraqi Army “which will reflect our highest ideals,” the role women should and should not play in war... you name it. A few of his views about the countless issues he addressed may have been wrong; for example, the claim that Israel lost its 2006 war against Hezbollah. As readers of the present volume will soon find out, though, they have always been, and still are, thought-provoking.

Nor has Lind been content with writing and lecturing. Always willing to pull an oar on behalf of causes in which he believed, he has also been active as a teacher. For years on end he ran workshops at Quantico. His students, all of whom attended in their own free time, were captains. He himself used to say that the great divide in the U.S Marine Corps officer corps, the turning point at which young, open-minded men and women (though very few women saw fit to join his courses) keen to serve their country were transformed into compliant cogs in a vast and often obtuse machine, occurred between that rank and the next one. Never have I seen a teacher more admired by his class, nor more attentive and eager students.

As those who peruse this volume will soon notice, Bill knows his way around the military as well as military history. Nevertheless he is nothing like a specialist. He truly floats like a butterfly and stings like a

bee. At various times he has written about democracy, politics, freedom (and its opposite, political correctness), and so many other topics as to make one's head spin. For some years he even found time and energy to run an Electric Railway Journal which advocated the revival of that means of transport. A formidable debater and inventor of pithy phrases ("Arab timekeeping is usually like Scandinavian cuisine; there isn't much of it and what there is is bad") his work is a joy to read.

Those of us lucky enough to know him well are also aware of his more endearing idiosyncrasies, most of which are linked to his thought and work. Among them is nostalgia for the Cleveland of his youth, described by him as a sort of pre-lapsarian paradise; and his former house in Alexandria, Va, so filled with 1930s-vintage furniture, pictures and appliances that he could have turned it into a museum and charged an entrance fee. Nor shall I ever forget him during a visit to Potsdam, Germany, reverently contemplating a building that used to be the seat of the Kaiser's garde du corps and looking as if he were caught up in a trance.

Let me end this with a story that will illuminate the man and his thought better than any other I can think of. Back when Bill was working for the Free Congress Foundation in Washington D.C, he used to run a television program. At one point he asked me whether I would appear on it. I immediately said yes; I added, however, that this might give rise to difficulties. Whereas he was a dyed-in the wool conservative trying to push a conservative cause, I in many ways see myself as what Americans would call "liberal." I shall never forget the way he looked at me from his great height—he is a good deal taller than I—and said, very softly: "I know—and it does not matter."

That, in my view, is a great man. I am proud to be his friend.

Martin van Creveld

Jerusalem



# Can A Government Wage War Without Popular Support?

Beginning January 28, 2003, I will offer commentary each week until the Iraq business is over and done. I suspect that may be awhile.

Who am I? In 1976 I began the debate over maneuver warfare that became a central part of the military reform movement of the 1970s and 1980s. The U.S. Marine Corps finally adopted maneuver warfare as doctrine in the late 1980s and I wrote most of their new tactics manual.

In 1989, I defined 4GW, 4th Generation warfare—war waged by non-state entities—which is what paid us a visit on September 11, 2001. The article I co-authored for the *Marine Corps Gazette* was cited in 2002 by al-Qaeda, who declared, “This is our doctrine.” My *Maneuver Warfare Handbook*, published in 1985, is now used by military academies all over the world, and I lecture internationally on military strategy, doctrine and tactics.

In this series, I propose to look at what is happening—with Iraq, North Korea, Afghanistan and other outposts of the new American imperium—from the standpoint of military theory. Hopefully, that will enable us all to make sense out of the bits and pieces we get each day as news. One of the most important things military theory offers to this end is a framework developed by Col. John Boyd, USAF, who was the greatest military theorist America ever produced. Col. Boyd said that war is fought at three levels: moral, mental and physical. The moral level is the most powerful, the physical level is the least powerful, and the mental level is in between. The American way of war, which is 2nd Generation warfare—there will be more on the Four Generations of Modern War in future commentaries—is physical: “putting steel on target,” as our soldiers like to say.



But how does the coming war with Iraq look at the moral level? Here, the U.S. seems to be leading with its chin. Why? Because the administration in Washington has yet to come up with a convincing rationale for why the United States should attack Iraq.

The argument that Iraq, a small, poor, Third World country halfway around the world, is a direct threat to the U.S.A. is not credible. Yes, Saddam probably has some chemical and biological weapons. But few tyrants are bent on suicide, and the notion that he would use them to attack the United States, except in self-defense, makes no sense. Nor does it seem likely he would give them to non-state actors like al-Qaeda—again, except in self-defense—because non-state forces and 4th Generation warfare are as much a threat to him as to us.

It is of course true that Saddam is a tyrant in the model of Stalin. So what? Mesopotamia has been ruled by tyrants since before history began, and it will be ruled by tyrants long after North America is once again tribal territories. The last President who tried to export democracy on American bayonets was Woodrow Wilson. That's one of the reasons he counts as America's worst President, ever. Very few people, in America or the rest of the world, wish to see us revive the practice.

Most importantly, the real threat we face is the 4th Generation, non-state players such as al-Qaeda, Hamas, Hezbollah, etc. They can only benefit from an American war against Iraq—regardless of how it turns out. If we win, the state is further discredited in the Islamic world, and more young men give their allegiance to non-state forces. If Saddam wins, their own governments look even less legitimate, because they failed to stand with him against the hated Crusaders. A recent cartoon showed Osama bin Laden, dressed as Uncle Sam, saying, “I want you to invade Iraq!” Undoubtedly, he does.

So what is the real reason for this war? Oil? Revenge for Saddam surviving the first Gulf War? Israel? The ordinary Americans I know are wondering, because the reasons provided by the administration

don't add up.

Military theory says that, in a democracy, a government cannot successfully wage war unless the war has popular support. In turn, a war cannot obtain popular support if the people do not understand why it is being fought. Today the people, at home and overseas, do not understand why America wants to go to war with Iraq. That means the administration is losing this war before the first bomb is dropped.

*January 28, 2003*

## Will the Enemy Fight?

I previously looked at the moral level of war from the American perspective. Now I want to turn the telescope around: how does this war look at the moral level—the highest and most powerful level of war—from an Iraqi perspective?

Of course, I have to speculate: Iraq is not big on opinion polls. But the question is important, because it relates directly to whether or not Iraqis fight us when we invade their country. The key to our almost bloodless success in the first Gulf War was the fact that most Iraqi soldiers besides the Republican Guard did not fight. Make no mistake: if the Iraqis do fight this time, the second Gulf War will be very different from the first.

Washington is so confident that the Iraqis will not fight that our operational plan depends on them not doing so. We will invade Iraq with a force as small as two Army divisions and one division from the Marine Corps. That is enough Americans to take Iraq's surrender, but nowhere near enough to defeat Iraq if Iraqis fight, which indicates that our operational plan is very fragile. Washington's reason for believing the Iraqis will not fight is moral: Saddam is a tyrant, and many, perhaps most Iraqis hate him. They will welcome as liberators anyone who promises to overthrow Saddam Hussein.

That may prove correct. But counting on it could prove dangerous. Many Iraqis may feel, “Yea, Saddam is an SOB, but at least he is our SOB.” Not without reason, Iraqis may see our invasion having more to do with oil than with spreading democracy.

Nationalism and tribalism may also work for Saddam, as many people unite to fight a foreign invader. After all, an earlier Saddam Hussein named Joe Stalin was also a tyrant. Many Russians hated him.

Many welcomed the Germans and even fought for Germany against the Soviet Union. But enough Russians stayed loyal for Stalin to win that war.

We also need to ask which Iraqis we are talking about. The Kurds, in northern Iraq, are unlikely to fight for Saddam, unless he seems to be winning. Their real fear, in any case, is ending up inside Turkey after Iraq breaks apart. In the south of Iraq, the Shi'ites have suffered heavily under Saddam; they may welcome us, or at least stay neutral.

But Iraq's real military, the Republican Guard, is made up almost entirely of Sunnis from the middle of the country. By saying we will bring democracy to Iraq, we are also saying that we will throw the Sunnis out of power, since they are a minority. In a country like Iraq, if you lose political power, you lose everything else too, including maybe your life. My bet is that the Sunnis will fight us. If they fight us in the cities, this will not be an easy war. Perhaps the most important question, looking at the moral level of war from the other side's perspective, is not what Iraqis think, but how this war will look in the larger Islamic world. Here, the U.S. has some important strikes against it, even if no one loves Saddam. We are a powerful country attacking a weak country and offering no credible reason for doing so. We are a rich country bringing more misery to a poor country. We boast that because of our technology, we can wage a war in safety, killing other people while taking no risks ourselves. And we are seen as a Christian country attacking a Moslem country, whether we see ourselves as one or not. Would that we still were!

This could bring us serious trouble in the Persian Gulf and elsewhere. The most critical place to watch is Pakistan. If the current pro-American government of Pakistan is ousted and replaced with one aligned with Islamic non-state forces against the West, the whole American position in the region will collapse. Osama or his buddies will have nukes and the most competent conventional armed forces in the Islamic world. If that occurs, we will have lost even if we take

Baghdad and hang Saddam Hussein from a sour apple tree.

One vignette of how this war may look from the Sunni Iraqi perspective comes from an incident in the first Gulf War, told to me by a U.S. Marine who witnessed it. The Marines were attacked by a small unit of the Republican Guard. They shot up the lead Iraqi personnel carrier, which caught fire. The Republican Guard infantry poured out of it on fire, and assaulted the Marines as they burned. One Iraqi was shot numerous times, but did not fall. A Marine finally brought him down with a football tackle and beat out the flames on his back. With the American Marines standing around him, the Iraqi sat up and said in perfect English, "I am thirsty, and I love Saddam." And then he died.

I guarantee you that those Marines respected their enemy. Before this is over, Washington may come to do the same.

*February 4, 2003*

# Washington is Playing at War

When I had lunch last week with the thoughtful foreign policy columnist Georgie Anne Geyer, the first thing she asked me was, “Can you make any sense out of what is going on?” I assured her that, like most of the people I know, I could not. Washington seems hell-bent on war with Iraq, and nobody, including my friends in the military, understands why.

Secretary of State Powell's speech to the U.N. did not answer the question. Considering that we are talking about war here, the grounds he offered for it were trifling. It brought to mind the War of Jenkins' Ear, when in the 18th century England declared war on Spain over the ear of a British merchant captain named Jenkins, supposedly sliced off his head by a Spanish coast guardsman. Jenkins presented the ear to Parliament, pickled in a bottle. And after the war was over, no one really understood why it had been fought.

The mismatch between causes and means raises a deeply troubling question: is Washington playing at war? Make no mistake: war is the most perilous and unpredictable of all human endeavors. Playing with war is more dangerous than playing with fire, because fire can usually be contained; war, too often, cannot. Wars have an unpleasant habit of evolving in ways that none of the participants anticipated. When, in the summer of 1914, Europe resounded with cries of “A Berlin!” or “Nach Paris!”, no one imagined the Somme, or Verdun, or the starvation blockade of Germany that killed 750,000 civilians.

The sense that Washington is playing at war is strengthened if we analyze the politics. If the Bush administration were in desperate political trouble, one could at least see a rationale for a wild gamble on war. But politically, the administration could hardly be riding higher. It

just gained strength in Congress in an off-year election, a rare event. Bush's poll numbers are more than comfortable. Yet the White House is risking it all on a single throw of the dice. If this war goes badly, it is the end of George W. Bush and any hope of a Republican ascendancy for the next twenty years. Our next President might well be Hillary Clinton.

Mr. Rumsfeld recently said that a war with Iraq would be over in six days or perhaps six weeks; it almost certainly would not last six months. Here, too one senses someone playing at war. What if Iraq fights in the cities, where the urban environment negates hi-tech weaponry? What if we take Baghdad, only to have a suitcase nuke go off in Seattle? What if Willie says to Joe, "Hey, Joe, you got a case of the sniffles?", and we find thousands of our troops dying from a genetically engineered disease? All these possibilities are quite real. But the War Party in Washington dismisses them with a shrug.

If anyone should be cautious about playing at war, it is conservatives. The greatest conservative catastrophe in the 20th Century was World War I. The three conservative monarchies that had kept the poisons of the French Revolution in check through the 19th century, Russia, Prussia and Austria, were all swept away by that disastrous war. As the Marxist historian Arno Mayer has correctly argued, the result was a vast spectrum shift to the left. Before World War I, America and France, because they were republics, represented the international left. By 1919, they represented the international right, not because they had changed, but because the world had shifted around them. The reason Americans today find themselves living in a moral and cultural sewer, is, in the end, World War I.

Then, too, in that fateful summer of 1914, governments played at war. Austria saw a chance to restore her image as a Great Power. Russia perceived an opportunity to take revenge on Austria for her humiliation in the Bosnian Annexation Crisis of 1908. The Kaiser, rightly, told the Chief of the German General Staff, Moltke the younger, that he wanted

to stay on the defensive in the west and attack in the east, which would have kept Britain out of the war. Moltke collapsed on a couch and said it could not be done although the plans were actually in the file, and the Kaiser gave in. Everyone agreed that the troops would be home before the leaves fell that autumn.

Four miserable years and millions of dead later, the Kaiser was an exile in Holland, the Tsar and his family were dead and Austria-Hungary had ceased to exist. The British empire had bled to death in the mud of Flanders, and on the streets of Paris, there were no young men. The future belonged to people no one had ever heard of, Lenin, Hitler and Stalin.

If there is a game conservatives should never allow their government to play, it is playing at war.

*February 12, 2003*



# War Against Everyone, Everywhere

In what increasingly appears to be Washington's war against everyone, everywhere, 3,000 American troops are now in the Philippines where they are to fight a small Islamic rebel group called Abu Sayyaf. Abu Sayyaf is supposed to have about 200 fighters; an American victory would seem to be assured.

But here is where we are likely to find that war is changing. When the U.S. Army was fighting Philippine insurgents a hundred years ago, the Philippine forces tried to fight stand-up battles, copying the Western way of war. Not surprisingly, they lost.

I suspect Abu Sayyaf will address the problem differently, in a way that reflects non-Western approaches to war. If they do, we are likely to see a conflict that unfolds along the same general lines as the war in Afghanistan, which is not going well. By some reports, we have been forced out of five forts on the Afghan-Pakistan border; we have admitted the loss of one.

What will happen? First, when the Americans appear, Abu Sayyaf will disappear. They will refuse to engage us, and simply blend back in to the civilian population. The American way of war, which is 2nd Generation warfare, is based on putting fire on targets. Abu Sayyaf will respond by making itself untargetable.

Second, Abu Sayyaf will wait. It will know that time is on its side. Why? Because it lives there, and we will eventually go home.

But its waiting will be watchful waiting. It will watch our forces to determine their patterns of operation: what they do, and when and how they do it. 2nd Generation warfare tactics are formalistic; they follow set patterns and confuse tactics with techniques. That makes us

predictable, which is the same thing that led to our humiliation in Mogadishu.

Once Abu Sayyaf has determined our patterns, it will move to take advantage of them. It will not offer us the stand-up battle we want; it will still try to remain untargetable. But we will suffer from a landmine here, an ambush there, a grenade tossed into a humvee somewhere else. We will begin taking casualties. But each time we reach out and try to grab them, we will come up with a handful of air.

Abu Sayyaf may never escalate beyond this sort of petite guerre, as it used to be called. The U.S. will not lose, but neither will it win. And as the conflict continues, Abu Sayyaf will take advantage of the greatest recruiting tool it was ever given: our presence. To Philippine nationalists, we will be foreign invaders. To Islamics in the southern Philippines, where Abu Sayyaf operates, we will also be Christian dogs, crusaders. To everyone, even the local people fighting against Abu Sayyaf, we will gradually become bullies, as we fight a weak enemy with attack helicopters, jet aircraft with smart bombs, the whole panoply of American firepower. The best book on that subject, *Firepower in Limited War*, makes one basic and very important point: don't use it.

What if we get lucky and take out the leadership of Abu Sayyaf? New leaders and different organizations will take up the fight.

In the Philippines as elsewhere, the spread of 4th Generation warfare means more and more people are transferring their primary loyalty away from the state to other entities and causes. For those new loyalties, they will fight.

If America is going to send in Marines or special forces against all 4th Generation forces it can find, we will indeed find ourselves fighting against everyone, everywhere. Keep your eyes on Columbia for the possible next round. Washington fails to see the danger because Washington defines the problem as merely "terrorism." But terrorism

is only a technique, and what we are really facing is the greatest change in warfare since the Peace of Westphalia in 1648 gave the state the monopoly on war it is now losing.

Remember, if you don't get the question right, your answer doesn't matter.

*February 25, 2003*

## **A Warning from Clausewitz**

An American war on Iraq now seems certain. Even if Saddam Hussein agrees to step down and go into exile, it is not clear that Washington would forgo the occupation of Iraq and the installation of an American military government. Wilsonianism is in full flower, in what is likely to prove a false spring. As we watch events unfold, it may be useful to keep two points in mind. First, the center of gravity of this war—the place or places where a decision is likely to occur—are not in Iraq. As is also true of the war in Afghanistan, the centers of gravity of a war with Iraq are in Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Egypt.

Of these three, Pakistan is the most important.

Strategically, Iraq is not a key to very much. One might argue that as Iraq goes, so goes Syria, but that is not saying a lot. Iraq is not a key to Iran; on the contrary, their rivalry goes back centuries. All Iraq means to Turkey is an increased threat of an independent Kurdish state and maybe a chance to grab Iraq's northern oil fields. The notion that an American-conquered Iraq can blossom into a Swiss-style democracy that will remake the Middle East comes from Cloud Cuckoo Land. If you want to see what democracy in that region would really mean for American interests, look at the Turkish parliament's vote this weekend against allowing U.S. forces to invade Iraq from Turkey.

Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Egypt, in contrast, are keys to many other things. Pakistan has nukes, Saudi Arabia controls world oil prices and Egypt offers Israel its only hope of some kind of temporary deal with the Arabs. If any of the pro-western regimes in those nations falls, we will have suffered a strategic disaster. If they all go, our position in the region will collapse. The central strategic question, therefore, is what effect an American attack on Iraq will have on the stability and

tenure of the Pakistani, Saudi and Egyptian regimes.

That leads to point number two: if and when American forces capture Baghdad and take down Saddam Hussein, the real war will not end but begin. It will be fought in Iraq in part, as an array of non-state elements begin to fight America and each other. It will be fought in part in the rest of the Islamic world where the targets will not only be Americans but any local regime that is friendly to America. And, of course, it will be fought here in America, as the sons of Mohammed remind Americans that war is a two-way street.

This kind of war, 4th Generation war, is something American and other state armed forces do not know how to fight. It is not going to go well, and among the casualties are likely to be the pro-American governments in Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Egypt. In short, an American victory over the state of Iraq, which is no sure thing, is more likely to lead to a strategic failure for America than to a strategic success.

In a somewhat more famous *On War*, the Prussian general Carl von Clausewitz wrote: *The first, the supreme, the most far-reaching act of judgement that the statesman and Commander have to make is to establish... the kind of war on which they are embarking: neither mistaking it for, nor trying to turn it into, something that is alien to its nature. This is the first of all strategic questions and the most comprehensive.*

With the invasion of Iraq, Washington is trying to turn a 4th Generation war, a war with non-state entities, into a 2nd Generation war, a war against another state that can be conquered by the simple application of firepower to targets. If Clausewitz were still with us, I suspect he would warn that we are marching toward Jena.

For those who are not up on the Napoleonic era of military history, Jena was the battle where Napoleon decisively defeated Prussia in 1806.

*March 5, 2003*

## Some German Lessons

Between 1809 and 1945, the Prussian and, later, German armies developed what is often called maneuver warfare of 3rd Generation warfare. For the past quarter century, the U.S. military has been trying to adopt this German way of war, and failing. Instead, we now appear to be copying two fatal German mistakes: thinking that a lower level of war trumps a higher, and initiating a war on two fronts. There are several ways of defining levels of war. One is John Boyd's trinity of moral, mental and physical. Another is the more traditional strategic, operational and tactical. One of the reasons Germany lost both worldwars was that she thought operational excellence would trump strategic failure. In reality, a higher level of war always trumps a lower.

America seems now to have taken this German error and extended it. The present American way of war assumes that superiority at the tactical and technical levels, manifested through high technology, will overcome massive failures at the strategic and moral levels. Strategically, a war with Iraq will help, not hurt, our real enemies: non-state forces such as al-Quaeda. Morally, we are launching an aggressive war against a weak enemy for no clear reason. Putting the two together leads to self-isolation, which is exactly what happened to Germany. The notion that Wunderwaffe will somehow overcome isolation and strategic failure will prove as viable for Washington now as it did for Germany in 1944-45.

Not content with duplicating just one fatal German mistake, we are moving to add a second by getting into a war on two fronts.

Our eastern front may be Korea. The situation there is steadily getting hotter, and Washington's response so far has been to pretend it is not happening while saying Kim Jong II is a nut case.

Strategically, what North Korea is doing makes perfect sense. North Korea knows it is part of the so-called Axis of Evil, and it sees the United States preparing to attack another member of that axis, Iraq. The same voices in Washington that have demanded war with Iraq are beginning to make noises about Iran, accusing it of attempting to develop nuclear weapons and suggesting it should be next on the hit list. If I were a North Korean general, I would certainly assume an American attack is at some point a very real possibility, perhaps an inevitability.

On that basis, North Korea has decided it needs one of two things: a formal, legally binding non-aggression pact with the United States, or nuclear weapons. Washington has turned the idea of a non-aggression pact down flat, which can only lead to greater fear in Pyongyang. So, North Korea is going to build nukes. What other choice does it have? Everyone in the region—Russia, China, Japan and even South Korea—is desperately urging Washington to talk with North Korea.

Washington continues to refuse. Adding fuel to what may soon become a conflagration, President Bush last week spoke openly about the possibility of a military solution to the problem of the North Korean nuclear weapons program. Far from solving anything, such an action would probably give us a two-front war.

As was the case with Germany, a war on two fronts would leave the American military stretched dangerously thin. Our war plan for Korea assumes South Korea will carry the main burden of a war while Japan offers safe logistical bases. But those assumptions could prove wrong. North Korea has indicated it might attack American forces in the region while offering peace with South Korea; the new South Korean president has said that if the U.S. and North Korea went to war, South Korea might offer to mediate. A North Korean threat of a nuke on Osaka might lead Japan to declare neutrality, in which case we could not use Japanese military bases. In such a situation, our options might be initiating the use of nuclear weapons or trying to stage a Dunkirk.



Either one would be a strategic disaster.

It would be an historical oddity if the United States, having failed to copy the Germans in what they got right, instead duplicated what they got wrong. In view of the almost light-hearted military optimism that currently prevails in Washington, one cannot help remembering Marx's comment about history occurring first as tragedy, then repeating itself as farce.

*March 12, 2003*

# Hippos Can't Tap Dance

The March 16 *Washington Post* outlined what it believes to be the current plan for a war with Iraq. In a piece subtitled “Bold War Plan Emphasizes Lightning Attacks and Complex Logistics,” the Post quotes an unnamed general as saying, “We literally could be in Baghdad in three or four days.” In an obvious reference to the German Blitzkrieg style of warfare, the article goes on to say that the ground forces coiled in Kuwait—including the 3rd Infantry Division, the 101st Airborne Division and the 1st Marine Expeditionary Force—anticipate attacking with Patton-like audacity. Roughly 350 miles of road separate the northern border of Kuwait from Baghdad, and substantial mechanized forces are expected to be on the outskirts of the Iraqi capital within a few days.

Two particular risks come with this war plan, one obvious, at least in part, the other subtle. The obvious risk is that U.S. forces will have a 350-mile supply line. That supply line is a lucrative target for anything and everything, ranging from guerilla war through counter-thrusts by Iraqi armor to attacks by chemical or biological weapons.

While the risk here is obvious, there is a dimension to it that is not—because political correctness forbids talking about it. In today's U.S. military, the supply line is full of women. History suggests that if rear-echelon units, where women may make up 20 percent or 30 percent of the personnel, are attacked, two things will happen, then a third. The first two things are: the women will panic and the men will forget about the mission in order to rescue and comfort the women. Both acts are built into human nature, and no military regulations or orders can overrule them. The third thing that will happen as a consequence of the other two is that the rear area will dissolve in chaos.

An interesting, if little-known, military fact is that, from the days of the Greek phalanx onward, most military units that collapse do so from the rear forward, not from the front back. If the American supply line deep inside Iraq collapses, so will the combat forces up front, in part because they will run out of fuel and bullets and in part for psychological reasons. Simply put, when you feel cut off you want to run away, and sometimes you do.

The subtle risk that comes with this Blitzkrieg-type war plan is that Blitzkrieg requires a 3rd Generation, German-model military and America has 2nd Generation, French-model armed forces. Directing 2nd Generation forces to do Blitzkrieg is asking hippos to tap dance. They may want to, but they just can't.

The problem is that fast-moving warfare requires fast decision-making, not just rapid movement by columns of armored vehicles. Unless everything goes exactly according to plan—and wars seldom do—commanders at every level must adapt often and rapidly. But our hierarchical, process-oriented military decision process, dominated by vast staffs, misleading virtual realities and political generals, does not permit local commanders to adapt. As is essential in 2nd Generation Warfare, the duty of commanders at all but the most senior levels is to follow the plan. At those most senior levels, a cynic might suggest that the main question is whether Saddam's political generals are even worse than our own.

Through all the years when the military reformers were attempting to lead America's armed forces from the 2nd Generation of modern war into the 3rd—and, sadly, failing—I warned that you cannot take the head of one and put it on the body of the other. You cannot give a 2nd Generation military a 3rd Generation maneuver warfare plan and expect it to successfully execute it. 3rd Generation armed forces are radically different as institutions: in their personnel systems, their training, their manpower and promotion policies, their institutional cultures. For more information, the best book on the subject is Martin

van Creveld's *Fighting Power*. Yet, if the *Washington Post* account is accurate, that is now what the administration has ordered its armed forces to do.

Unless the enemy does not fight, or fights according to our plan, the result is likely to be watching hippos try to tap dance. It won't be pretty.

1. The same issue of the *Washington Post* reported on a new, “mysterious, sometimes fatal pneumonia-like illness” that poses “a worldwide threat after spreading from Asia to Europe and North America.” This may or may not be the first attack by the 21st century's most deadly weapon of mass destruction, a genetically engineered disease. Even if it is not, it is a timely warning about how some 4th Generation opponents are likely to counter America's vaunted “technological superiority.” As I have said before, war is a two-way street.
2. 1st Generation Warfare relies on massed manpower; 2nd Generation on massed firepower. Both 1st and 2nd Generation Warfare are essentially linear. 3rd Generation Warfare shifts to non-linear tactics based on speed and flexibility. 4th Generation Warfare is also non-linear; the fighting is conducted by non-state forces unbound by the rules of conventional warfare. However, the strategic objectives of 4th Generation Warriors extend beyond mere terrorism, which is only a technique.

*March 19, 2003*

# No Exit

In June of 1944, when Field Marshal von Rundstedt, the German commander in France, was told that the Allies were landing in Normandy, he knew exactly what to do. He went out into the garden and pruned his roses.

Von Rundstedt knew that in war, early reports, regardless of whether the news is good or bad, are usually misleading. Reacting to them with instant analysis merely makes the problem worse. That is as true for the war in Iraq as for any other war. For now, we need to wait. Only time can offer clarity. What we can do now is discuss possibilities.

I see three broad, possible outcomes to this war. None of them is good. The first and worst is that our current advance on Baghdad proves to be a trap. We get there, our 350-mile single supply line is cut, and the 3rd Infantry Division, which is the spearhead, is forced into a desperate retreat or even surrender. Could it happen? Yes. As the Iraqi leadership seems to understand, a modern defense does not try to keep the enemy out. Rather, it seeks to suck him in, then cut him off. This type of defense was first developed by the German army during World War I and was called by early critics the “let them walk right in defense”. It was the standard German defense during World War II. The key element, the counterattack by armored forces, will probably be impossible for the Iraqis because of air power. But there are other ways to cut a supply line. This outcome would be disastrous in both the short and long terms. Short-term, we lose an army. Long-term, the Islamic world gets what it might see as its biggest victory since the Turks took Constantinople in 1453. It would be an enormous shot in the arm for every Islamic jihadi, and would lead to a collapse of America's position throughout the Islamic world, and perhaps elsewhere as well.

The second broad possibility is that we take Baghdad, replace Saddam with an American-approved pro-consul, then watch Iraq turn into a vast West Bank as non-state elements take effective control outside the capital city. This is what has happened in Afghanistan, and in Iraq too we would quickly find that our state armed forces do not know how to fight non-state opponents in 4th Generation War. This outcome is good short-term but—as Israel can attest—a bloody mess in the long-term.

The third possibility is what the adventurers who now run American foreign and defense policy seek: we take Baghdad, liberate Iraq and turn it into a modern, peaceful democracy. The probability of this happening makes a snowball's chances in Hell look pretty good, but even if it does, it too is a long-term disaster. Why? First, because democracy in the Islamic world probably means the election of people like Bin Laden, whose campaign slogan would be: “Death to the Christian and Jewish dogs!” Second, because what the American Establishment means by “freedom and democracy” is Brave New World. And third, because the adventurers, emboldened by success, might then go on to wage war against Iran, Syria, Libya, and possibly North Korea. If their goal is American world hegemony, that goal is certain to drive everyone else into a coalition against us, state and non-state elements alike.

In short, so long as American policy remains what it is today, the war in Iraq offers us no exit. If the adventurers were replaced by sober men, could we find a way out? Perhaps. It just might work if we took Baghdad, overthrew Saddam, and then immediately turned Iraq over to the Arab League or the U.N. to run, while making it very clear to the rest of the world that America's quest for world hegemony is over, finished and done. A good way to put it might be, “a republic, not an empire.” Meanwhile, let us all pray that possibility number one does not come to pass, and that our friends over there doing the fighting—and I have many—come home to us whole, safe, victorious and soon.

*March 26, 2003*

## **The Duke of Medina Sidonia**

In planning a war, the most important task is to understand what can be planned and what cannot. In general, the initial disposition of forces can be planned, and it must be planned with great care. As Field Marshal von Moltke said, "A mistake in initial dispositions can seldom be put right." But Moltke also said, "No plan survives its first contact with the enemy." Once you cross the enemy's border, you have to adjust and improvise constantly. The conduct of war, as distinct from preparation for war, is "a matter of expedients." Count von Schlieffen thought otherwise, and in the famous Schlieffen Plan he attempted to extend the logic of railway mobilization planning into the campaign itself. Not surprisingly, the result was failure and, for Germany, a lost war.

A second planning error is to make the war plan depend upon a single assumption. Here, the Spanish Armada provides an example. The single assumption on which the Armada depended was that the Spanish commander in the Netherlands, the Duke of Parma, would somehow get his own army to the sea and out into the English Channel, where the Armada would protect its crossing. The Armada's commander, the Duke of Medina Sidonia, did everything he was expected to do. He brought his fleet into the Channel in splendid order, ready to convey Parma's troops. But Parma never came. All Medina Sidonia could do was try to get home, and in fact, he made it, with his flagship and a goodly portion of his fleet.

Yet a third error in planning is to assume that the enemy will fight the way you would. The classic example here is Napoleon's march to Moscow. Napoleon knew he would have fought a great battle to keep the enemy from taking his capital. But Tsar Alexander did not do that and fought at Borodino instead, being careful not to let his army be



destroyed there. He let Napoleon take Moscow, moving the Russian army east and south. Then, he waited. Baffled, Napoleon had no choice but to march back the way he came—losing nine-tenths of his army in the process.

How does our current war with Iraq look, if we examine it in light of these three errors in military planning? Regrettably, not very good. Normally, the American military can be counted on to plan initial deployments thoroughly, and, once again, it did. But the Pentagon threw the plan out at the last minute, resulting in chaos.

James Kitfield wrote in the March 28 *National Journal*:

“By far the most dramatic and disruptive change to the battle plan, however, was Rumsfeld's decision last November to slash Central Command's request for forces... Notably, the Pentagon scrapped the Time Phased Force Deployment Data, or “TipFid,” by which regional commanders would identify forces needed for a specific campaign, and the individual armed services would manage their deployments by order of priority.”

This mess was multiplied by the Schlieffen error: we had a rigid plan for the campaign itself, and did not adjust it despite changes in the situation. Specifically, when the Turks rejected the passage of American forces through Turkey, putting an end to the planned northern front, we continued with the rest of the plan as if nothing had changed. The result at this point is a campaign that looks like a balloon on a string, with a single Army division of about 3,500 combat troops deep in Iraq and a slender thread of a supply line connecting it to its food, water, fuel and ammunition. The First Marine Division is slowly putting itself in the same situation. No classical strategist can see the picture without his hair standing on end.

On top of all that, like the Armada, our plan depended on a single assumption: that the Iraqis would not fight. Unfortunately, they are fighting, leaving General Franks in the position of the Duke of Medina

Sidonia. One division was enough to accept the surrender of Baghdad, but one division is far from enough to take Baghdad. One hates to say so, but the fact that the Iraqis are fighting has caused our initial campaign plan to collapse.

Finally, we seem to have assumed that the Iraqis would fight as we would, relying primarily on their heavy armor units. Instead, they have fallen back on the age-old Arab tradition of light cavalry warfare, directed against our rear. Arabs have a dismal record in tank battles, but at light cavalry warfare, they are quite good. We might recall that an Englishman named Lawrence used Arabs that way against the Turks, with pretty decent results.

The pitfalls in planning a war or a campaign are many. History does, however, warn us what some of them are. Perhaps it is time for Clio to ask Mr. Rumsfeld why he fell into three of the most obvious anyway.

*March 31, 2003*

# **Don't Take John Boyd's Name In Vain**

Some senior American military officers and a number of military commentators are now saying that America's swift victory in the first phase of the war with Iraq shows that the U.S. armed forces have learned the lessons John Boyd tried to teach them. As someone who knew and worked with John Boyd, I have to say, not so fast. There is a lot less here than meets the eye.

Col. John Boyd, USAF, was undoubtedly the greatest military theorist America has produced. An important part of his theoretical work dealt with what is known as maneuver warfare or 3rd Generation Warfare. Boyd argued that in any conflict, each side goes through repeated cycles of Observing, Orienting, Deciding, and Acting, Boyd's famous OODA Loop. Whoever can consistently go through the OODA Loop faster than his adversary gains a decisive advantage. This concept explains how and why maneuver warfare works, how it “gets inside the other guy's mind,” as Boyd liked to say.

Supposedly, the U.S. military got inside the OODA Loop of the Iraqi armed forces during the recent campaign, thereby proving that they can do maneuver warfare. This claim is, at best, premature. At present, we do not know why the Iraqis did what they did, especially why the Republican Guard went home rather than fight for Baghdad. Nor do we know how our own forces actually operated. A few preliminary reports suggest the First Marine Division may indeed have followed maneuver warfare concepts, echeloning its forces, using mission-type orders, bypassing enemy strong points to keep up the speed of the attack, etc. One of the Marine Corps's premier maneuverists, Brigadier General John Kelly, is the Assistant Division Commander of 1st MAR DIV, so this is not entirely surprising.

In fact, 1st MAR DIV also followed maneuver warfare precepts in the first Gulf War, under a very talented commander, General Mike Myatt.

But one division's actions by no means prove that the Marine corps as a whole has successfully internalized maneuver warfare.

Nor does it say anything about the Army's performance. The Army's Third Infantry Division, the campaign's focus of effort or *schwerpunkt*, did move quickly. But a 2nd Generation force can also move quickly, if and when it has planned to do so.

What it generally cannot do is move quickly in response to unexpected threats and opportunities. It does not have the cultural characteristics required to do so, qualities John Boyd stressed such as decentralization, initiative, the tolerance for mistakes that must accompany initiative, trust up and down the chain of command, and reliance on self-discipline rather than imposed discipline. Those characteristics are mighty hard to find in today's United States Army.

More fundamental still is the point that while the OODA Loop was an important part of Boyd's work, there was a great deal more to what John Boyd said and did than the OODA Loop. For example, we are now told that America's armed forces simply cannot be challenged by any state opponent on air, land or sea. What would John Boyd say to that?

I can tell you because I often heard him say it. "When we went into Vietnam, I heard the Pentagon say that if you have air superiority and land superiority and sea superiority, you win. Well, in Vietnam we had air superiority and land superiority and sea superiority, and we lost. So I said to myself that there is obviously something more to it."

Another of John Boyd's most important contributions to military theory was his observation that war is waged at three levels, the physical, the mental and the moral. The physical level is the weakest and the moral level is the strongest, with the mental in between. How would Boyd assess our performance thus far in terms of his three levels

of war? If we could ask him, I think his assessment might go something like this:

*“At the physical level, we won. At the mental level, we just don't know yet, because we don't know what was going on in the other guy's mind. At the moral level, we did good by getting rid of Saddam. But now the hard part comes. Remember, these three levels have to work in harmony. If we come across as the bully, pushing everyone else around not only in Iraq but all over the world, it isn't going to work. If we don't let the people of Iraq run their own country, we're going to lose at the moral level, and then we will lose at the mental and physical levels too. We'll end up giving ourselves the whole enchilada right up the poopchute.”*

Some of the same generals who are now claiming that our initial victory in Iraq shows we have mastered John Boyd's theory feared and hated the real John Boyd. For them now to take Boyd's name in vain would not have made John happy. And while I can guess what he would have said, I can't put those words into print.

*April 11, 2003*

## Of Time and the Rivers

Whether the leaders and theoreticians of 4th Generation forces such as al-Qaeda, Hamas and Hezbollah have heard of John Boyd, I do not know. It would not surprise me if they have; they generally seem to make better use of open-source intelligence than do America's high-tech, closed-system intelligence agencies. In any event, like Boyd, they do understand that war is conducted in time as well as in space, and that time is often the more important dimension.

A recent article in *The American Conservative* is titled, "God's Time: The Afghan war is over when the Afghans say so." The author, Jim Pittaway, makes the point that 4th Generation, non-state Islamic forces have a wholly different view of time than does America. Of Afghan guerillas fighting the Soviets in the 1980s, he writes: *For more than a decade, they had been enduring the privations of life in the bush, organizing defenses, and preparing strategies that would ultimately lead them to success against the overwhelmingly superior forces of a global superpower... this idea of being on "God's time" led to an extraordinary degree of patience...*

The same is true now that many of these same 4th Generation fighters face American opponents: As surely as the American soldiers and society will want to win and go home, these men do not need victory or closure in any comparable sense in order to justify their ongoing fight. Adversity, discouragement, and setbacks are never defeat; defeat is an epistemological impossibility except in the event that one ceases to believe ... It is not his job to drive the invading Coalition out; his job is to make them pay. Allah will see that they are driven out when it is his will to do so.

War on God's time has already fought us to a stalemate in

Afghanistan, with very little fighting. Our puppet government in Kabul has failed to extend its authority beyond that city. Indeed, last week's mob assault on the American embassy, sparked by the mistaken killing of four Afghan Army soldiers by Marine embassy guards, shows that its ability to control its capital is shaky at best. The promised American rebuilding of Afghanistan has become a stale joke, because without security, nothing can be rebuilt. And America hasn't a clue on how to provide security in Afghanistan.

Or in Baghdad, for that matter. Having learned that M-1 tanks make poor police patrol cars, we are proposing to put a lot more American troops on Baghdad streets, in Humvees and on foot. Welcome to my parlor, say the Ba'athist and Shiite spiders to the fly. One RPG round will incinerate any Humvee, and foot patrols will be even easier game. When that happens, we will be back in the tanks, and someone else will control the streets. We could have used Iraq's own army for that purpose, but instead we have sent it home, without pay, providing a vast reservoir of fighters for our enemies. America's plan for occupying Iraq seems to have been to identify every possible mistake, then make it.

The American authorities in Baghdad claim to be restoring order, getting the economy moving, fixing the infrastructure, etc., but the Iraqi people don't seem to see any of it. We begin to sound like Saddam's Minister of Information. In fact, if he's still around, perhaps we should hire him. Already American casualties are rising. Instead of bringing the troops home, we are sending in more. Those are not the usual signs of a war that is won.

In the land between the Tigris and the Euphrates, time belongs to our opponents, not to us. We, not they, need closure. Our time is determined by American election cycles. They operate on God's time. If they do not win today, or even fight today, there are many tomorrows—for them, but not for us. If Iraq is still a mess and there is no end in sight a year from now, George Bush is in trouble.

The fly has occupied the flypaper. And time is always on the flypaper's side.

*May 29, 2003*



# The Men Who Would Not Be King

Normally, the position of Chief of Staff of the Army is the ultimate brass ring an Army officer can hope to grab. There is no higher Army job, and merely holding it guarantees a man at least a small place in the history books—though not necessarily a favorable one. In fact, the last Army Chief of Staff to merit Clio's praise was General Edward “Shy” Meyer, who held the post twenty years ago. Since he left, the Army has been stuck in a Brezhnevite era of stagnation. It is therefore surprising that at present, no one seems willing to take the job, nor the position of Vice Chief. Both current incumbents leave this summer, and instead of the usual line of hopefuls standing hat in hand, the eligibles have headed for the hills. Rumor has it they may have to recruit the hall porter and the charwoman.

The interesting question is why. Part of the answer is Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld. To put it plainly, Rumsfeld treats people like crap. Working for him is like working for Leona Helmsley, except that Leona is less self-centered. Unless you are one of his sycophants, equipped with a good set of knee-pads and plenty of lip balm, you can expect to be booted down the stairs on a regular basis.

Truth be told, some senior officers deserve to be treated that way, because that is how they always treated their subordinates.

But Rummy does not discriminate between perfumed princes and the real thinkers and leaders. He has driven more than one of the latter to hang up his hat in disgust, to the loss of the service and the nation.

But that is not the whole story. Part of the reason no one wants the Army's top job are two fundamental contradictions in the administration's policy toward the Army. Unless they are resolved, any Army Chief of Staff will find himself in a difficult position.

The first contradiction is that the administration puts the Army last in line among the services at the same time that it is getting us into wars only the Army can fight. We are already fighting one 4th Generation War in Afghanistan, we are becoming enmired up to our necks in another 4th Generation War in Iraq, and we are sticking our noses into still more potential wars in the Philippines, Indonesia, and possibly Iran.

Only the Army can fight 4th Generation War, to the degree anyone can, and no one really knows how. The Navy is irrelevant, the Air Force nearly so, and the Marines want to get in and get out, fast, while 4th Generation War plays itself out with agonizing slowness. *Volens nolens*, the Army is left holding the bag.

Logically, that should make the Army the administration's focus, its Schwerpunkt. Instead, OSD is in love with the Air Force, to the point where it wants to make the Army into a second Air Force, waging the high-tech, video-game warfare that exists only in the minds of children and Pentagon planners.

That leads to the second contradiction. The Army needs, and has long needed, genuine military reform. Reform means such basic changes as adopting 3rd Generation maneuver warfare doctrine and the culture of decentralization and initiative that goes with it; instituting a radically different personnel system that creates cohesive units, eliminates the bloat in the officer corps above the company grades and suppresses rather than mandates careerism; making free play training the norm rather than a rare exception; and getting rid of dual standards for men and women.

Secretary Rumsfeld also preaches reform, but what he means by reform is just more of the high-tech illusion. Again, the Air Force is the model: the more a system costs and the more complex it is, the better it must be. The result is absurdities such as the Stryker, where Light Armored Vehicles, which are wonderful for operational maneuver, are instead to be used for urban combat where they will be instant coffins

for their crews, and the Future Combat System, a conglomeration of robots, tanks, drones and kitchen sinks that surpasses anything envisioned by Rube Goldberg. Meanwhile, the real reforms so badly needed go unaddressed.

In the face of all this, becoming Chief of Staff of the Army is somewhat less enticing than being elected mayor of Baghdad. But at the same time, it leaves the troops desperately in need of not just a Chief of Staff, but a highly talented and morally courageous Chief of Staff, someone who can defend his men against the follies emanating from the civilian side of the Pentagon.

Those who know him believe the current Vice Chief, General John M. “Jack” Keane, is such a man. Some think he could be the Army's Al Gray, the reforming Commandant of the Marine Corps of the early 1990s who left an enduring and powerful legacy. To date, General Keane is refusing the job, on the legitimate grounds of his wife's health problems. Many are praying he will reconsider. If the job goes instead to one of Rummy's lickspittles, God help our soldiers.

*June 3, 2003*

## **Lies, Damned Lies, and Military Intelligence**

It is now evident that Saddam Hussein's possession of vast quantities of weapons of mass destruction is about as likely as Mars having canals, complete with gondolas and singing gondoliers. Remember, it wasn't just a couple of stink bombs we accused him of possessing. According to data compiled by columnist Nicholas Kristof, the governments of the United States and Great Britain told the world that Saddam had 500 tons of mustard and nerve gas, 25,000 liters of anthrax, 38,000 liters of botulinum, almost 30,000 banned munitions and the tornado that abducted Dorothy. So far, all we have found is two empty trailers. Presumably, American troops had sufficient time to paint over the Allied Van Lines logos.

Since Saddam's WMD were one of the principal stated reasons for this strategically curious war, their absence is something more than a social faux pas. Were the American and British publics, as Pat Buchanan puts it, lied into war? If they were, it would not be the first time. In Britain, the practice goes back at least as far as the 18th century and the War of Jenkin's Ear.

Americans were lied into World War I by cartoons of German soldiers bayoneting Belgian babies and into Vietnam by a Tonkin Gulf torpedo boat attack that never happened.

There are, of course, other possibilities. It may have been simply an intelligence failure. That is the least disturbing possibility, because the others are worse.

One is that someone in the chain of military intelligence deliberately cooked the books. If they did so, it was probably to curry favor with their political and budgetary masters, who let it be known what findings they wanted. This sort of corruption is now endemic in

Washington. Virtually every Federal agency, including the armed forces, have accepted the rightness of doing and saying anything to get money. Budget size is the universal measurement of success, and whatever pleases those who allocate funds is wholesome and good.

What John Boyd said of the Pentagon is now universal: “It is not true they have no strategy. They do have a strategy, and once you understand what it is, everything they do makes sense. The strategy is, ‘Don't interrupt the money flow; add to it.’”

Another possibility is more disturbing still, and regrettably I have to say I think it is a certainty. Those who use military intelligence do not understand what it is.

Throughout history, in virtually every conflict, a universal law has applied. That law says that when it comes to military intelligence, whatever you think you know is incomplete, and some of it is wrong. You don't know what you don't know, you don't know how much you don't know, and you don't know what part of what you think you know is wrong.

As part of the so-called “Revolution in Military Affairs,” which promises to turn war into a video game, many intelligence users, both military and civilian, have come to think of military intelligence as hard data. RMA touts have long and loudly promised perfect information, on both concerning your own side and the enemy, although in war, just knowing what your own forces are doing is difficult.

The military talks about “information dominance”, which somehow suggests one of our attractive female officers, dressed in a natty leather outfit, serving as the G-2SM, the Information Dominatrix.

It may be—though I doubt it—that our intelligence agencies really believed Saddam had all that stuff. But even if that is what they reported to the decision-makers, the decision-makers should have known better to swallow it. If they did not know that, they are not fit to

be making military decisions. They lack the most basic understanding of the nature of military intelligence, a nature no technology can alter, one that technology can easily make worse by making the errors more convincing.

The upshot is that we went to war and wrecked a country over something that, barring an unlikely revelation, was not true. The American people don't seem to care. Perhaps they expect to be misled by their government, or, more likely, they have just changed the channel.

But the rest of the world does care. The international credibility of American assertions based on military intelligence is now zero. When we make claims about other countries—as we are now doing about Iran—not a soul will believe them, even when they happen to be true. At this point, Americans should not believe them either.

The U.S. is now moving rapidly to relocate its forces in South Korea well to the south of the DMZ. I suspect the real reason is to move them out of range of North Korean artillery. At present, if we launch airstrikes on North Korea, Pyongyang can respond with a massive, World War I-style artillery bombardment of U.S. ground troops that could kill thousands. The sudden withdrawal of Americans to positions south of the Han river reveals our intention to go after North Korea's nuclear and missile facilities. A possible North Korean riposte: demand Japan expel all American forces or kiss Osaka goodbye.

*June 11, 2003*

# How NOT to Use Light Armored Vehicles

*August 13, 2003*

One day in the late 1970's, when I was a defense staffer for Senator Gary Hart, I got a call from an Armed Services Committee staffer asking if I knew anything about Light Armored Vehicles (LAVs), which are what we used to call armored cars. A bit, I replied. What did I think of them, he asked? I said I liked them for operational maneuver, because they are wheeled, and most operational (as opposed to tactical) movement is on roads.

That was the beginning of the Marine Corps' LAV program. We soon roped in a one-star at Quantico named Al Gray, and within a few years the Corps had acquired some LAVs. The concept for which they were purchased was very clear: to form Soviet-style Operational Maneuver Groups for use against Third World countries. We all knew that LAVs are tactically fragile, and must be used in ways that avoid heavy combat. We also knew that the tank the U.S. armed forces were then buying, the M-1, was too heavy and used too much fuel to be able to maneuver rapidly over operational distances. The LAVs could fill the gap.

As one of the Ur-Vaters of the Marines' LAV program, I was pleased to hear a couple years ago that the Army was now also planning to buy LAVs. Good, I thought; they too have recognized that the M-1 is more a *Sturmgeschuetz* or a *Jagdpanzer* than a real tank, and they need something else for operational maneuver. These are also known as "tank destroyers", *Jagdpanzer* literally translates as "tank hunter". I should have known better, given that we are talking about the U.S. Army. Nonetheless, it was with unbelief, then horror, that I learned

what the Army was really buying Strykers for: urban combat. And now, the first Stryker units are to be sent to Iraq.

The magnitude of the idiocy involved in using Light Armored Vehicles in urban fighting, where they are grapes for RPGs, is so vast that analogies are difficult. Maybe one could compare it to planning a fireworks display on board the Hindenburg. Urban combat is extremely dangerous for any armored vehicle, including the heaviest tanks, as the Israelis can testify after losing several Merkavas in the Gaza strip to some very big mines. Why? Because for opposing fighters, regular infantry or guerillas, the old sequence from the German “men against tanks” is easy. The sequence is, “blind 'em, stop 'em, kill 'em.” Armored vehicles are already blind in cities because distances are short; the safest place near a hostile tank is as close to it as you can get since then it can't see you. Stopping tanks is also easy, because streets are often narrow enough to prevent vehicles from turning around.

And with LAVs, once they are blinded and stopped, killing them is very easy because the armor is, well, light. That's why they are called Light Armored Vehicles.

In the first phase of the war in Iraq, the jousting contest, the Marine Corps lost M-1 tanks and it lost Amtracks, its amphibious personnel carrier. But it lost no LAVs. That is a testament, not to the vehicles, but to how they were employed.

But in the second phase of the Iraq war, and in future phases as well, there will be no role for operational maneuver. And there will be no role for LAVs or Strykers. If the Army insists on sending them into Iraqi towns and cities, they should first equip them with coffin handles, because all they will be is coffins for their crews.

When I first came to Washington in 1973, I was quickly introduced to an old saying about the American armed forces: the Air Force is deceptive, the Navy is dishonest, and the Army is dumb. It seems some things never change.



## Utopia Means “No Place”

In an earlier column, I noted that the current phase of the war in Iraq is driven by three different elements: chaos, a war of national liberation which is currently inflicting most of the casualties, and 4th Generation War. In time, the 4th Generation elements will come to predominate, as they fill the vacuum created by the destruction of the Iraqi state.

But right now, chaos is again on the front page. Former soldiers of the Iraqi army are rioting for their back pay. The scope of Mr. Bremer's blunder in dismissing the Iraqi army instead of using it to maintain order is more and more evident. Many of those former Iraqi soldiers whom we could have employed are now joining the war of national liberation, shooting at and sometimes hitting Americans.

But two aspects of this burst of chaos point to a more fundamental American error. Speaking of the rioting soldiers, the *Washington Times* reported that “many of the men at Sunday's protest in Baghdad voiced desperation that they had no jobs and no money to support their families.” The Bush administration, hoping to turn the American public's gaze away from the reality in Iraq, meanwhile trotted out the first American-trained battalion of the New Iraqi Army, a multicultural force supposedly indoctrinated to be nice to other Iraqis. However, if Iraq breaks up along ethnic and sectarian lines, the New Iraqi Army will do the same, just as the Lebanese army did.

What both these phenomena point to is a classic American error, utopianism. The old Iraqi army did not meet utopian standards, so it had to be sent away, unpaid. We must instead create a New Iraqi Army which will reflect our highest ideals. Meanwhile, Iraqis don't have jobs, because Saddam's state-run economy doesn't meet utopian standards.

We have to privatize that economy, which if other countries' experiences are any guide will involve several years of continued economic decline and jobless chaos. Again, anything less would “betray American ideals.”

It is useful to remember that the word utopia means “no place.” By definition, utopias cannot exist in the real world. Attempts to create them lead to disaster, as both the French and Russian Revolutions attest.

What Mr. Bremer and the neocon philosophes behind him are insisting upon guarantees more, not less, chaos in Iraq.

Panglossading through reality, they refuse to revive the old Iraq before attempting to create their utopian New Iraq. The electric power system offers an example. Iraqis know how to make their 1960's-technology electric grid work. But we won't let them. American companies have to get the job, and since they cannot work with 1960's technology, they have to build a whole new system from the bottom up. Meanwhile, Iraqis go without power.

Of course, the whole neocon enterprise was utopian from the beginning. Denying the limits history places on potential, which is the sin of “historicism” in their Straussian Newspeak, neocons really believe every flea-bitten, fly-blown Third World hellhole can be turned into Switzerland. All it takes is enough American troops.

An old line about the Marine Corps comes to mind: the difference between the Boy Scouts and the Marine Corps is that the Boy Scouts have adult supervision. Are there no adults overseeing American policy in Iraq? If there are, it is about time for them to tell the hapless Mr. Bremer to get the old Iraq working again, and let Iraqis worry about utopia. That might at least give the United States what it so desperately needs in Iraq: a way out.

*September 1, 2003*

## Curiouser And Curiouser

If there is one thing that all Washington should be able to agree on, it is that the United States does not want to fight another war in Korea. The bloodbath would be horrific, the financial cost would be ruinous, and the effects of such a war on the stability of northeast Asia would be unpredictable.

Also, we might not win.

Yet when President Bush was asked during his recent Asian trip about North Korea's request for a non-aggression pact with the United States, he replied, "We will not have a treaty, if that's what you're asking. That's off the table." For heaven's sake, why?

North Korea has offered to give up its nuclear weapons program for such a treaty. Speaking with Thailand's prime minister, Mr. Bush later said, "We have no intention of invading North Korea." If that is true, then what is the administration's objection to a formal non-aggression pact? At the very least, offering North Korea such a pact would put the onus on them if they chose to continue their nuclear program instead. And if they did in fact give up their nukes in return for a treaty, we would walk away with a very good deal.

Here we see the underlying problem with the Bush administration's foreign policy. On the surface, its actions often do not make sense. There is no obvious, clear, or even rational explanation for positions the administration takes. Naturally, that leads people at home and abroad to ask what is really going on. What is the Bush team up to? What is their hidden agenda? What are their real intentions and plans?

The Iraq war is exhibit A. Since Saddam had no weapons of mass destruction and was not working with non-state 4th Generation forces,

aka terrorists, what are the real reasons America attacked Iraq? For oil? For Israel? For world dominion? Everyone speculates, because the official answers don't make sense.

Now the same speculation is underway about American intentions in Korea. Does America perhaps plan to attack North Korea's nuclear facilities? Does it think a war in Korea would injure China, which elements in Washington see as a probable future enemy? Do Pentagon advocates of the so-called "Revolution in Military Affairs" believe they could win an easy victory over North Korea, thereby justifying even more money for high-tech weapons? What are the unstated, real reasons behind Mr. Bush's refusal to consider a non-aggression pact?

It appears that North Korea may save the Bush administration from itself in this case. Secretary of State Colin Powell has indicated that the U.S. might offer a written guarantee of some sort that it will not attack North Korea, a guarantee that would be backed by China, Japan and Russia as well. After first rejecting this offer, North Korea now appears willing to reconsider.

This is wise from their perspective, because a guarantee involving the other regional powers would put more, not fewer, constraints on Washington than would a bilateral treaty. If America signed, then attacked North Korea anyway under the administration's preventative war doctrine, it would have serious problems with China, Russia and Japan. It is all too easy to imagine Mr. Rumsfeld, at a news conference following an American strike on North Korea, referring to a non-aggression pact as a mere scrap of paper.

But the underlying problem remains. So long as Washington's actions do not make sense in terms of its stated policies and intentions, people will keep wondering what the real game is. Curiouser and curiouser, as Alice would say. One is tempted to revise a bon mot from that worst of years, 1914: in Pyongyang, the situation is serious but not hopeless; in Washington, it is hopeless but not serious.

*October 30, 2003*

# Indicators

This week's tragic shooting down of an Army Chinook helicopter near Fallujah, with the loss of 16 soldiers, may or may not point to a significant new development in the Iraq war. Helicopters proved highly vulnerable in Vietnam and in the Soviet war in Afghanistan as well, and there is no shortage of SA-7 missiles in Iraq, as U.S. forces there have long known. Moreover, there is a fairly simple technique helicopters can use to minimize their vulnerability to the SA-7 and similar shoulder-fired missiles: fly high. In Afghanistan, Soviet infantry referred to their helicopter pilots as “the Cosmonauts” because of their desire for altitude.

Of course, altitude also works against us in that it prevents the people in helicopters from seeing what is happening on the ground. But when your aircraft is a big piñata, high is the way to fly.

Three events last week may actually provide more in the way of indicators as to where the Iraq war is headed. The first two were successful attacks on American M-1 Abrams tanks by Iraqi resistance forces. In the first attack, the M-1 was taken out by what appears to have been a tandem-warhead light anti-tank weapon, which no one knew the resistance possessed.

Fortunately, in that attack no Americans were seriously hurt, though the tank was disabled. The second attack resulted in the complete destruction of the targeted M-1, with the turret blown off the chassis of the tank by a large improvised mine. Sadly, two American tank crewmen were killed and one badly wounded. The technique is the same as that used by the Palestinians to destroy several Israeli Merkava tanks, so it should not have come as a surprise to us.

More significant than the destruction of two American tanks is the

fact that Iraqi guerrillas are attacking tanks. This is an indicator that the guerilla war is developing significantly more rapidly than reports in Washington suggest. With the second stage of the Iraq war just six months old, one would expect the guerillas to be attacking only weak, vulnerable targets, such as supply columns. The fact that they are going after the most difficult of all ground targets, heavy tanks, is surprising. It means they lack neither confidence nor skill.

A third indicator comes from a widely-reported incident where an American battalion commander threatened an Iraqi under interrogation with his pistol and now faces criminal assault charges for doing so. The charges themselves are absurd, since the Iraqi was not injured and the information he provided prevented American soldiers from being ambushed. Here, the indicator comes from the identity of the Iraqi. Who was he? An Iraqi policeman.

The Bush administration's strategy for the war in Iraq, to the degree floundering can be called a strategy, is "Iraqification", which involves developing Iraqi armed security forces such as police, border guards, civil defense guards and a New Iraqi Army, then dumping the insurgency into their laps. Last week's incident shows the major flaw in that strategy: it assumes that the Iraqis in those forces will really be working for us.

Guerillas, and even more, 4th Generation elements, deal with state security forces primarily by taking them from within.

They will also attack members of the state forces and their families, as part of punishing collaborators. But taking them from within is even more effective, because when we think the members of the state forces we create are working for us, we let them into positions where they can do real damage. Only too late do we discover where their real loyalties lie.

We seem to naively believe that if we are paying someone, they will give us their honest best. Some will. But especially in old, cynical



societies such as that in Mesopotamia, people see nothing wrong with serving two or more masters and getting a paycheck from each. They have no real loyalty beyond their family and, perhaps, their clan or tribe. Everyone else is trying to use them, and they are trying to use everyone else. That is just how the place works.

As we create more and more Iraqi armed units, and try desperately to hand the war over to them, don't be surprised if they refuse to play our game. They will tell us what we want to hear in order to get paid, and then they will do what benefits them. Often, that will just be seeing and hearing nothing as the resistance forces go about their business. Sometimes, it will be shooting Americans in the back. It doesn't take many such shootings before we have to treat the Iraqi forces we have ourselves created with distrust, pushing even those who want to work with us into our enemies' arms.

One other indicator. A friend recently noted to me that the rapidly improving techniques we see from the Iraqi guerrillas bear a striking resemblance to those used by the Chechen guerrillas against the Russians.

Might it be that we are not the only ones to have a coalition in Iraq?

*November 4, 2003*

## Post-Machine Gun Tactics

Thirty years ago this month, I first went to the field with the United States Marine Corps. I was a new staffer for Senator Robert Taft, Jr., of Ohio, and the Marines had invited me down for the Company War at The Basic School in Quantico, Virginia. Early one frosty November morning, I found myself standing in the commander's hatch of an M-48 tank moving about two miles per hour with the infantry walking alongside, just as in 1917. When we reached the objective, which was an enemy machine gun nest, the tank stopped while the infantry formed a line two men deep and walked into the machine gun. I turned to the Marine major who was my escort and asked, "Where are Frederick the Great and the band?" It was obvious that what I was seeing was not modern war.

Sadly, the last time I went to the field with TBS a couple years ago, little had changed. I again watched the lieutenants hurl themselves against enemy machine guns. When the attack had concluded, I turned to them and said, "You know you are all dead, don't you?" One of the lieutenants replied, "We know that, but what else can you do?" There are answers to that question, in the form of the post-machine gun tactics developed during and after World War I by a number of foreign armies. Those tactics are now readily available to Marine lieutenants and everyone else, through three superb books written by a former Marine Corps gunnery sergeant, H. John Poole.

John Poole's first book, *The Last Hundred Yards*, came out in 1997 and immediately acquired almost cult status with Marine NCOs. As Bruce Gudmundsson, the author of *Stormtroop Tactics*, said, it represented at least a half-century's advance over official Marine Corps and U.S. Army tactics. Of critical importance, it also filled a gap left by writings such as Gudmundsson's book and my own *Maneuver Warfare*

*Handbook* by looking in great detail at the level where tactics and techniques come together, the world of the fire team, squad and platoon. It opened a whole new world to corporals, sergeants and staff NCOs by focusing on that toughest of battlefield problems, covering the last hundred yards to the enemy. It showed them that you do not have to, and never should, throw your men into enemy machine gun fire.

In August 2001, Gunny Poole published another book with a different take on the same problem: *Phantom Soldier: The Enemy's Answer to U.S. Firepower*. Here, Poole focused on the Asian way of war, where tactics usually follow the indirect approach.

Avoiding the frontal jousting contests beloved by Western armies, Eastern militaries usually use stealth, subtlety and fieldcraft to evade Western firepower and take their enemies from behind, in a manner and at a time the enemy least expects. When the U.S. invaded Afghanistan, *Phantom Soldier* suddenly became the hottest book in the Pentagon—which did not prevent the failure of Operation Anaconda, where al-Qaeda fought exactly as Poole said an Eastern force would fight.

John Poole's newest book has just come out. Titled *The Tiger's Way: A U.S. Private's Best Chance for Survival*, it looks at Asian, Russian and German small-unit tactics to draw the best from each. Most importantly, Poole uses his new book to redefine the basics, that mantra of bad infantry instructors who use the term to justify their "Hey-diddle-diddle, straight-up-the-middle" approach that measures success in its own casualties. Gunny Poole's new basics, each of which gets its own chapter, are microterrain appreciation, harnessing the senses, night familiarity, non-detectable movement, guarded communication, discreet force at close range (of prime importance in Iraq, where the U.S. Army's indiscreet use of firepower is daily generating more enemies), combat deception, and one-on-one tactical decision making, which encourages thinking and initiative down through the most junior ranks.

It is of course inexcusable that most of the schools American privates go through still teach pre-machine gun tactics. If the Pentagon thought about war, that would be one of the first things it would change. But so long as the Pentagon thinks only about programs and money, American soldiers and Marines will need to discover post-machine gun tactics on their own. Gunny Poole's books offer them a readily available way to do so. My advice to our junior infantry leaders is, get these books and read them now if you want to keep your men alive.

*November 11, 2003*

# The Politics of War

In all probability, both wars were lost before the first bomb was dropped or the first shot fired. They were lost because, in an era when the state is in decline, our wars on the Afghan and Iraqi states were doomed to be too successful. We fought to destroy two regimes, but what we ended up doing was destroying two states. Neither in Afghanistan nor in Iraq are we able to recreate the state, which means that 4th Generation non-state forces will come to dominate both places. And neither we nor any other state knows how to defeat 4th Generation enemies.

To the degree America had a chance of real victory in either war, we lost that chance through early mistakes. In Afghanistan, we failed to bring the Pashtun into the new government, which means we remain allied with the Uzbeks and Tajiks against the Pashtun. Unfortunately, in the end, the Pashtun always win Afghan wars.

In Iraq, the two fatal early errors were outlawing the Ba'ath Party and disbanding the Iraqi army. Outlawing the Ba'ath deprived the Sunni community of its only political vehicle, which meant it had no choice but to fight us. Disbanding the Iraqi army left us with no native force that could maintain order, and also provided the resistance with a large pool of armed and trained fighters.

Washington is now making noises about reversing both of those early decisions, but it is simply too late. As von Moltke said, a mistake in initial dispositions can seldom be put right.

What is interesting is that the most powerful man in Washington, Karl Rove, who is President George W. Bush's political advisor, has apparently figured out that the Iraq war is lost, although unfortunately, Afghanistan is not on his political radar screen. He has also discerned

that if Mr. Bush goes into the 2004 election with the war in Iraq still going on, and still going badly, Mr. Bush is toast. The result was the recent decision to turn our back on the Iraqis sometime next summer.

Will it work? Probably not. Mr. Rove still faces two big fights, and neither will be easy. The first will be a nasty political brawl with the so-called neocons, more accurately neo-Jacobins, who gave us the Iraq War in the first place. Their political future is at stake in Iraq, and if we are defeated, they go straight into history's wastebasket. They are determined to fight down to the last American paratrooper, and once they figure out that Mr. Rove wants out, they will go after him with everything they have.

The other fight will be in Iraq itself, where we will see a race between American efforts to create at least the fig leaf of a functioning Iraqi state so we can get out with some tail feathers intact and a resistance movement that is rapidly gaining strength. My bet is that, unfortunately, we will lose. Again, the root problem is that in a 4th Generation world, once you have destroyed a state, recreating it is very difficult. As is typical of a power facing defeat, our moves are too little and too late.

By next summer, when we hope to transfer sovereignty to a new Iraqi government, it is likely to represent a frustration of the Shi'ites' hope to use their majority status to create a Shi'ite Islamic Republic. That may deprive us, and the new Iraqi government, of the one prop we still have, a relatively quiescent Shi'ite population.

The upshot of all of this is that despite Mr. Rove's belated wakening to political reality, Mr. Bush will go into the 2004 election with one of two albatrosses around his neck: a continuing, losing guerilla war, with ever-increasing American casualties, or an out-and-out American defeat, where we have left Iraq very much the way the Soviets left Afghanistan. Which is, by the way, the way we will also leave Afghanistan itself.

The neocons' parting gift to real American conservatives will be a Democratic president. Thanks a lot, guys.

*November 18, 2003*

## Worse Than Crimes

It is increasingly evident that U.S. Army commanders in Iraq know nothing about guerilla warfare. Over and over, they are ordering actions that are counterproductive. Three recent examples include:

- U.S. forces have sealed off Saddam Hussein's little home village of Auja, Iraq, ringing the town with barbed wire and forcing locals to show identity cards to enter or exit. One of the rules of guerilla war is that tactical actions can have strategic effects. When images of sealed-off Auja appear in the Islamic press all over the world—and they will—who do we look like? Israel in the West Bank.
- As if sealing off towns were not enough, the British newspaper *The Independent* carried a story by Patrick Cockburn titled, “U.S. soldiers bulldoze farmer's crops.” The lead paragraph states, US soldiers driving bulldozers, with jazz blaring from loudspeakers, have uprooted ancient groves of date palms as well as orange and lemon trees in central Iraq as part of a new policy of collective punishment of farmers who will not give information about guerrillas attacking US troops. Why not just start flying the Israeli flag? The parallel with what Israel does to the Palestinians is one nobody can miss. That, in turn, hands the guerillas a massive propaganda victory. Ironically, the Chief of Staff of the Israeli Defense Forces recently denounced these same tactics as ineffective and counterproductive.
- Across Iraq, American troops last week began Operation Iron Hammer, described by *The Washington Times* as a “new 'get tough' strategy of going after insurgents before they strike.” Thus far, Operation Iron Hammer has included calling in F-16s to drop bombs and using heavy artillery on targets in Baghdad itself. If sealing off towns and bulldozing orchards did not do enough to



encourage our enemies, Operation Iron Hammer certainly will. Not only does it telegraph desperation, not strength, but it also drives uncommitted Iraqis straight into the arms of the resistance. As Robert Kennedy said in a speech he delivered in 1965, just as the Vietnam War was ramping up, success in guerilla war comes not from escalation but from de-escalation.

The Army didn't get it then, and it doesn't get it now. The Marine Corps did get it then, as evidenced by its CAP program in Vietnam, and it seems to get it better now as well. Why is it that the American Army repeatedly proves so inept and so plain ignorant when it comes to guerilla warfare?

Some Army history offers an answer. After the Korean War, the Army said, "We're never going to do that again." It refocused itself on preparing to fight a conventional war against the Warsaw Pact in central Europe. Then, that conventional Army got sent to Vietnam, to a war it had not prepared for and did not know how to fight. The old saw, "You fight the way you train," is a double-edged sword: you will fight the way you have trained whether it is appropriate to the situation or not. Attempting to fight a conventional war in Vietnam, the Army lost.

However, the Vietnam War did leave a usable legacy of experience in guerilla war—experience bought at a terrible price. But in the mid-1970s, the Army once more said, "We're never going to do that again," and once more it focused on fighting the Soviets in central Europe, first in "the Active Defense," then in "Air Land Battle." All the learning from Vietnam was thrown away, along with most of the people who had developed a genuine understanding of how guerilla war works.

Now, just as in 1965, a U.S. Army trained for conventional war in Europe is fighting a guerilla war. And, just as in 1965, it doesn't know how. Actions such as sealing off Auja, bulldozing farmers' orchards and Operation Iron Hammer are worse than crimes; they are blunders. They may result in some small gains at the tactical and physical levels of

war, but at tremendous cost at the strategic and moral levels, where guerilla war is decided.

Successful militaries learn in a stair-step process. Unsuccessful militaries find themselves on an endless sine wave, where lessons are learned, then quickly forgotten as everything goes back to where it was before. Will the U.S. Army ever succeed in breaking out of its sine-wave pattern where guerilla warfare is concerned?

*December 1, 2003*

# How to Fight 4GW

For almost two years, a small seminar has been meeting at my house to work on the question of how to fight 4th Generation war. It is made up mostly of Marines, lieutenant through lieutenant colonel, with one Army officer, one National Guard tanker captain and one foreign officer. We figured somebody ought to be working on the most difficult question facing the U.S. armed forces, and nobody else seems to be.

The seminar recently decided it was time to go public with a few of the ideas it has come up with, and use this column to that end. We have no magic solutions to offer, only some thoughts. We recognized from the outset that the whole task may be hopeless; state militaries may not be able to come to grips with 4th Generation enemies no matter what they do. But for what they are worth, here are our thoughts to date:

If America had some 3rd Generation ground forces, capable of maneuver warfare, we might be able to fight battles of encirclement. The inability to fight battles of encirclement is what led to the failure of Operation Anaconda in Afghanistan, where al-Qaeda stood, fought us, and got away with few casualties. To fight such battles we need some true light infantry, infantry that can move farther and faster on its feet than the enemy, has a full tactical repertoire beyond bumping into the enemy and calling for artillery and air support, and can fight with its own weapons instead of depending on supporting arms.

We estimate that U.S. Marine infantry today has a sustained march rate of only 10-15 kilometers per day; German World War II line infantry, not light infantry, could sustain 40 kilometers daily.

4th Generation opponents will not sign up to the Geneva Conventions, but might some be open to a chivalric code governing how our war with them would be fought? It's worth exploring.

How U.S. forces conduct themselves after the battle may be as important in 4GW as how they fight the battle. What the Marine Corps calls cultural intelligence is of vital importance in 4GW, and it must go down to the lowest rank. In Iraq, the Marines seemed to grasp this much better than the U.S. Army.

What kind of people do we need in Special Operations Forces? The seminar thought minds were more important than muscles, but it is not clear all U.S. SOF understand this.

One key to success is integrating our troops as much as possible with the local people. Unfortunately, the American doctrine of force protection works against local integration and generally hurts us badly. Here's a quote from the minutes of the seminar:

“There are two ways to deal with the issue of force protection. One way is the way we are currently doing it, which is to separate ourselves from the population and to intimidate them with our firepower. A more viable alternative might be to take the opposite approach and integrate with the community. That way you find out more of what is going on and the population protects you. The British approach of getting the helmets off as soon as possible may actually be saving lives.”

What wins at the tactical and physical levels may lose at the operational, strategic, mental and moral levels, where 4GW is decided.

Martin van Creveld argues that one reason the British have not lost in Northern Ireland is that the British Army has taken more casualties than it has inflicted. This is something the 2nd Generation American military has great trouble grasping, because it defines success in terms of comparative attrition rates.

We must recognize that in 4GW situations, we are the weaker, not the stronger party, despite all our firepower and technology.

And what can the U.S. military learn from police units? Our reserve and National Guard units include lots of cops; are we taking advantage

of what they know?

One key to success in 4GW may be “losing to win.” Part of the reason the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq are not succeeding is that our initial invasion destroyed the state, creating a happy hunting ground for 4th Generation forces.

In a world where the state is in decline, if you destroy a state, it is very difficult to recreate it. Here’s another quote from the minutes of the seminar:

“The discussion concluded that while war against another state may be necessary one should seek to preserve that state even as one defeats it. Grant the opposing armies the honors of war, tell them what a fine job they did, make their defeat civilized so they can survive the war institutionally intact and then work for your side. This would be similar to 18th century notions of civilized war and contribute greatly to propping up a fragile state. Humiliating the defeated enemy troops, especially in front of their own population, is always a serious mistake but one that Americans are prone to make.”

This is because the football mentality we have developed since World War II works against us.

In many ways, the 21st century will offer a war between the forces of 4GW and Brave New World. The 4GW forces understand this, while the international elites that seek BNW do not. Another quote from the minutes:

“Osama bin Ladin, though reportedly very wealthy, lives in a cave. Yes, it is for security but it is also leadership by example. It may make it harder to separate (physically or psychologically) the 4GW leaders from their troops. It also makes it harder to discredit those leaders with their followers... This contrasts dramatically with the BNW elites who are physically and psychologically separated by a huge gap from their followers. Even the generals in most conventional armies are to a great extent separated from their men. The BNW elites are in many respects

occupying the moral low ground, but don't know it.

In the Axis occupation of the Balkans during World War II, the Italians were more effective than the Germans in many ways. The key to their success is that they did not want to fight. On Cyprus, the U.N. commander rated the Argentine battalion as more effective than the British or the Austrians because the Argentines did not want to fight. What lessons can U.S. forces draw from this?

How would the Mafia do an occupation?

When we have a coalition, what if we let each country do what it does best, e.g., the Russians handle operational art, the U.S. firepower and logistics, and the Italians the occupation? How could the Defense Department's concept of Transformation be redefined so as to come to grips with 4GW? If you read the current Transformation Planning Guidance put out by DOD, you find nothing in it on 4GW, indeed nothing that relates at all to either of the two wars we are now fighting. It is all oriented toward fighting other state armed forces that fight us in a symmetric manner.

The seminar intends to continue working on this question of redefining Transformation so as to make it relevant to 4GW. However, for our December meeting, we have posed the following problem: It is Spring, 2004. The U.S. Marines are to relieve the Army in the occupation of Fallujah, perhaps Iraq's hottest hot spot, and one where the 82nd Airborne's tactics have been pouring gasoline on the fire. You are the commander of the Marine force taking over Fallujah.

What do you do?

I'll let you know what we come up with.

*December 5, 2003*

# Understanding 4th Generation War

Will Saddam's capture mark a turning point in the war in Iraq? Don't count on it. Few resistance fighters have been fighting for Saddam personally. Saddam's capture may lead to a fractioning of the Ba'ath Party, which would move us further toward a 4th Generation situation where no one can recreate the state. It may also tell the Shi'ites that they no longer need America to protect them from Saddam, giving them more options in their struggle for free elections.

If the U.S. Army used the capture of Saddam to announce the end of tactics that enrage ordinary Iraqis and drive them toward active resistance, it might buy us a bit of de-escalation. But I don't think we'll that be smart. When it comes to 4th Generation war, it seems nobody in the American military gets it.

Recently, a faculty member at the National Defense University wrote to Marine Corps General Mattis, commander of I MAR DIV, to ask his views on the importance of reading military history. Mattis responded with an eloquent defense of taking time to read history, one that should go up on the wall at all of our military schools. "Thanks to my reading, I have never been caught flat-footed by any situation," Mattis said. "It doesn't give me all the answers, but it lights what is often a dark path ahead."

Still, even such a capable and well-read commander as General Mattis seems to miss the point about 4th Generation warfare. He said in his missive, "Ultimately, a real understanding of history means that we face NOTHING new under the sun. For all the '4th Generation of War' intellectuals running around today saying that the nature of war has fundamentally changed, the tactics are wholly new, etc., I must respectfully say: 'Not really...'"

Well, that isn't quite what we 4th Generation intellectuals are saying. On the contrary, we have pointed out over and over that the 4th Generation is not novel but a return, specifically a return to the way war worked before the rise of the state. Now, as then, many different entities, not just governments of states, will wage war. They will wage war for many different reasons, not just the extension of politics by other means. And they will use many different tools to fight war, not restricting themselves to what we recognize as military forces. When I am asked to recommend a good book describing what a 4th Generation world will be like, I usually suggest Barbara Tuchman's *A Distant Mirror: The Calamitous Fourteenth Century*.

Nor are we saying that 4th Generation tactics are new. On the contrary, many of the tactics 4th Generation opponents use are standard guerilla tactics. Others, including much of what we call terrorism, are classic Arab light cavalry warfare carried out with modern technology at the operational and strategic, not just tactical, levels.

As I have said before in this column, most of what we are facing in Iraq today is not yet 4th Generation warfare, but a War of National Liberation, fought by people whose goal is to restore a Ba'athist state. But as that goal fades and those forces splinter, 4th Generation war will come more and more to the fore. What will characterize it is not vast changes in how the enemy fights, but rather in who fights and what they fight for. The change in who fights makes it difficult for us to tell friend from foe. A good example is the advent of female suicide bombers; do U.S. troops now start frisking every Moslem woman they encounter? The change in what our enemies fight for makes impossible the political compromises that are necessary to ending any war. We find that when it comes to making peace, we have no one to talk to and nothing to talk about. And the end of a war like that in Iraq becomes inevitable: the local state we attacked vanishes, leaving behind either a stateless region like Somalia or a façade of a state like Afghanistan, within which more non-state elements rise and fight.



General Mattis is correct that none of this is new. It is only new to state armed forces that were designed to fight other state armed forces. The fact that no state military has recently succeeded in defeating a non-state enemy reminds us that Clio has a sense of humor: history also teaches us that not all problems have solutions.

*December 20, 2003*

# A Marley Christmas

Back in my tadpole days, sometime in the Pleistocene, my fellows at Roehm Junior High (Frederick, as it happens, not Ernst) enjoyed hanging the name of “Scrooge” around my neck. Whether or not they did so in response to my “Bah! Humbug” attitude toward Christmas, I do not now recall. I do remember with perfect clarity my invariable reply: “Scrooge? Scrooge? How dare you call me Scrooge! Scrooge was a weakling. Scrooge *gave in*—to all that poppycock about Tiny Tim and Christmas goose for common clerks. I assure you, I am no Scrooge. I’m Marley.”

As I sat by my fireside the other evening, smoking my pipe, drinking a bottle of old Port and occasionally kicking the cat, I thought again about my exemplar, Jacob Marley. What would Marley have made of the colossal mess that Bush, Cheney & Co., have pulled us into? Then it came to me: Marley's Christmas list! Out of the stony cockles of his hard old heart, Marley would have known what each and every *dramatis personae* deserved. I suspect Marley's list for Santa might go something like this:

- For President George W. Bush, a slightly nicer hole than Saddam's, to hide in once the American people figure out that he started two wars, and lost both.
- For Dick Cheney, a late night visit from the ghost of Colonel John Boyd, whose briefings Mr. Cheney heard and whose wisdom he totally ignored in whooping it up for war with Iraq. Also, at least one foreign policy advisor who is not a neocon.
- For the neocons themselves, those wonderful people who believe in promoting democracy on the tips of American bayonets, Robespierre bobble-heads for one and all. Also, their children get

drafted and sent to Iraq for the duration.

- For Secretary of State Powell, a small desk plaque that reads, "There is no position more difficult than that of minister to an idiot king."
- For Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld, a portrait of Robert McNamara, to sit on his desk as a reminder that we've been down this road before. "Metrics, give me metrics, stout-hearted metrics...".
- For Condi Rice, the title that goes with her duties: concierge.
- For Pompey, alias Mr. Wolfowitz, some clean underwear to replace that lost at the al Rashid hotel.
- For the U.S. Navy, complete irrelevance to future war, plus plans for the F-18Z to fill all those carrier deck spots in the year 2104.
- For the U.S. Air Force, status of "worse than useless" for future war, plus F-22s to shoot down Taliban flying carpets.
- For the U.S. Army, hope that the new chief may be the Army's Al Gray.
- For the United State Marine Corps, the ultimate \_\_\_ sandwich, in the form of orders back to Iraq in the spring. Also Arabic phrase books that start with, "We're not like those other guys who just left."
- For the U.S. Army generals in Iraq, British uniforms, circa 1776.
- For U.S. troops in Iraq, tickets home, with no return.
- For the people of Iraq, Operation Iraqi Freedom, which happens when the last Coalition soldier leaves.
- For the American People, President Hillary Clinton. This one has a note on it, in Marley's own crabbed scrawl: This is actually from the neocons.
- And finally, for old Saddam himself, his very own reality TV show, in the form of a show trial running right through the American Presidential campaign and election, where he can talk about all kinds of interesting things like how the Bushes were so helpful when it came to using chemical weapons against Iran.

I thought that was the end of my old friend Marley's list. But then I found something written on an envelope. "For all true conservatives who opposed this counterproductive war from the outset, the strategic advice of Tokugawa Ieyasu: 'Wait.'"

*December 24, 2003*

## How 2004 Looks From Potsdam

At the beginning of a new year, it is traditional for columnists, commentators and other harmless drudges to take a look at their crystal ball and forecast what the year may bring. Fortunately, I have superior technology. My home telephone was made in 1918. When I need to see down the road a bit, I just call my reporting senior, the Kaiser. I got through to Potsdam a few nights ago, and here is what *der Allerhoechste* thinks may be in store for us in 2004:

- In Iraq, the War of National Liberation led by the Ba'ath will diminish as the Ba'ath itself fragments. This may lead to a "pause" of sorts in the guerilla war, which the neocons will falsely hail as a sign of American victory. In fact, the splintering of the Ba'ath will move Iraq even farther away from being able to recreate a real state. As the Ba'ath fades, true 4th Generation forces will rise, leading to more fighting among Iraqis and an eventual multi-sided, permanent Iraqi civil war. Attacks on Americans will rise again as various 4th Generation entities seek to show that they are the deadliest enemy of the Crusaders. 2004 will also see the Shi'ites play a more active role. If Mr. Bremer tries to thwart them by rigging elections, or abandoning them altogether, our troops are likely to end up with their hands full of Shi'ite.
- His Majesty foresees three other interesting possibilities in Iraq. First, another long, hot summer with no security and little electric power may generate an intifada on the Palestinian model; the U.S. Army's use of Israeli tactics increases this possibility, because it leads Iraqis to visualize themselves as Palestinians. Second, the morale of American troops in Iraq, already low, may decline to the point where the U.S. Army starts to crack, much as the German Army did in August, 1918. Third, when the Marines go back into

Iraq, they will use very different tactics from the Army, tactics that might have worked had they been applied earlier. But again like Germany in 1918, the situation will be too far gone for any tactics to redeem it.

- The war in Afghanistan will unroll like all previous Afghan wars. The Taliban will slowly but steadily retake the countryside, while we cling to Kabul and try to prop up our puppet government. The only question is when we, like the British and the Soviets, will recognize reality, give up and go home.
- Far more important than either Iraq or Afghanistan is Pakistan, where the state is crumbling. 2004 may well be the year when it goes over the edge, handing the international Islamic jihad 40–50 nuclear weapons. His Majesty said, General Musharraf is about where I was at the beginning of November, 1918.”
- Throughout the Islamic world, al-Qaeda and other non-state forces will thrive and grow. Speaking of Libya's recent attempt at a rapprochement with the United States, His Majesty said, “I had a good laugh when your neocons, who make my former advisors look intelligent, claimed Quaddafi did this out of fear of the U.S. What terrifies him and drives him toward other states, including America, is fear of non-state elements inside Libya. This is just one small example of the unholy alliances states will make with other states, and non-state forces will make with other non-state forces. At our last *tabagie*, my ancestors from the time of the wars of religion in Europe were all nodding and saying that it will soon be time for them to go back, because it will all be so familiar.”
- Look for non-Islamic 4th Generation forces to make their mark in the United States. America is now making war on the FARC in Columbia, and it is likely to return the favor. “Remember, they've got a better distribution system in the United States than the *Reichspost* had in Germany.”
- “Your government's color-coded alert system is almost as effective as my U-boat war was in undermining your own

strategy,” His Majesty volunteered. “The other side knows exactly what intelligence indicators you look for, and it is playing you like a glockenspiel. When it is not going to do anything big, it feeds you false indicators to make you jump, undermining your own people's sense of security and making your enemy look stronger than he is. Of course, when something real is coming, there will be no indicators at all.”

I knew there was a *Zapfenstreich* in Heaven that night, and I did not want to keep my Sovereign on the phone with the petty concerns of earth. But I did follow up his last comment with a final question: was something real likely to happen in 2004? His Majesty sighed. “Look for something big, real big, right before your election. al-Qaeda has an excellent sense of timing.”

“But wouldn't that help reelect George Bush?” I asked, puzzled.

“*Ja, genau,*” the Kaiser replied. “I guess you haven't spent enough time at court to really understand these things. As Bismarck said to me just yesterday, al-Qaeda and George Bush need each other.”

*January 8, 2004*

## More Thoughts From the 4th Generation Seminar

The seminar on Fourth-Generation war that meets each month at my house took as its December topic the following question: You are the commander of the Marine Corps unit that will take over Fallujah in March; what will you do?

Army and Marine Corps participants agreed that your first task is to tell the locals, “We're not like the guys who just left”—the 82nd Airborne. Wear the new Marine Corps utilities that look different from the Army desert uniforms. Don't relieve in place, instead, move into new areas, not the Army's old billets. Patrol on foot, not in vehicles. Wear soft covers, not helmets and body armor. Don't wear sunglasses. Teach your troops a bit of Arabic, so they can say, “We're different.” Teach them enough Arab culture so they avoid gross insults, like stepping on the heads of people they detain. Don't do raids, breaking people's doors down in the middle of the night.

Make sure you have plenty of money, and pass it around. Maybe the first thing the Marines should say is, “We are here to pay the blood money”—compensation to families who have had members killed by Americans. Without blood money, the locals' honor requires that they fight you to avenge their dead. Here, Washington is a major obstacle, because it requires peacetime accounting rules for any money our forces spend. Commanders need a generous slush fund.

Remember that success comes not from escalation, but from de-escalation. This may require taking more casualties than you inflict. We need to re-think force protection; if it isolates us from the population, it works against us.



Of course, we will take casualties. How long can we sustain this alternate, softer approach as our casualties mount? The troops need to be trained and prepared for doing so, because their natural response will be to take it out on the population. One Marine said that we have to talk through traumatic events with the men when they happen, so they do not take revenge. They have to be willing *not* to kill.

If Fallujah is a hard spot, don't start there; start where the situation is more favorable. Maybe we should not go into Fallujah at first.

A Marine suggested we use the ink blot strategy the special forces initially used in Vietnam, with good results. Let each squad get to know one particular area and the people in it. Regrettably, we probably won't have enough troops to make this work.

We asked some radical questions: what if the Marines carried no weapons? One participant who spent time in Iraq said we have to be armed, because Iraq is an armed society and anyone without a weapon looks weak. Should we offer the guerillas a deal where they take responsibility for local security? Should we set up a liaison office where the locals can tell us what they need to get life working again, then we try to provide that to them? Should our troops wear civilian clothes, at least when working with Iraqis to repair infrastructure?

One Marine said that in Numaniya, his men had backed off on checkpoints for weapons and had loosened controls a little at a time; this gained a good deal of popular support. Another Marine talked about a rule we had in Somalia, where locals could carry weapons around Americans so long as they pointed the muzzles down. The Somali militiamen were willing to do that.

Toward the end of our seminar, we faced what may be the toughest question: what if the Marines do all this (and the thinking at Camp Pendleton seems to be similar to what we have come up with), and it doesn't work? An Army officer said that at that point, the U.S. military may need to turn the problem back over to the politicians in

Washington as the military will have done all that it can do.

But there may be some other approaches. There is the British Northwest Frontier Agent model, where we would try to shift local balances of power. This may mean more to the locals than anything else, because the new power relationships we help create may be there long after we leave. But this requires superb local intelligence, and we usually don't have it. There may be a "Mafia model," where instead of acting directly, we contract hits on the bad guys, who just disappear with no American fingerprints on them. This helps keep us out of the local blood feud culture.

At its first session, our seminar said that we may find ourselves asking questions to which there are no answers. But we intend to keep asking. In January, in addition to continuing the above discussion, we will ask the question, how do you train Marines for all this?

*January 17, 2004*

# The Army's Transformation

The favorite buzzword in Donald Rumsfeld's Pentagon is "Transformation," and for the most part it means nothing more than winning through superior technology, an old but highly profitable delusion, as can be seen in Martin van Creveld's *Technology and War*. It is geared almost entirely to fighting other states, which is to say jousting contests, and has little relevance to war with non-state entities, which is where real war is headed. So long as it keeps all the contractors happy, and it does, Washington is content with it.

But the U.S. Army seems to be looking for something more. I was recently invited to join a day-long session of the Army's Transformation task force dealing with force structure, and I left with the feeling that the soldiers in the group were striving for real reform. The contractors were another matter.

It has been widely reported that the Army intends to replace the division with the brigade as its basic building block, as advocated in Doug Macgregor's *Breaking the Phalanx*. In itself, this is a positive change. Most armies went to brigades or smaller divisions long ago.

The problem is that change may be good but insufficient; the French Army's development of armored forces in the 1930s is an example. Is what the Army is defining as Transformation sufficient change to meet the 4th Generation of modern war, or at least bring it from the 2nd Generation of firepower and attrition warfare into the 3rd Generation of maneuver warfare? The answer is unclear.

Two subsidiary questions might help answer that large question: how far does the Army's proposed Transformation move it toward being able to engage non-state opponents effectively, and if all the proposed reforms were already in place, how much difference would

they make in the two wars the Army is now fighting in Iraq and in Afghanistan? From what I saw in my day with the force structure task force, the answers are a) not very far and b) not very much. That does not bode well in terms of answering the larger question. In my opinion, far more radical change is required than merely substituting brigades for divisions as the basic building block.

Here are two concrete examples: if Transformation truly means moving the U.S. Army from the 2nd Generation to the 3rd, headquarters above the brigade level would become both fewer and smaller. Will that happen? Another example: a 3rd Generation military understands John Boyd's point that implicit communications are faster and more reliable than explicit communications. Yet the Army and the other services continue to spend billions making communications explicit, computerizing anything and everything to the point where commanders drown in information. When Boyd asked the German generals Balck and von Mellinthin how computers would have affected their ability to fight maneuver warfare, they said, "We couldn't have done it." Small staffs and a small officer corps above the company grades, not vast information flows, are the key to communications for a 3rd Generation army.

What seems to be emerging from the Army's Transformation process is a hybrid of the Second and 3rd Generations. The concepts, some of them anyway, are 3rd Generation. But the Army's structure will remain 2nd Generation. Hybrids are dangerous, because their internal contradictions can become vast friction generators, and Clausewitz tells us where friction leads.

The key issue is not the Army's force structure, but its culture. Does it remain 2nd Generation, focused inward on process, prizing obedience above initiative and depending on imposed discipline? Or does it transition to the 3rd Generation, focusing outward on the enemy, the situation and the result the situation requires, prizing initiative over obedience and depending on self-discipline? A 3rd Generation culture

will eventually fix a 2nd Generation force structure, but no force structure can help a 2nd Generation military culture.

At the end of the day, my impression was that the big, green Army dinosaur has gotten its head up out of the swamp (apologies to you Rangers, but from my vantage point it appears to be an herbivore). The question is whether it can evolve fast enough to match the speed of change in war itself. If not, it will join the rest of its kind in the coming mass extinction of 2nd Generation armies, and of the states they defend.

*January 22, 2004*

# The Discarded Image

*The Discarded Image* is the title of C.S. Lewis's last book, and perhaps his best. On the surface, it is a discussion of medieval cosmology and the Ptolemaic universe. In reality it is about very much more, including the medieval refutation of the modern notion of equality, which decrees that people are interchangeable. That vast error lies at the heart of many of the ideologies which made the 20th century such a horror and which still gnaw at the vitals of Western civilization. Lewis recognized that on many matters, our medieval ancestors were wiser than ourselves.

Lewis's book was brought to mind by a letter from a reader of this column, who asked a difficult question: "Having read all I could lay my hands on about 4th Generation warfare (including your books), something is missing. You are still discussing 4th Generation warfare at the state level...What can individuals do to prepare for 4th generation warfare? What can my family do?"

My correspondent has grasped the most difficult point about 4th Generation war. In its ultimate form, it is not something we face over there, in places such as Afghanistan and Iraq. Nor is it an import, like 9/11. 4th Generation theory says that the state here, in the good old USA, is also likely to break apart as Americans too transfer their primary loyalty away from the state to a wide variety of other things. The conflicts among these new loyalties will, in many cases, be sharp enough to generate fighting.

In the face of this possibility, or maybe probability, what indeed are individuals and families to do? I think the answer, if there is one, begins with my friend David Kline's farm. David Kline is an Amishman. He farms about 200 acres in Holmes County, Ohio, good

land that supports a herd of forty to fifty dairy cows. He has some modern equipment, such as milking machines, but his life does not depend on any of it. In today's world, his farm provides him a good living. In a 4th Generation world, his farm would still provide well for him and his family. I am not talking about survivalism here. The Kline farm represents much more than that. As I have said to David more than once, what he and other Amish are doing is preserving an understanding of how to live in reality for the time when all the virtual realities collapse.

Virtual realities lie at the heart of Brave New World, aka the New World Order, concepts such as "globalism," and "democratic capitalism" as the neocons define it. The bargain Brave New World offers is this: if you will only do as Marcuse advises and trade the Reality Principle for the Pleasure Principle, we will enmesh you in virtual realities that will make you happy. True, you will lose your freewill, because our virtual realities will condition you to think as we want you to think. But they will also give you anything and everything you want. So what if none of it is real? All that matters is that you feel happy, right now.

As our medieval forefathers would quickly recognize, this is Hell speaking. Hell has always loathed reality, because in reality, Christ is king. Wiser than we, the medievals were interested not in *felicitas* but in *beautitudine*—not in being happy but in being saved. Had they been given a television or a video game, they would have smelled brimstone.

Not only do virtual realities lead to Hell, they have another drawback, one that a 4th Generation world will soon bring to the fore: all of them, without exception, eventually collapse. The complex structures and vast resources required to sustain them are evanescent. The realities of the 4th Generation are hard and sharp, and they will slice and dice virtual realities like, well, dare I say, the Scimitar of Islam? Many Islamics, unlike most Christians, seem to recognize Brave New World for what it is.

Which brings me back to David Kline's farm. Is the answer to my reader's question that we should all become Amish? No, because in the end some of us will have to fight or the world will have no place for the Amish. Should we all live like Amish farmers? Here the answer is closer to yes. At the least, even if we do not farm, we need to separate our lives and the lives of our families from the virtual realities and live in reality itself. The small family farm may not be the only way to do that, but it is a good way.

David Kline's farm is itself a discarded image. But it is an image America discarded not very long ago. As David says, "I just farm the way everybody did fifty years ago." David edits *Farming Magazine*, a thoughtful and literate quarterly dedicated to teaching others, Amish and non-Amish, how they too can make a good living from a small farm, farmed the old way. His discarded image is one we can find, still living, perhaps not too far down the road.

My correspondent concluded, "How do you apply non-state warfare to family protection? Give me only those practical items that can be implemented on the individual and family level." Well, I don't know many things more practical than an Amish farm, nor many things better at protecting families. And I do know that answers to the 4th Generation and to Brave New World, false images both, can only be found at the individual and family level, because that is where the decision to live by the Reality Principle must be made.

*January 27, 2004*



## 5th Generation War

Despite the fact that the framework of the Four Generations of Modern War is relatively new, first appearing in print in 1989, some observers are now talking about a 5th Generation. Some see the 5th Generation as a product of new technologies, such as nanotechnology. Others define it as the state's struggle to maintain its monopoly on war and social organization in the face of 4th Generation challengers. One correspondent defined it as terrorist acts done by one group in such a manner that they are blamed on another, something traditionally known as “pseudo-operations.”

These ideas are all valuable, and if people try to think beyond or outside the framework of the Four Generations, that is probably a good thing. An intellectual framework must remain open or it descends into an ideology, something poisonous per se. As Russell Kirk wrote, conservatism is the negation of ideology. At the same time, I have to say that these attempts to announce a 5th Generation seem to go a generation too far.

One reason for the confusion may be a misapprehension of what “generation” means. In the context of the Four Generations of Modern War, a “generation” is shorthand for a dialectically qualitative shift. As the originator of the framework, I adopted the term because I was speaking to and writing for Marines, and “dialectically qualitative shift” has more syllables than the average Marine mind can readily grasp. Think of the Emperor Joseph II's response when he first heard Mozart's music: “Too many notes.” Most Marines vaguely remember that Hegel pitched for the Yankees in the late 1940's.

As that old German would be quick to tell us, dialectically qualitative shifts occur very seldom. In my view, there were only three

in the field of warfare since the modern era began with the Peace of Westphalia; the fourth marks the end of the modern period.

One simple test for whether or not something constitutes a generational shift is that, absent a vast disparity in size, an army from a previous generation cannot beat a force from the new generation. The 2nd Generation French Army of 1940 could not defeat the 3rd Generation Wehrmacht, even though the French had more tanks and better tanks than the Germans. The reason I do not think the wars of the French Revolution and Napoleon mark a generational shift is that Wellington consistently beat the French, and the British Army he led remained very much an 18th century army.

While attempts to think beyond the Four Generations should generally be welcomed, there are some shoals to avoid. One is technological determinism, the false notion that war's outcome is usually determined by superiority in equipment. Martin van Creveld's book *Technology and War* makes a strong case that technology is seldom the determining factor.

A related danger is technological hucksterism: coming up with Madison Avenue slogans to sell new weapons programs by claiming that they fundamentally change warfare. This kind of carnival sideshow act lies at the heart of the so-called "Revolution in Military Affairs," and it dominates all discussions of national defense in Washington. Every contractor who hopes to get his snout in the trough claims that his widget revolutionizes war. As the framework of 4GW spreads, you can be sure that the Merchants of Death will claim that whatever they are trying to sell is an absolute necessity for 4th or 5th Generation war. It will all be poppycock.

From what I have seen thus far, honest attempts to discover a 5th Generation suggest that their authors have not fully grasped the vast change embodied in the 4th Generation. The loss of the state's monopoly, not only on war but also on social organization and first loyalties, alters everything. We are only in the earliest stages of trying

to understand what the 4th Generation means in full and how it will alter—or, in too many cases, end—our lives.

Attempting to visualize a 5th Generation from where we are now is like trying to see the outlines of the Middle Ages from the vantage point of the late Roman Empire. There is no telescope that can reach so far. We can see the barbarians on the march. In America and in Europe, we already find them inside the limes and within the legions. But what follows the chaos they bring in their wake, only the gods on Mount Olympus can see. It may be worth remembering that the last time this happened, the gods themselves died.

*February 4, 2004*

## **Kick Down the Doors and Beat 'Em Up**

One of the purposes of this column is to share with readers the results of the monthly seminar I lead on 4th Generation warfare. The focus is on the tactical and the practical, ideas that might be of use to American troops who have to face 4th Generation war in places such as Iraq and Afghanistan. That is not to say that I or others in the seminar support the strategy that got us there; it merely recognizes that the strategy has dumped a singularly ugly baby in the laps of our lance corporals and lieutenants.

Most of the members of the seminar are active duty Marines. Although I take an occasional shot at the Marine Corps—someone has to cut through Marines' love for their own bulls---, and I find the task congenial—the fact is that the Marine Corps has done more serious thinking about war over the last twenty years than the three other services put together.

We gathered on a frosty January evening with a good fire, plenty of beer for the Marines and port for the civilized. Much of our discussion revolved around what the military might learn from police. Police seek to defuse situations, to de-escalate them, which is what our military needs to do in many, perhaps most, 4th Generation situations. Escalation works to the advantage of our enemies on the moral level; de-escalation undermines them by allowing normal life to flourish.

We quickly encountered a serious obstacle: language. Cops solve at least 90 percent of all situations by talking. Talking is an alternative to fighting and therefore a critically important tool for de-escalation. The problem is, in places like Iraq our troops cannot talk to the locals because they do not speak the language.

We need help from locals to solve this, but how do we get it? In

Iraq, we are trying to set up police forces that work for us. But working for us can easily be fatal, both physically and to the legitimacy of the Iraqi police. Many are responding, as they must to survive, by working for both sides at the same time.

How can we obtain the loyalty of locals? What if along with money we offered green cards? When Romans occupied an area, they quickly recruited local auxilia who, by twenty years of loyal service to the legions, earned Roman citizenship. Maybe we could develop a program like the KATUSA program in Korea, which recruited Koreans to serve in U.S. infantry companies.

Another police question was whether we should equip our troops with shields and riot gear. This brought sharp disagreement; some thought yes, because without shields we are vulnerable to rock-throwers, who are often kids, while others said no because it signals that you are prepared to stand there and take a beating.

One Marine said that the Marine Reservists he worked with in the first phase of the Iraq war who were cops had a problem: they could not escalate when the situation required it. Was this their police training working against them? Possibly, but might the situation be reversed in subsequent phases, i.e., the occupation and the fight against 4th Generation elements?

Is perhaps the best achievable outcome in places like Iraq a situation where the locals expend their energies fighting each other? This is far from the neocon's objective of "peaceful, democratic capitalism," but that objective was a fantasy from the outset. It may be time for the foreign policy idealists to exit stage left while the realists enter. Mike Vlahos' excellent paper, "Terror's Mask: Insurgency Within Islam," may point the way here—along with our old friend Machiavelli.

If that is the strategy, might the best tactic be getting local factions to do our fighting for us? We have no long-term need for places like Fallujah, but someone who lives there may want it. If they can take it,

make an alliance with them and help them do so. What if that someone is the Ba'ath? Perhaps it is time to say, “Any old port in a storm.” We seem to be taking a Ba'ath in Iraq as it is.

One model that keeps coming up in our discussions is the CAP program from Vietnam. One member of the seminar who had been in Iraq said he had lieutenants who were very good at settling their platoons into a neighborhood and becoming part of it. We are far from having enough troops to do this everywhere in Iraq, but maybe doing it in some places would set an example and provide a moral victory.

How do we train Marines for all this? We recognized that the problem would come when they took casualties and all the rage and hate and desire for revenge came to the surface. Role-playing might help, including putting Marines in the roles of locals who get humiliated by foreign troops. One pilot suggested SEER school might be a model—that is training where pilots simulate being shot down and captured, and have to try to survive and escape.

Another idea was to give each patrol a camera. If someone shoots at them, instead of blasting back with the high risk of hitting civilians, get a picture of the shooter. Then, you can either get snipers to hunt him down or take out a contract—the Mafia model—and let locals take care of him. Sometimes “no fingerprints” is more effective than running up a score.

What message do we send to proud people like the Iraqis when we establish a fortified little America for our troops, where they live not only separated from the population but also in effect sneering at them? What if instead we did like every other army in history and billeted among the local population, paying them well for the quarters?

Our central conundrum remains what it has been for the last few meetings of the seminar: everything we are talking about is part of just one model, one alternative to the “kick down the doors and beat 'em up” model the Army now appears to be using in Iraq. What if our

model, the de-escalation model also fails? We still have no answer for that one.

*February 13, 2004*

## The Withering Away of the State

Many years ago, old Uncle Karl foresaw a “withering away of the state” as a prelude to the inauguration of international communism. As history turned out, communism died before the state did. But the state is withering away, as a most interesting development in Iraq demonstrates. Like many aspects of 4th Generation war, this development is not something new, but something old, from the time before the state's monopoly on war: mercenaries.

My hometown newspaper, the *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, recently dispatched its *Friday! Magazine* editor, Chuck Yarborough, on an extended journey through Iraq. *Friday! Magazine* normally reports on plays, movies, restaurants and other entertainment, so Mr. Yarborough's stories reflect a fresh view of that vastly entertaining subject, war. I will leave it to others to speculate as to whether Cleveland is so dull on a Friday night that even Iraq is an improvement.

In his February 9th story, Yarborough describes Iraq as “*a dirty, nasty countryside that looks like the tide just went out on the River Styx... Each time we ground to a stop—as we did often—our South African personal security detachment (PSD, as it is called here) went on high alert... Task Force Shield commander Col. Tom O'Donnell, fresh off 10 days in the United States briefing National Security Advisor Condoleeza Rice's deputy on the progress of providing security for the Iraqi oil pipeline, and I rode in the back seat... Trailing us in an unarmored Jeep were the rest of the Erinys Co. team assigned to protect O'Donnell.*”

So U.S. Army colonels now have mercs, not American soldiers, providing their security. “That's very interesting,” as John Boyd liked to say. A front-page story in the February 18 *Washington Post* adds



more:

*Attacks on the private contractors rebuilding Iraq are boosting security expenses, cutting into reconstruction funds and compelling U.S. officials in Baghdad to contend with growing legions of private, armed security teams spread throughout the country... U.S. and coalition military forces, which are being trimmed and face continuing attacks, cannot provide contractor protection, and neither can fledgling Iraqi forces... leaving private teams as the main protection for contractors... Major security contractors (in Iraq) estimated in interviews that at least 40 private security companies and several thousand armed guards already are working in the country.*

So while at the micro level an American Army colonel has a merc security detail, at the macro level mercenaries are filling the gap between American military forces engulfed in their own war and the security units of Iraq's Vichy regime, most of which are less than keen to fight.

What does the return of mercenaries on a large scale, in a theatre of war, tell us? It tells us that state militaries have become so bureaucratic, expensive and top-heavy that they are losing the ability to fight.

As expensive as mercenaries are—and the Post article quotes a figure of \$1,000 per day for skilled bodyguards—they are still cheaper than state military forces. This is not because the U.S. Army overpays its privates and sergeants, but because the \$400 billion America pays each year for defense buys very few privates and sergeants in the combat arms, guys who can actually fight. Most of the money goes for overhead: contractor welfare in the form of multi-billion dollar programs for irrelevant weapons like the F-22, endless consultants who are mostly retired generals and colonels already collecting large pensions, a bloated officer corps above the company grades, a vast rear area made ever-larger by the needs of complex, computerized systems, and layer upon layer of headquarters, each with a small army of horse-

holders and flower-strewers. If you want to imagine a modern state military, think of a brontosaurus with three teeth.

This is a classic sign of generational change. The passing generation requires vast resources for little battlefield output, while the coming generation knows how to do much with small resources. The Maginot Line cost many times more than Guderian's panzers. Think of what an organization like al-Qaeda can do with a million dollars compared to what the same money means to the Pentagon.

But it is not just the passing of state militaries that we see in the rise of mercenaries. It is the withering away of the state itself. Mercenaries mark the state's loss of its monopoly on war just as surely as do the rise of non-state actors. Mercs will work for whoever pays them, state or non-state player. The more roles they fill, the more irrelevant the state becomes.

Maybe it is time for the Grimaldis, those old galley-fleet entrepreneurs who still rule Monaco, to ask discreetly if we would like someone to patrol the Tigris and the Euphrates.

*February 21, 2004*

## Dead Leaves and Dry Bones

Earlier this week, I enjoyed the somewhat odd experience of speaking to the Washington chapter of the Council on Foreign Relations. I say odd because my own views on foreign affairs are anti-Establishment, while the CFR is the holy of holies of the Establishment elite. To aspiring young Establishmentarians, membership in the CFR is a Holy Grail, the equivalent of joining the Praetorians in Imperial Rome or, among the Masons, achieving the rank of High Wingwang or perhaps even Exalted Grand Wazoo.

I was there as part of a panel on 4th Generation war. The Establishment would prefer not to notice 4GW, but 4th Generation war has fastened its fangs firmly into the Establishment's backside in Iraq, Afghanistan and elsewhere, so attention must be paid. Sometimes that means inviting us anti-Establishment types and hoping we don't break too much of the crockery.

The other panelists were two retired Army officers, both of whom have written some good things on 3rd and 4th Generation war, and a retired Marine Corps general who served as moderator. One panelist noted the degree to which we remain stuck in the 2nd Generation, especially in what is taught in the various armed forces schools and staff colleges. Another took the neocon line, predicting a coming American century, which is about as likely as a coming Austro-Hungarian century. Surprisingly, we all agreed on one point: however good the American military may be from the battalion level down, what goes on above that level doesn't make much sense. One panelist hit the pig right on the snout on the Air Force's F-22 fighter; the only way we will ever be able to use it is if we first give some to whoever is fighting us.

But the most significant aspect of the session was not what any of the panelists said. It was the utter inability of the audience, distinguished members of the Council on Foreign Relations, to understand any of it. They were as bewildered as the Gadarene swine.

The problem was two-fold. First, the heart of 4th Generation war is a crisis of legitimacy of the state, and these people are the state. They are the policy elite, the people who influence or even decide what hornet's nests we will next stick our nose into around the globe. Us, not legitimate? *Mais monsieur, le état c'est nous!* Who could possibly doubt our right to rule? When I suggested folks like Hispanic gang members in L.A. and factory workers in Cleveland whose jobs they are helping outsource to China and India, I got blank looks. As Martin van Creveld said to me one day in my Washington office, "Everybody sees it except the people in the capital cities." The CFR is Exhibit A.

The second reason is yet more fundamental. Despite their degrees, résumés and pretensions, the Establishment is no longer made up of policy types. Most of its members are placemen. Their expertise is in becoming and remaining members of the Establishment. Their reality is court politics, not the outside reality of a 4th Generation world or any other kind of world. When that world intrudes, as it did in the panelists' remarks, the proper response is to close the shutters on the windows of Versailles.

The CFR had generously allowed me to bring a guest with me into its august precincts, a young Marine major who is doing some excellent work on how to fight 4th Generation opponents. As we walked to the car, I said to him, "John, the next time you're on an amphib off somebody's coast, waiting for the order to go in, remember that these are the kind of people who will be making the decision."

"From that standpoint, I sort of wish I had not come tonight," was his reply.

There is nothing left of the vaunted Council on Foreign Relations,

or of the Establishment it represents, but dead leaves and dry bones.

*February 28, 2004*

## Reality 1, Neocons 0

The Marines have landed, and the situation is not well in hand, nor will it ever be. I am speaking, of course, of Haiti, that boil on the Western Hemisphere's posterior which no plaster can ever cure. In the 18th century, Haiti was so rich, thanks to the sugar trade, that it alone provided two-thirds of the value of France's overseas commerce. Today, Haiti is so poor that the average American dog probably lives better than the average Haitian.

But I forget: just ten years ago, we solved all of Haiti's problems. Applying the neocons' prescription for the whole world, we sent in thousands of American troops, overthrew the “undemocratic” Haitian government and installed Haiti's Mr. Chalabi, Monsieur Aristide— the same savior who just departed, with Washington's encouragement, to the universal anthem of the Third World's elite, “I'm Leavin' on a Jet Plane”. For some incomprehensible reason, democracy backed by American bayonets failed to turn Haiti into Switzerland. It's probably because we forgot to teach them how to make cuckoo clocks and put holes in cheese.

Haiti is in fact a fair test of the neocons' thesis, a thesis we are now putting to further trials in Iraq and Afghanistan. Their core argument is that history and culture simply don't matter. Everyone in the world wants American-style democratic capitalism, and everyone is also capable of it. To think otherwise is to commit the sin of historicism.

The argument is absurd on the face of it. History and culture don't matter? Not only do the failed cultures and disastrous histories of most of the world argue the contrary, so does our own history and culture. Democratic capitalism first developed in one place, England, over an historical course that goes back almost a thousand years, to the Magna

Carta. America was born as an independent country to guarantee the rights of Englishmen. If England had possessed the culture of, say Mongolia, can anyone with the slightest grasp on reality think we would be what we are today?

While the neocons' thesis says nothing about reality, it says a great deal about the neocons themselves. First, it tells us that they are ideologues. All ideologies posit that certain things must be true, regardless of any evidence to the contrary. That evidence is to be suppressed, along with the people who insist on pointing to it. Sadly, the neocons have been able to do exactly that within the Bush administration, and the mess in Iraq is the price.

Second, it reveals the nature of the neocon ideology, which has nothing whatsoever to do with conservatism. The neocons in fact are Jacobins, *les ultras* of the French Revolution, who also tried to export "human rights", which are very different from the concrete, specific rights of Englishmen, on bayonets. Then, the effort eventually united all of Europe against France. Today, it is uniting the rest of the world against America.

Finally it reveals the neocons as fools, lightweights who can dismiss history and culture because they know nothing of history or culture. The first generation of neocons were serious intellectuals, Trotskyites but serious Trotskyites. The generation now in power in Washington is made up of poseurs who happen to have the infighting skills of the Sopranos. If you don't believe me, look at Mr. Wolfowitz's book. Or, more precisely, look for Mr. Wolfowitz's book. You won't find it. He hasn't written it.

Perhaps it was America's turn to have its foreign policy captured by a gang of ignorant and reckless adventurers. It has happened to others: Russia before the Russo-Japanese War, Japan in the 1930's. The results are seldom happy.

Before we get ourselves into any more neocon led follies, we

should apply their thesis to a simple test: send them to Haiti and see if they can make a go of it, after the U.S. Marines pull out. If they can, I'll put my money in a Haitian bank.

*March 3, 2004*



# Why They Throw Rocks

Last week, suicide car bombings left around 200 Shi'ite pilgrims dead and scores more wounded in Iraq. How did the locals respond? By blaming the Americans. U.S. troops, including medics who were trying to help the wounded, found themselves attacked by stone-throwing mobs. Similarly, in Haiti, when gunmen opened up on a demonstration by Aristide opponents, the locals blamed American Marines for the casualties.

What gives? Neither the American soldiers and Marines on the spot nor American citizens at home can understand why we get blamed when Iraqis or Haitians kill each other. After all, we didn't do it.

The answer gets at what the state is all about, or should be all about, and why the state is failing in so many parts of the world: order.

As Martin van Creveld writes in his important book, *The Rise and Decline of the State*, the state arose, in Europe starting in the 15th century, to bring order. Not freedom, not capitalism, certainly not democracy, but order. Between the decline of the High Middle Ages and the rise of the state, Europe was plagued by disorder, often in the form of roving bands of armed men looking for employment as soldiers. Being skilled in the use of arms and semi-organized, and not having much to lose anyway, if they saw something they wanted, they took it. That meant not only money but the food a family had stored to get it through the winter, along with their warm house; women; boys and young men, to fill up their ranks; horses and other livestock; in short, anything. What they did not steal they destroyed, just for the fun of it. And seeing how long they could keep someone alive under torture often provided an evening's entertainment. Life was Hobbesian—nasty, brutish and short—for anyone without a castle.

The state promised to restore order, and in time it did. As the state spread throughout the world, usually in the form of European colonialism, it made that same promise good beyond Europe. While the state added qualities beyond order as it developed, its legitimacy still depended on upholding its first promise, maintaining order. And it still does so depend.

That is why, in countries such as Iraq and Haiti, the locals blame us when order breaks down. As the occupying power, we are responsible for maintaining order. That is true under international law as well as in the eyes of the local people. We are the state now in those places, and when order breaks down, we—the state—have failed.

Why do we fail? Any battalion commander in Iraq can easily answer that question. We have far too few troops to do the job. We do not have, and for the most cannot get, effective human intelligence. We do not understand the local culture. Force protection keeps us isolated from the local population, and effective policing, which is what keeping order requires, demands integration with the people. As a state military, we are designed to fight other forces like ourselves. Our own rules of engagement keep us from simply hosing crowds with machine-gun fire, and when that happens anyway, it just creates more enemies. There is also the legitimacy problem: because we are a foreign occupier, many locals who want order nonetheless feel compelled to resist us.

But these local answers do not address the whole problem. It is not only "over there" where the state no longer brings order. In developed countries, including Britain and the United States, the state has also broken its contract. It no longer effectively provides order on its home soil. In Britain as in the United States, one of the fastest-growing industries is private security. Gated communities are the new castles. My own office on Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C., is in an area plagued by high levels of crime. The city that wants to rule the world cannot maintain order one thousand yards from the U.S. Capitol

Building after nightfall.

The state's growing inability to maintain order, in Baghdad or in Washington, is a primary cause of its intensifying crisis of legitimacy. The remedy is not to be found in new techniques for our troops to use in Iraq or Haiti, or for police to use here at home. In the end, it requires not just new people at the head of the state, but a different kind of people, people who genuinely see themselves as servants of the state, not as racketeers gratifying their own vast egos and enriching themselves, their families and their supporters. That, unfortunately, is a tall order, in Haiti, in Iraq or in Washington.

*March 11, 2004*

# Successful Strategic Bombing

In one of history's shortest and most successful strategic bombing campaigns, Islamic 4th Generation forces have brought about regime change in Spain. The conservative Popular Party, which had allied itself closely with American President George W. Bush and sent Spanish troops to Iraq, was badly defeated in Spain's national election following last week's bombings on Spanish commuter trains. As one Popular Party MP said to the Washington Post, "The terrorists have killed 200 people and defeated the government—they have achieved all their objectives." The new Spanish government will be headed by the Socialist Party, which has promised to pull the Spanish army out of Iraq, withdraw from the U.S.-British axis and realign Madrid with Paris, Berlin and Moscow.

How could a strategic bombing campaign waged with a handful of explosives-filled backpacks attain such dramatic results when strategic bombing by fleets of aircraft has usually failed? The answer lies not in the purely military sphere but in the larger field of politics, where Spain's Popular Party government had left itself extraordinarily vulnerable.

The Popular Party's error was trying to wage a cabinet war typical of the 18th century under modern conditions. In terms of national interests, Spain had nothing at stake in America's war with Iraq. Polls indicated that the Spanish people were strongly opposed to sending the tercios to Iraq, by as much as 90 percent. But the Popular Party's Prime Minister, Jose Maria Aznar, saw a chance to get his name up in lights. And he did, with frequent invitations to the White House and even President Bush's Texas ranch. He felt like one of the big boys, and the price seemed small—a few dead Spanish soldiers. Like Bush and Blair, he assumed that war could be a one-way street where only the enemy

suffered.

And now he's out in the cold, his party defeated in an election the polls said it would handily win. The Madrid bombings brought the war home to Spanish soil, which suddenly made Spain's participation in it issue number one. Why was Spain in Iraq? The government had no answer, because there really was none.

Spain is not the only country whose government is playing the game of cabinet war. Britain's involvement in Iraq is a cabinet war. So for that matter is America's; Iraq had no weapons of mass destruction, Saddam was not working with America's real 4th Generation enemies and the United States had no vital national interests at stake. All over Europe, countries are reforming their militaries to prepare them for cabinet wars, wars in far-off lands where the key quality is rapid deployment. Nations such as Norway have troops fighting in places like Afghanistan.

The whole notion that the 21st century can suddenly revert to the 18th and governments can fight wars in which the people and vital national interests are not involved is absurd. That is the real lesson of the Spanish election. War is no longer a game of thrones. The people are involved, and 4th Generation opponents know how to make sure they are intensely involved, by bringing the war home to them.

*The Washington Times* quoted a Pentagon official as saying of the Spanish election, "This was a big defeat for us. al-Qaeda caused a regime change better than we did in Baghdad. No cost." That is exactly correct. Using the simplest of technologies, al-Qaeda or whatever 4th Generation organization did it undertook a strategic bombing campaign of unprecedented effectiveness. Their backpacks outperformed our B-2 bombers.

But if al-Qaeda bowled the ball, the pins were set up by the fools in Washington, London and Madrid who believe they can wage 18th century cabinet wars in an all-too-democratic 21st century.

*March 18, 2004*

# Decentralized Non-State War

An article in the Friday, March 29 *Washington Post* pointed to the long-expected opening of Phase III of America's war with Iraq. Phase I was the jousting contest, the formal war between America's and Iraq's armies that ended with the fall of Baghdad. Phase II was the guerilla-style war of national liberation waged by the Ba'ath Party. Phase III, which is likely to prove the decisive phase, is true 4th Generation war, war waged by a wide variety of non-state Iraqi and other Islamic forces for objectives and motives that reach far beyond politics.

The Post article, "Iraq Attacks Blamed on Islamic Extremists", contains the following revealing paragraph:

In the intelligence operations room at the 1st Armored Division's headquarters in Baghdad, wall-mounted charts identifying and linking insurgents depict the changing battlefield. Last fall the organizational chart of Ba'athist fighters and leaders stretched for 10 feet, while charts listing known Islamic radicals took up a few pieces of paper. Now, the chart of Iraqi religious extremists dominates the room, while the poster depicting Ba'athist activity has shrunk to half of its previous size.

The article goes on to quote a U.S. intelligence officer, "There is no single organization that's behind all this. It's far more decentralized than that."

Welcome to Phase III. The remaining Ba'athists will of course continue their war of national liberation, and 4th Generation elements have been active from the outset. But the situation map in the 1st Armored Division's headquarters reveals the tipping point: 4th Generation war is now the dominant form of war against the Americans

in Iraq.

What are the implications of Phase III for America's attempts to create a stable, democratic Iraq? It is safe to say that they are not favorable. First, it means that the task of recreating a real, functioning Iraqi state — not just a government of Quislings living under American protection in the Green Zone — has gotten more difficult. 4th Generation war represents a quantum move away from the state compared to Phase II, where the Ba'athists were fighting to recreate a state under their domination. The fractioning process will continue and accelerate, creating more and more resistance groups, each with its own agenda. The defeat of one means nothing in terms of the defeat of others. There is no center to strike at, no hinge that collapses the enemy as a whole, and no way to operationalize the conflict. We are forced into a war of attrition against an enemy who outnumbers us and is far better able to take casualties and still continue the fight.

We will also find that we have no enemy we can talk to and nothing to talk about. Since we—but not our enemies—seek closure, that is a great disadvantage. Ending a war, unless it is a war of pure annihilation, means talking to the enemy and reaching some kind of mutually acceptable settlement. When the enemy is not one but a large and growing number of independent elements, talking is pointless because any agreement only ends the war with a single faction. When the enemy's motivation is not politics but religion, there is also nothing to talk about, unless it is our conversion to Islam. Putting these two together, the result is war without end—or, realistically, an American withdrawal that will also be an American defeat.

Finally, the way the war is fought will gradually change its character. 4th Generation forces, like the Ba'ath, will fight a guerilla war. But religious motivation will gradually introduce new elements. We have already seen one: suicide bombers. We will start to see others: women and children taking active roles, riots where the crowds force Coalition forces to fire on the people and create massacres, treachery



by Iraqis who we think are friends (we are already seeing this among the Iraqi police), and finally an Iraqi intifada, where everyone just piles on. That could happen as early as this summer, at the rate things seem to be going. If it does, American forces will have little choice but to get out of Iraq as best they can.

Nor is it just in Iraq that American troops are now facing 4th Generation war. They have their hands full of it in Afghanistan, in Pakistan by proxy, in Haiti, and in Kosovo. So long as America continues on the strategic offensive, intervening all over the world, the list will grow. In each case, the root problem will be the same: the disintegration of the local state. And in each case, the attempt to recreate a state by sending in American armed forces will fail.

As Clausewitz said, "it is asking too much when a state's integrity must be maintained entirely by others."

*March 23, 2004*

# The Battle That Wasn't

About two weeks ago, the world's attention suddenly turned to a dramatic battle in Pakistan. The Pakistani Army, we were told, had trapped a large force of al-Qaeda, including a high-value target, possibly Ayman Zawahiri. The Pakis brought in artillery and air power. The fate of the al-Qaeda fighters was sealed.

Then the whole thing evaporated into thin air. First, Zawahiri wasn't there. Then no other high-value target was there either. The Pakistani Army invited local tribal elders to mediate, declaring a cease-fire while they did so—not the sort of thing you do when you are winning. Pakistani Army units elsewhere in the tribal territories came under attack. Finally the whole business just dropped out of sight, ending not with a bang but a whimper.

What really happened? At this point, if anyone knows they are not telling. But that is not the important question. The important question is, what didn't happen?

What did not happen is that a force of irregulars—maybe al-Qaeda, maybe Taliban, certainly local tribal fighters—was trapped by a state military and beaten. That is a very significant non-event. Normally, non-state irregulars cannot stand against state armed forces. Once they are located and pinned down, the state armed forces can use their vastly superior firepower to win an easy and guaranteed victory. They just keep up the bombardment until those left alive have little if any fight left in them. Remember, these irregulars are not exactly the German Army at the Somme.

Here, the firepower was employed. The Pakistani Army used both artillery and attack helicopters. But it did not win. If it had won, you can be certain Islamabad would be trumpeting the victory. The fact that

the battle became a non-event says that the forces of the state of Pakistan did not win.

What does this failure mean? The Washington Post quoted a retired Pakistani Army general as saying, “The state has to win this battle or its credibility will be destroyed.” I suspect the general is correct. In fact, I will go further: I think the failure of the Pakistani Army to win this battle marks the beginning of the end for Pakistan's current President, General Musharraf. The defensive victory of the tribal fighters will turn into an offensive victory, giving courage and a sense of inevitable victory to Musharraf's enemies while causing near-revolt in Musharraf's base, the army itself. Before the year is out, I suspect we will see General Musharraf's head impaled on a pike and surging Pashtun crowds proclaiming Osama as their leader.

At that point the American strategic failures that are the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan will have transformed themselves into an American strategic disaster. As I have said before in *On War*, Iraq and Afghanistan themselves mean little. The centers of gravity in this war are Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Egypt. What is important about the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan is how they affect these other countries and their pro-American governments.

Our friends in the Middle East have warned us that the spillover effects are not likely to be positive. That has now proven to be the case. The Pakistani Army went into the Tribal Territories—something it has long known is not a good idea—under American pressure, as part of the current American big push in Afghanistan. In effect, the American generals in command in Afghanistan made the typical German mistake: they sacrificed the strategic situation to benefit their operational plan. As did the Germans, we will find that blunder tends to win the campaign at the price of losing the war.

Meanwhile, adding insult to injury, the putative first target in this failed operation, al-Qaeda's Mr. Zawahiri, issued an audiotape in which he cocked a snook at General Musharraf, damned him for sending his

“miserable” army against the tribesmen and called on the humiliated Pakistani Army to revolt. I suspect the bad fairy of militant Islam will grant him that wish. al-Qaeda's strategic victory in Spain will be followed by a vastly more significant strategic victory in Pakistan, while the U.S. contents itself with bombing an occasional Afghan orphanage from 20,000 feet.

Am I the only one who can see where this is all going? But perhaps it helps to be a German military historian...

*March 30, 2004*

## Your Fish, Sir

In the twelve-course meal that is the war in Iraq, America has just been served the first entree. The fight with Iraq's state armed forces was merely the *amuse-bouche*. The subsequent guerilla war with the Ba'ath, as distasteful as we found it, was still just the appetizer. Over the past two weeks, we have been presented with the first of the main courses, 4th Generation war waged for religion. If, as is traditional, this is the fish course, our reaction suggests it is flounder.

Frankly, I was surprised how quickly this dish arrived. It seems Mohammed's kitchen is working rather more speedily than usual. While a broadening and intensifying of the anti-American resistance was inevitable, I did not think it would reach its present intensity until this summer. The fact that it has erupted so early has political as well as military implications. The full scope of our disaster in Syracuse—er, sorry, Iraq—may be evident before the party conventions, as well as prior to the fall election. Might Bush do an LBJ and choose not to run? Will a Kerry who voted for the war be a credible nominee? Military disaster can displace all sorts of certainties.

It is not yet a disaster, some may say. On the tactical level, that is true, although it may not be true much longer. But on the strategic level it is not just one disaster, it is four:

- The pretense that we came to liberate the Iraqi people and not as conquerors is no longer credible. Faced with a popular uprising, we effectively declared war on the people of Iraq. The overall American commander, General Abizaid, “gave a stark warning for the Iraqi fighters, from the minority Sunni as well as the majority

Shi'ite populations,” according to the Cleveland Plain Dealer.

“‘First, we are going to win,’ Abizaid said, seated at a table in a marbled palace hall...’Secondly, everyone needs to understand that there is no more powerful force assembled on Earth than this military force in this country...’” That is the language of conquest, not liberation, and it destroys the legitimacy of America's presence in Iraq, both locally and around the world.

- We have now picked a fight with the Shi'ites, who control our lines of communication and who make up a majority of the Iraqi population. I thought that even the Valley of the Blind that is the CPA would have better sense than to make this final, fatal strategic blunder, but it seems they can always find a new ditch to stumble into. We did it over the utterly trivial matter of Muqtada al-Sadr's newspaper printing lies—this from an American administration that long ago won the Order of Pinocchio, First Class, with Oak Leaves, Swords and Diamonds. While many Iraqi Shi'ites don't much like al-Sadr, they like seeing Americans kill fellow Shi'ites even less.
- The Marines threw away the opportunity to de-escalate the fighting with the Sunnis in Fallujah and instead have raised the intensity of anti-Americanism there. For months, the Marines trained for de-escalation. But because of one minor incident of barely tactical importance, the killing of four American contractors, the de-escalation strategy was thrown out the window and replaced by an all-out assault on an Iraqi city. The Marines may have been given no choice by the White House, but it also looks as if their own training did not go very deep; the *Plain Dealer* quoted a Marine battalion commander in Fallujah as saying, “What is coming is the destruction of anti-coalition forces in Fallujah. They have two choices: Submit or die.” That is hardly the language of de-escalation.
- Finally, our whole “say good-bye at the end of June” strategy depends on the reliability of the Iraqi security forces we have been

busy creating. But when faced with fighting their own people on behalf of Christian foreigners, most of them went over or went home. This was utterly predictable, but its effect is to leave us without any exit strategy at all.

So what comes next? The current violence may follow a sine wave, ebbing and then flowing again, with the whole curve gradually trending up. Or, it may rise in a linear, accelerating curve, in which case we will soon be driven out of Iraq, possibly in a full-scale *saive que peut* rout. The former appears more likely, but it still leads to the same ending, if taking a bit more time to get there.

Unlike traditional twelve-course dinners, this one does not finish with a dessert or a savoury. It ends, to borrow one of John Boyd's favorite phrases, with the Coalition getting the whole enchilada right up the poopchute. You cannot get anything you want at Mohammed's restaurant.

*April 15, 2004*

# Why We Get It Wrong

One of the few consistencies of the war in Iraq is America's ability to make the wrong choices. From starting the war in the first place through outlawing the Ba'ath and sending the Iraqi army home to assaulting Fallujah and declaring war on Shi'ite militia leader Muqtada al-Sadr, we repeatedly get it wrong. Such consistency raises a question: can we identify a single factor that consistently leads us in the wrong direction?

I think we can. That is not to say other factors are not also in play. But one wrong notion does appear to underlie many of our blunders. That is the belief that in this war, the U.S. military is the strongest player.

We hear this at every level from the rifle squad to the White House. In Fallujah, Marine privates and sergeants want to finish the job of taking the city, with no doubt whatsoever that they can. In Baghdad, spokesmen for the CPA regularly trumpet the line that no Iraqi fighters can hope to stand up to the US military. Washington casts a broader net, boasting that the American military can defeat any enemy, anywhere. The bragging and self-congratulation reach the point where, as Oscar Wilde might have said, it is worse than untrue; it is in bad taste.

In fact, in Iraq and in 4th Generation war elsewhere, we are the weaker party. The most important reason this is so is time.

For every other party, the distinguishing characteristic of the American intervention force is that it, and it alone, will go away. At some point, sooner or later, we will go home. Everyone else stays, because they live there.



This has many implications, none of them good from our perspective. Local allies know they will at some time face their local enemies without us there to support them. French collaborators with the Germans, and there were many, can tell us what happens then. Local enemies know they can outlast us. Neutrals make their calculations on the same basis; as my neighbor back in Cleveland said, one of the Arabs' few military virtues is that they are always on the winning side.

All our technology, all our training, all our superiority in techniques, like being able to hit what we shoot at, put together are less powerful than the fact that time is against us. More, we tend to accelerate the time disadvantage. American election cycles play a role here; clearly, that is what lies behind the June 30 deadline for handing Iraq over to some kind of Iraqi government. So does a central feature of American culture, the desire for quick results and closure. Whether we are talking about wars or diets, Americans want action now and results fast. In places like Fallujah, that leads us to prefer assaults to talks. Our opponents, in contrast, have all the time in the world—and in the next world for that matter.

Time is not the only factor that renders us the weaker party. So does our lack of understanding of local cultures and languages. So also do our reliance on massive firepower, our dependence on a secure logistics train where we are now experiencing vulnerability in Iraq as our supply lines are being cut, our insistence on living apart from and much better than the local population. But time still overshadows all of these. Worse, we can do nothing about it, unless, like the Romans, we plan to stay for three hundred years.

Until we accept the counterintuitive fact that in 4th Generation interventions we are and always will be the weaker party, our decisions will continue to be consistently wrong. The decisions will be wrong because the assumption that lies behind them is wrong. We will remain trapped by our own false pride.

What if we do come to understand our own inherent weakness in

places like Iraq? Might we then come up with some more productive approaches? Well, the Byzantines might have something to teach us on that score. Greek fire notwithstanding, what kept the Eastern Roman Empire alive for a thousand years after Rome fell was knowing how to play weak hands brilliantly.

*April 22, 2004*

## Back From the Brink

Last week, the Americans in Iraq stood on the brink of not one but three cliffs. Now, in what appears to be a sudden attack of sanity, they have pulled back from the edge of two.

The first was the American threat to assault the holy Shi'ite city of Najaf in order to capture or kill militia leader Muqtada al-Sadr. When the most powerful man in Iraq, Ayatollah Sistani, said "Don't do that," the CPA in Baghdad had the good sense to listen. Now it appears we may hand off the Coalition military presence in Najaf from the wisely-departing Spaniards to the Brits, rather than keeping American troops camped just outside the city gates. If that happens, it would be another smart move on our part, as the British are rather better at dealing with the natives than we are. It would be comforting to have adults in charge, at least at Najaf.

The second precipice was the plan to renew the assault on Fallujah. At the end of last week, the Marines were making no secret of their preparations to go back on the offensive and take the whole city, cost what that may. The U.S. military's spokesman in Baghdad, Army Brigadier General Mark "Kermit" Kimmett, sounded a bit like old Saddam himself when he told *The Washington Post* on April 24, "Whether [an opponent] is somebody who is trying to defend their city...or somebody who's just out to kill an American, both of those will find the full force of the United States Marine Corps and the coalition brought down on them." That sounds like "Kill 'em all and let God sort 'em out", which is not entirely consistent with liberation.

Suddenly, and again wisely, we have backed off. Instead of threatening to turn Fallujah into Stalingrad, we are once more talking to Iraqi leaders in the city and proposing joint patrols. One of the Marines'

commanders, General Mattis, was quoted in the April 26 *Post* saying, “We didn't come here to fight.” That is how the Marines trained to handle Fallujah, by de-escalation. Finally, it looks as if the CPA may allow them to do it.

In both Najaf and Fallujah, the threat is not what happens in the city. It is what happens in the rest of Iraq, and the rest of the world, if we continue to play the bully. Fallujah has already become for many Iraqis what the Alamo is for Texans. Shi'ites have joined Sunnis in its defense. *The Sunday New York Times* quoted a spokesman for the Iraqi Muslim Clerics Association saying, “We're living in beautiful days of solidarity between people. We need to thank our enemy, the Americans. They helped us carry out our dream.” That dream is our nightmare, an intifada against the occupation throughout Arab Iraq. When American actions help bring that about, it is time for a change of course.

While we have stepped back from two brinks, we remain poised on a third. That is the current plan to turn Iraq over on June 30 to an Iraqi government that is sovereign in name only. According to the April 26 *Washington Post*, “US officials made clear last week that the transitional government would have limited powers, with no authority to write new laws and no control over US military forces that would continue to operate in Iraq.” Any government that cannot control foreign forces operating on its soil is not sovereign. Worse, a situation where US forces continue to police Iraq holds America down in its present quagmire, with violence and casualties rising.

There are two ways America can leave Iraq. The first is at the request of a genuinely sovereign Iraqi government. What America needs is for the Iraqi government that takes over at the end of June to ask us to reduce our troop numbers, move the troops that remain far away from Iraqi population centers and then, after an interval measured in months, not years, leave. That is the best outcome we can hope for, although it means the end of the neocon dream of an Iraq that is a new satellite of both America and Israel.

The second way the war in Iraq can end is with the Americans and other Coalition forces driven out. Last Friday, President George W. Bush said, "America will never be run out of Iraq by a bunch of thugs and killers." But that is exactly what will happen if we continue fighting the Iraqi people. It is to avoid that end to the war that we must not attack Fallujah, Najaf, or any other Iraqi city that dares to want its freedom from a now widely-hated occupation.

Will our present sanity attack continue, allowing the U.N. to install a genuinely sovereign Iraqi government on June 30 and thereby give us a graceful way out? Or will we revert to type, renew the assault on Fallujah, perhaps try an Israeli-style assassination-by-Apache of Muqtada al-Sadr and demand that we continue to control Iraq after the end of June?

A bon mot from the summer of 1914 again comes to mind: In Berlin, the situation is serious but not hopeless; in Vienna, it is hopeless but not serious. At the moment, some of our commanders in Iraq are playing Berlin, while George W. sounds like Conrad von Hoetzendorf. Which will prevail? The next week may tell us.

*April 28, 2004*

# Iraq's WMD Factory

As America's civilian and military high command comes unglued, American actions in Iraq grow more inchoate. The Marines did what needed to be done in Fallujah, turning the place over to one of Saddam's generals who might be able to run it, mainly because he comes from the tribe that has always run it. The pathetic CPA, aka the Emerald City, bleated that they had not vetted him and named another Iraqi general in his place, forgetting that anyone the Americans vet is thereby labeled a collaborator. We continue to encircle Najaf, which is dumb, and the Iraqi resistance has again cut the road from Baghdad to the airport, which is dangerous. One suspects that a fly on the wall in meetings in the White House or in Baghdad's Green Zone thinks it has wandered into a low-budget production of Marat-Sade.

But what of the world beyond Iraq? That is where one sees the full effect of Iraq's factory of WMDs—Wars of Mass Destruction. The State Department has just told all Americans to leave Saudi Arabia, while they can still get out alive. Over a hundred people are dead in Thailand, where local Islamics are waging a new jihad. Moslems and Christians are going at it again in Indonesia and Nigeria. The Israelis, beaten in Gaza as they were beaten in Lebanon, find it impossible to move either forward or back. Pakistan, whose army got its ass handed to it by tribesmen on the old Northwest Frontier, is turning a deaf ear to increasingly desperate demands from America's generals in Afghanistan for “tough action”. President Mubarak of Egypt warns from his tottering throne that America has never been so hated in the Middle East as it is now.

Each day's newspapers make the same point: in the misnamed “War on Terror”, America is losing and losing badly. Osama & Company are having a banner year. The reason is not any brilliance on

their part, but gross buffoonery on ours. Specifically, the invasion and occupation of Iraq by America have created the greatest recruiting drive in history—for the other side.

Not content with so modest an achievement, the Bush administration has tossed its expensive cigar into the powder magazine by embracing Israel the way Russia once embraced Serbia. Not only did Bush endorse Mr. Sharon's de facto annexation of much of the West Bank, when Sharon's own party voted against him on Gaza and thus gave Bush a way out, he reiterated his support of Likud and its policies. Apparently, not even the gods' rarest gift, a golden bridge across which to retreat from a blunder, is of interest to an administration that has sealed itself off from reality.

It is however, somewhat unfair to blame the whole bloody mess on George II. The entire Establishment is in this together. All Mr. Kerry can do is say “stay the course”. Congress is silent on the whole business; few in the media have the courage to state the obvious, which is that we need to bring the troops home, now. Only old Ralph Nader, playing the crocodile to Kerry's Captain Hook, has the guts to call for an American withdrawal from Iraq. In an election where the choice may be between Tweedledumb and Tweedlephony, Ralph is starting to look pretty good, even to Russell Kirk conservatives like myself.

When the full scope of America's defeat in the Wars of Mass Destruction ignited by Iraq becomes apparent, the political result is likely to go far beyond any election, especially an election in America's one-party Republicrat state where you get two candidates, but they both represent the same thing. We are likely to see that interesting time known by historians as a change of dynasty, where a defective and corrupt establishment is all swept away.

Now that could be fun to watch.

*May 6, 2004*





## **Work for the *Grossgeneralstab***

In 1914, Kaiser Wilhelm II, whom history has underrated, told his Chief of the General Staff, von Moltke the Less, that he wanted to remain on the defensive in the West and take the offensive in the East, against Russia. Such a reversal of the Schlieffen Plan would probably have won the war for Germany. France would have bled to death throwing bodies against bullets in Elsass and Lothringen, England would have remained neutral, at least for a while, and Russia would have gone under in a couple years. Unfortunately for Germany and for history, von Moltke Jr. collapsed in a fit of nerves and said it couldn't be done.

In fact, the plans for just such a campaign were in the file. They were there because it was the job of the General Staff to make plans for every contingency.

The disastrous course of America's war in Iraq has created a new task for the Great General Staff, in the form of more contingency planning. America needs to make sure it has a plan in the file for a fighting withdrawal from Iraq.

It is still possible the end may not come this way. We may still manage a shaky hand-off to a U.N.-designated Iraqi government, and that government might last long enough for us to withdraw with some shreds of dignity. George W. might awake some morning a new man, announce he was swindled, sack the neocons and bring in someone like Marine Corps General Tony Zinni, who opposed the war all along, to handle our disengagement. The Archangel Michael might appear over Mecca and convert all the Mohammedans to Christianity.

But the growing probability is that we will be driven out of Iraq by a general uprising, an intifada in which every American will be the

target of every Iraqi and our boys (and, in America's Neo-Model Army, girls) will have to fight their way out in a scene like that which faced Gordon in the Sudan. It is not a pleasant prospect. It means thousands, perhaps tens of thousands, of American and Coalition casualties, many times more Iraqi casualties, and one of history's more memorable defeats, right up there with Syracuse, Waterloo and Stalingrad. The aftershocks will be severe, as regimes tumble from Pakistan through the Persian Gulf and Egypt to Britain and America itself. You can look forward to seeing the Dow at 3,000, if not 300.

Facing such a contingency, we can have only one priority: the lives of our troops. Their chances of making it out alive will be far greater if we have done some planning beforehand. Our great vulnerability is that our lines of supply, communication and retreat are long, and they almost all run through hostile territory. Most lead through southern Iraq to Kuwait, and that is not likely to be a comfortable way out. North through the Kurds to Turkey may be the best bet, although as Xenophon can attest, retreating with a beaten army through Kurd country is no picnic. West lies Syria, no friend, and Jordan, which may itself be convulsed.

One great snare and delusion lies in our path: the notion that we can always go by air. Already the Air Force is saying that if the southern supply lines are cut, as they were in the first half of April, air transport can fill the gap. Right, just as Goering promised the troops in Stalingrad. Not only does that assume American and coalition troops can hold the airports, it assumes they can get to the airports, which at the moment is problematic just between Baghdad and its airport. Worse, coups in places such as Saudi Arabia could see Islamic-flown F-15s and F-16s shooting down American C-5s and C-17s.

A 2nd Generation military such as America's does not improvise well under time pressure, at least at the higher levels, where vast staffs drilled to *Kadavergehorsamkeit* in the sacred staff planning process are slaves to procedure. The neocons in the Bush administration and their

toadies in the Pentagon will no doubt howl if the military starts contingency planning for a forced withdrawal. Listen up, guys: do it anyway. You don't have to tell them. Just make sure the plan is in the file.

*May 13, 2004*

# Our Psyops Disasters

I recently received an invitation to speak at a conference at Ft. Bragg on psychological operations, or psyops. Regrettably, a schedule conflict prevented me from accepting, but the invitation got me thinking: what are psyops in 4th Generation war?

It is clear what they are not: leaflets saying, “No one can hope to fight the American military, surrender now,” or “We are here to liberate you.” After the Iraq debacle, those messages will be met with open derision. The only way such leaflets are likely to be useful is if they are printed on very soft paper.

Colonel John Boyd said that the greatest weakness a person or a nation can have at the highest level of war, the moral level, is a contradiction between what they say and what they do. From that I think follows the basic definition of psyops in 4th Generation war: psyops are not what you say but what you do.

If we look at the war in Iraq through that lens, we quickly see a number of psyops we could have undertaken, but did not. For example, what if instead locating the CPA in Saddam's old palace in Baghdad and putting Iraqi prisoners in his notorious Abu Ghraib prison, we had located the CPA in Abu Ghraib and put the prisoners in Saddam's palace? That would have sent a powerful message.

What if, when we get in a firefight and Iraqis are killed, General Kimmitt the Frog, our military spokesman in Baghdad, announced that with regret instead of in triumph? We could use every engagement as a chance to reiterate the message, “We did not come here to fight.” That message would be all the more powerful if we treated Iraqi wounded the same way as American wounded, offered American military honors to their dead and sent any prisoners home, quickly, with a wad of cash

in their pockets.

Years ago, my father, David Lind, whose career was in advertising, said, "If the day World War II ended, Stalin had sent all his German prisoners home, giving them a big box of food for their families and a wallet full of Reichsmarks, the Communists would have taken all of Western Europe." He may have been right.

In Fallujah, the Marines just showed a brilliant appreciation of psyops in 4GW. How? They let the Iraqis win. At the tactical level, the Marines probably could have taken Fallujah, although the result would have been a strategic disaster. Instead, by pulling back and letting the Iraqis claim victory, they gave Iraqi forces of order inside the city the self-respect they needed to work with us. Washington and the CPA seem to define liberation as beating the Iraqis to a pulp, then handing them their freedom like a gift from a master to a slave. In societies where honor, dignity, and manliness are still important virtues, that can never work. But losing to win sometimes can.

The CPA's complete inability to appreciate psyops in 4GW was revealed in a recent episode that suggested Laurel and Hardy are in command. It seems our Boys in Baghdad decided the new Iraq needed a new flag. Never mind that the new flag suggested Iraq is still a province of the Ottoman Empire and also conveniently included the same shade of blue found on the Israeli flag. What giving any new flag to Iraq's Quisling government in Baghdad really did was give the Iraqi resistance something it badly needed, its own flag, in the form of the old Iraqi flag. Couldn't anybody over there see that coming?

Perhaps our most disastrous failure beyond Abu Ghraib to realize that psyops are what we do, not what we say, is our ongoing fight with the Mahdi Army of Muqtada al-Sadr. At the beginning of April, Sadr had almost no support in the Shi'ite community outside Baghdad's Sadr City, while Ayatollah Sistani, who has passively cooperated with the occupation, had overwhelming support. Now, thanks to our attacks on Sadr and his militia, polls taken in Iraq show Sadr with more than 30

percent support among Shi'ites while Sistani has slipped to just over 50 percent. The U.S. Army has been Sadr's best publicity agent. Maybe it should send him a bill.

Some of our psyops people probably understand all this. Unfortunately, the people above them, in Iraq and in Washington, appear to grasp none of it. The end result is that, regardless of who wins the firefights, our enemies win one psychological victory after another. In a type of war where the moral and mental levels far outweigh the physical level, it is not hard to see where that road ends.

*May 26, 2004*

## Two Marine Corps

Since sometime before Caesar was a lance corporal, the United States Marine Corps' greatest fear has been becoming a second land army. It has long believed that if the country perceived it had two armies, it would require one to go away, and that one would be the Marine Corps. It is therefore ironic that the United States now finds itself with not one, but two Marine Corps, and the final result may be that both disappear.

Almost any Marine knows the two Marine Corps of which I speak. One is the heir of the maneuver warfare movement of the 1970s and 80s, of Al Gray and *Warfighting*, of free play training, officer education focused on how to think, not what to do, of the belief that the highest goal of all Marines is winning in combat with the smallest possible losses. This is the Marine Corps that led the advance to Baghdad in the first phase of the ongoing war in Iraq. It is also the Marine Corps that recently fought smart in Fallujah by not taking the city.

The other Marine Corps' highest goal is programs, money and bureaucratic success inside the Beltway. Its priorities are absurdities such as the MV-22 “Albatross” and reviving the 1990s “Sea Worm” project under the label “distributed operations”, which are referred to openly at Quantico as putting lipstick on a pig. This Marine Corps is anti-intellectual, sees the 1st Generation culture of order as sacred, believes that sufficient rank justifies any idiot and regards politics, not combat, as the real world.

Regrettably, in the war between these two Marine Corps, the second one is winning. I recently encountered a horrifying example of its success at the Marine Corps Command & Staff School at Quantico. At the end of this academic year, the Command & Staff faculty simply

got rid of 250 copies of Martin van Creveld's superb book, *Fighting Power*. This book, which lays out the fundamental difference between the 2nd Generation U.S. Army in World War II and the 3rd Generation Wehrmacht, is one of the seven books of the 4GW Canon, the readings that take you from the 1st Generation of modern war into the 4th. It should be required reading for every Marine Corps and Army officer.

When I asked someone associated with Command & Staff how such a thing could be done, he replied that the faculty has decided it “doesn't like” van Creveld. This is similar to a band of Hottentots deciding they “don't like” Queen Victoria. Martin van Creveld is perhaps the most perceptive military historian now writing. But in the end, the books went; future generations of students at Command & Staff won't have them.

A friend who attended the last Marine Corps General Officers' conference reported the same division between the two Marine Corps. The officers from the field, he said, had completely different concerns from those stationed in Washington. They were ships passing in the night. But it is the interests of the Washington Marine Corps, not those in the field, that determine Marine Corps policy. And that policy is affected little, if at all, by the two wars in which Marines are now fighting.

Throughout my years as a Senate staffer, the Marine Corps' clout on Capitol Hill was envied by the other services. The Marine Corps then had little money and not much interest in programs. Its message to Congress and to the American public was, “We're not like the other services. We aren't about money and stuff. We're about war.” That message brought the Corps unrivalled public and political support.

In the mid-1990s, the Marine Corps changed its message and, without realizing what it was doing, abandoned its successful grand strategy for survival. The new message became, “We are just like the other services. We too are now about money and programs.” And that new message is what now dominates Headquarters Marine Corps and



Quantico. Thinking about war is out; money and stuff is in. In effect, the Marine Corps has sat down at the highest-stakes poker game in the world, American defense politics, with 25 cents in its pocket. It simply cannot compete with the Army, Navy or Air Force at buying Congressional and public support. But it is determined to try.

If the dumb and increasingly corrupt Washington Marine Corps finally triumphs over the smart *Warfighting* Marine Corps, both will disappear in the end. And that will be a shame, because the smart Marine Corps, Al Gray's Marine Corps, really had something going. It was on its way to becoming the first American 3rd Generation armed service.

*June 5, 2004*

# The Four Generations of Modern War

I previously made a reference the 4GW Canon, the seven books which, if read in the correct order, take the reader from the 1st Generation of modern war through the 2nd and 3rd Generations and into the 4th Generation. I have received a number of requests for a description both of the canon and of the Four Generations, so I shall begin with a description of the latter.

The 1st Generation of modern war began with the Peace of Westphalia in 1648, which ended the Thirty Years War. It also marked the state's assumption of a monopoly on war; thereafter, war became something waged by states, for *raison d'etat*, with state armies and navies doing the fighting. The 1st Generation ran from 1648 to about the time of the American Civil War, and it was characterized, on the whole, by a battlefield of order. The battlefield of order created a military culture of order, which endures to this day.

And there's the rub. For around the middle of the 19th century, the battlefield of order began to break down. Ever since, state militaries have had to grapple with a growing contradiction between their internal culture of order and the external reality of an increasingly disordered battlefield.

The 2nd and 3rd Generations represent two different approaches to that problem. 2nd Generation war was developed by the French Army during and after World War I, and is best summed up with the French saying, "The artillery conquers, the infantry occupies." Also known as firepower/attrition warfare, 2nd Generation war maintained the 1st Generation culture of order. Decision-making was centralized and hierarchical; orders were detailed and controlling, to permit synchronization of all arms; time was not particularly important; and

success was measured by comparative body counts. 2nd Generation armed forces focus inward on methods, processes and procedures, prize obedience over initiative (because initiative and synchronization are not compatible) and depend on imposed discipline. The American Army and Marine Corps learned 2nd Generation war from the French during the First World War and still practice it today, with exceptions based on individual commanders.

3rd Generation war, also known as maneuver warfare, was developed by the German Army in World War I; by 1918, Blitzkrieg was conceptually complete, lacking only the tanks necessary for operational mobility. The Prussian/German roots of 3rd Generation war go back earlier, to the Scharnhorst reforms that followed Prussia's defeat by Napoleon. One of those reforms changed what was required of a Prussian officer; instead of being responsible for obeying orders, he became responsible for getting the result the situation required regardless of orders. For example, in 19th century war games, it was common for junior Prussian officers to be given problems that could only be solved by disobeying orders. This in turn created a military culture that was focused outward, on the enemy, the situation and the result the situation demanded instead of inward on rules, orders and processes. In effect, Prussia had broken with the 1st Generation culture of order.

The new 3rd Generation tactics developed by the Germans in World War I were the first non-linear tactics. On the defense, the objective became sucking the enemy in, then cutting him off, rather than holding a line. On the offensive, the attack flowed like water through the enemy's defenses, always seeking the weakest point to penetrate, then rolling him up from his own rear forward. Operationally as well as tactically the goal was usually encirclement. Speed replaced firepower as the most important tool, and dislocation, mental as well as physical, was more important than attrition. Culturally, not only was the German Army outward-focused, it prized initiative over obedience

and it depended on self-discipline rather than imposed discipline.

Much of the American military reform movement of the 1970s, 80s and early 90s was an attempt to move the American armed forces from the 2nd to the 3rd Generation. While the Marine Corps formally adopted maneuver warfare as doctrine in the 1990s, most of what the Marine Corps does still remains 2nd Generation. The other American services remain almost wholly 2nd Generation, to the frustration of many junior officers.

4th Generation war is the greatest change since the Peace of Westphalia, because it marks the end of the state's monopoly on war. Once again, as before 1648, many different entities, not states, are fighting war. They use many different means, including terrorism and immigration, not just formal armies. Differences between cultures, not just states, become paramount, and other cultures will not fight the way we fight. All over the world, state militaries are fighting non-state opponents, and almost always, the state is losing. State militaries were designed to fight other state militaries like themselves, and against non-state enemies most of their equipment, tactics and training are useless or counterproductive.

*June 11, 2004*

# The 4GW Canon

The previous column laid out the basic framework of the Four Generations of modern war. Here, we pick up with a discussion of the canon, the seven books which, read in the order given, will take the reader from the 1st Generation through the 2nd, the 3rd and on into the 4th. As one Marine Corps captain, an instructor at The Basic School, said, “Unless the guy's a rock, he can't read these books in the right order and not get it.”

The first book in the canon is C.E. White, *The Enlightened Soldier*. This book explains why you are reading all the other books. It is the story of Scharnhorst, the leader of the Prussian military reform movement of the early 1800s, as a military educator. With other young officers, Scharnhorst realized that if the Prussian army, which had changed little since the time of Frederick the Great, fought Napoleon, it would lose and lose badly. Instead of just waiting for it to happen, he put together a group of officers who thought as he did, the Militaerische Gesellschaft, and they worked out a program of reforms for the Prussian army and state. Prussia's defeat at the battle of Jena opened the door to these reforms, which in turn laid the basis for the German army's development of 3rd Generation war in the 19th and early 20th century. When I taught a course on the Four Generations at Quantico a few years ago, my students, Marine captains, said that of all the books in the canon, they liked this one best.

The next book is Robert Doughty, *The Seeds of Disaster*. This is the definitive history of the development of 2nd Generation warfare in the French army during and after World War I. This book is in the canon because we learned modern war from the French, absorbing 2nd Generation war wholesale from them. In 1930, when the U.S. Army wanted a manual on operational art, it just took the French manual on

grand tactics, translated it and issued it as its own. Every American officer to whom I have lent my copy has told me when he returned it, “This is us.” *The Seeds of Disaster* is the only book in the canon that is something of a dull read, but it is essential to understand why the American armed forces act as they do.

The 3rd book, Bruce Gudmundsson's *Stormtroop Tactics*, is the story of the development of 3rd Generation war in the German army in World War I. It is also a book on how to change an army. Twice during World War I, the Germans pulled their army out of the Western Front unit-by-unit and retrained it in radically new tactics. Those new tactics, which are still largely new to American units today (how many American platoon leaders or company commanders have ever directed a three-element assault?), broke the deadlock of the trenches, even if Germany had to wait for the development of the Panzer divisions to turn tactical success into operational victory.

Book four, Martin Samuels's *Command or Control?*, compares British and German tactical development from the late 19th century through World War I. Its value is the clear distinctions it draws between the 2nd and 3rd Generations, distinctions the reader will find useful when looking at the U.S. armed forces today. The British were so firmly attached to the 2nd Generation—at times, even the 1st—that German officers who had served on both fronts in World War I often said British troop handling was even worse than Russian. Bruce Gudmundsson argues that in each generation, one Brit is allowed really to understand the Germans. In our generation, Martin Samuels is that Brit.

The fifth book in the canon is again by Robert Doughty, the head of the History Department at West Point and the best American historian of the modern French army: *The Breaking Point*. This is the story of the battle of Sedan in 1940, where Guderian's Panzers crossed the Meuse and then turned and headed for the English Channel in a brilliant example of operational art. Here, the reader sees the 2nd and 3rd

Generations clash head-on. Why does the 3rd Generation prevail? Because over and over, at decisive moments the 3rd Generation Wehrmacht takes initiative, often led by NCOs in doing so, while the French wait for orders. What the French did was often right, but it was always too late.

The sixth book in the canon is Martin van Creveld's *Fighting Power*, the second-best book by this brilliant Israeli military historian. While *The Breaking Point* contrasts the 2nd and 3rd Generations in combat, *Fighting Power* compares them as institutions. It does so by contrasting the U.S. Army in World War II with the German Wehrmacht. What emerges is a picture of two radically different institutions, each consistent with its doctrine. This book is important because it illustrates why you cannot do what the U.S. military is now attempting, namely combine 3rd Generation, maneuver warfare doctrine with a 2nd Generation, inward-focused, process-ridden, centralized institution. If you are a Marine, the next time the MAGTF Staff Training Program (MSTP) visits your unit, you might want to throw a copy of *Fighting Power* at them—hard.

The seventh and final book in the canon is van Creveld's finest work to date, *The Transformation of War*. Easily the most important book on war written in the last quarter-century, *Transformation* lays out the basis of 4th Generation war, the state's loss of its monopoly on war and on social organization. In the 21st century, as in all centuries up to the rise of the state, many different entities will fight war, for many different reasons, not just *raison d'etat*. Clausewitz's trinity of People, Government and Army vanishes, as the elements disappear or become indistinguishable from one another. Van Creveld's term for what I call 4th Generation war is non-trinitarian warfare. He subsequently wrote another book, *The Rise and Decline of the State*, which lays out the historical basis of the theory in *Transformation*.

These seven books constitute the canon. But there is one book I am tempted to add, for naval audiences: Andrew Gordon's *The Rules of the*

*Game*. The 4GW canon is based on modern land warfare, but the same elements we see in the 1st, 2nd and 3rd Generations also exist in naval warfare, although their development follows different patterns. In the second half of the 18th century, the Royal Navy developed and institutionalized 3rd Generation naval warfare, then lost it again in the 19th century. *The Rules of the Game* explains how and why they lost it. At the heart of the matter lies signaling, and the illusion that advances in signaling permit effective centralization—a point of some relevance today as our military services drown in a tsunami of computers and video screens. It is a point Gordon does not miss.

As I said at the outset, what the 4GW Canon offers is an intellectual framework, a construct the reader can use to make sense of events and discern larger patterns in them. There can, of course, be other frameworks, although I would urge caution toward those based on simple technological determinism. See van Creveld's *Technology and War* concerning that. But without a framework of some sort, both historical and current developments in war tend to appear chaotic. Soldiers as well as scholars need a framework if they are to make sense out of the world around them. The 4GW Canon offers the best framework I know.

*June 16, 2004*



# Spillover

How are the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan going? Perhaps the best way to answer that question is to look at what is happening in Saudi Arabia.

Until about a year ago, Saudi Arabia was one of the safest countries on earth. Crime was rare, and everyone, including Americans, was secure almost anywhere in the kingdom. In a world where the most important distinction will increasingly be that between centers of order and centers of disorder, Saudi Arabia was a center of order.

That is no longer true. War has come to Saudi Arabia, 4th Generation war waged by Islamic non-state forces. Battles are almost a daily occurrence. Foreigners, on whom the Saudi oil industry heavily depends, are frequent targets for assassination. A number of incidents suggest the 4th Generation forces have penetrated Saudi security forces—not surprising in a strict Islamic country where the non-state elements represent an even stricter Islam. They have the moral high ground.

In Washington, the “bouffesphere” whispers nervously about Saudi Arabia's future. It is obvious that the trend-line is not favorable. When will the House of Saud fall? What will replace it? Will the cheap oil on which America depends continue to flow? Schemes abound—send the Marines to secure the oil fields and exporting facilities, impose democracy and feminism on the Saudi monarchy, give Mecca and Medina back to the Hashemites—but the debacle in Iraq effectively makes it impossible for us to act elsewhere. Plus, invading the homeland of Wahhabism would make Iraq seem like a walk in the park.

What Washington cannot understand is that the crumbling of Saudi Arabia is part of the war in Iraq, and that in Afghanistan as well. We

still think of wars as delineated by state boundaries, because we still envision a world made up of states.

Non-state forces such as al-Qaeda use a very different map. Their map has no state boundaries on it; they only think of the dar al-Islam, the Islamic world, and the dar al-Harb, the world of war. For them, our presence in Iraq and Afghanistan is an invasion, not of two countries, but of the dar al-Islam. Their response can come anywhere, with equal validity; to them it is all one battlespace, to use the U.S. military's latest buzzword for battlefield. This raises an interesting historical question: do all failing militaries frequently change their terminology? Their actions in Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, Europe and North America are all one. Reacting to what we do in one state with actions in another is no different from, in conventional war, counterattacking in the south when your opponent attacks in the north. Like the Washington Establishment, al-Qaeda also believes in one world government.

If we use our enemies' map, it is difficult not to conclude that we are losing the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. In addition to increasing instability in Saudi Arabia, we see General Musharraf tottering in Pakistan, President Mubarak of Egypt flying to Germany for “back surgery” (which may be diplomatic-speak for terminal cancer?), Islamic militancy rising in Europe, and who-knows-what-else in the way of terrorist incidents being prepared in the United States itself. All of these play into the Afghan and Iraqi wars, no less than car bombs in Baghdad and ambushes outside Kandahar. It is all one war, one battlefield. The boundaries of the state mean nothing.

Of course, it is not going very well on the ground in Iraq and Afghanistan either. But in this war, events in those places are in effect merely tactical. The strategic centers of gravity are in Saudi Arabia, Pakistan and Egypt. al-Qaeda, I think, understands this. Washington does not. That fact alone suggests we have only seen the opening moves in what promises to be a very long war.

*July 3, 2004*

# The October Surprise

Shortly before I left Washington for the summer (in the good old days whose passing I regret, few stayed in Washington in summertime), my informal intelligence network gave me an interesting report: Iran was beginning to mass troops on the Iran-Iraq border. Did this portend overt Iranian intervention in Iraq? I said I didn't think so. Events in Iraq are not unfavorable to Iran, and the risks of direct intervention would be great.

However, there is a potential situation that could lead to Iranian intervention: if it were in response to an American-Israeli attack on Iran's nuclear facilities. Such an attack may very well be on the agenda as the "October Surprise", the distraction George Bush desperately needs if the debacle in Iraq is not to lead to his defeat in November.

There is little doubt that Iran has a nuclear weapons program, one that is operating under forced draft to produce a nuclear deterrent as quickly as possible. Iran, along with everyone else in the world, knows that the best way to be safe from an American attack is to have nukes. Even the most howling neocons show little appetite for a war with North Korea.

The problem is that, while an Iranian nuclear capability may be directed at deterring the United States, it also poses a mortal threat to Israel. Israel is not known for sitting quietly while such threats develop. It is a safe bet that Israel is planning a strike on known Iranian nuclear facilities, and that such a strike will take place. The question is when.

If Israel plans to act this year, the Bush administration may see a political opportunity it cannot pass up. At the very least it is likely to endorse the Israeli action, and it may well participate. In the Islamic world at least, an American disassociation from any action by Israel

would not be believed. Israel and America are now perceived as one country. And the neocons seem to agree.

The question becomes, how would Iran respond? It might shoot some missiles at Tel Aviv, but absent at least a dirty bomb or bio-engineered warheads, that is not likely to accomplish much.

A far better response lies right next door: attack the Americans in Iraq. America has about 130,000 troops in Iraq, a formidable army by local standards. But their disposition makes them vulnerable. Confronted by a guerilla war, they are spread out in penny packets all over the country. If Iran could mass quickly and use effective camouflage and deception to conceal at least the scope of its concentration, then suddenly attack into Iraq with two or three corps, we could face a perilous situation. Iranian success would depend heavily on how Iraqis reacted, but if Iran called its action Operation Iraqi Freedom, promised immediate withdrawal once the hated Americans were beaten and waved the Koran at Iraqi Shi'ites, it might win the cooperation of Iraq's resistance movement. That would make American efforts to concentrate all the more difficult as convoys would come under constant attack. Logistics would quickly become a nightmare.

Such an action would be perilous for Iran as well. The danger with threatening a nuclear power with conventional defeat is that it may go nuclear. America might choose to do that through its Israeli surrogate or, on the theory that the bigger the crisis the stronger the rally around the President syndrome, directly. Either way, Iran would have no effective response.

But the mullahs now running Iran are, like Mr. Bush, in a steadily weakening political position. If they did not respond powerfully to an attack on Iran's nuclear facilities, they might well lose legitimacy with the hard-line base they now depend on. It is risky to count on them doing nothing, and they have few opportunities to do anything that would be effective. Unfortunately for us, their best chance lies right

next door, and the party favor has our name on it.

*July 9, 2004*

# The Past is All Coming Back

The international goo-goos, which was Tammany Hall's old name for the “good government” types, need their humanitarian *crise du jour*, and the Sudan currently fills the bill. The usual celebrities are wringing their hands and we are all supposed to care, deeply. The realist replies, “Yea, that's life in the global village”, but realism is out of fashion these days. Sense, it seems, has been defeated by sensibility.

But there is more to events in the Sudan than the usual starving children. A recent article in the *Cleveland Plain Dealer* offered a peek at 4th Generation war at work in some ways both new and very old. After noting that more than a million people have been turned into refugees in just 16 months—not a trivial military result—the paper wrote:

Over and over, the refugees tell the same story. First airplanes and helicopters came and bombed their villages. Then gun-and-sword-wielding militiamen came galloping in on horseback and camelback—burning, looting, raping and pillaging. Tens of thousands have made the journey, forced on a desperate flight through the desert by Arab herders bent on chasing their African farming neighbors from the vast western region (Darfur), the size of Iraq.

In these few sentences, we take a journey through war over the last five thousand years. It begins with a modern overlay, in the form of bombing by aircraft. Terrorizing tribesmen by bombing their villages from the air was a technique pioneered by the British in their post-World War I fight with insurgents in Iraq. It has the advantage that tribesmen seldom have much in the way of air defenses, other than to get up and move. In the Sudan, that seems to be just what their enemies

desire.

Of course, the involvement of aircraft suggests the involvement of the Sudanese government. But the rest of the *Plain Dealer's* brief account quickly moves us beyond, or more precisely, back from the age of the state.

Those gun and sword-wielding militiamen are almost certainly tribesmen. Not only are their horse and camel-charges something out of past centuries, so is their primary loyalty. It is safe to say that their ties to the government of the Sudan are tenuous. They are fighting for their tribes, against other tribes they have fought for generations. As the state recedes, it reveals once again the old human landscape, almost unaltered and ready, like winter wheat under the snow, to spring to life again and flourish.

Another ancient cause of war, race, also presents itself. The attackers are Arabs, the refugees are Negroes. How long have those two been going at it, with the blacks almost always getting the worst of it? In the Sudan, even today, that worst includes black slavery. Of course, as is also true throughout history, the alternative to slavery is death. An old Russian proverb comes to mind: Life is terrible, but death is not so great either.

Finally, to complete a two-paragraph journey back to history's dawn, the mounted attackers are herdsmen while the victims are farmers. The Navahos could tell us something about that one, as could the Mesopotamians, the Egyptians and the Chinese. One cannot help but wonder if in addition to their swords and guns, those horsemen are good shots with a bow?

We see here in this remarkable vignette one of the most important, most powerful and also most unremarked features of our age: the past is all coming back. As modernity crumbles, all ancient ways and causes of war return, defining a 4th Generation that is also a vast Minus One Generation. I have said from the outset that the 4th Generation marks



the end of modern war and the modern age, and nowhere do we see that more clearly than in places like the Sudan. And there are more and more such places.

Those who have eyes, let them see.

*July 16, 2004*

# Civil War in Iraq?

Observers continue to ask if Iraq will descend into civil war. The answer is that civil war is already underway in Iraq. Most people do not see it, because it is not following the Sunni/Shi'ite/Kurd fault lines on which we have been led to focus. As is usually the case in war, we are the victims not of deception but of self-deception.

In Iraq's civil war, the most prominent faction is what America calls Iraq's government. It is, of course, not a government, because there is no state. The goal of this government is to recreate an Iraqi state and become a real government. What are its chances of success?

At the physical level, the government is undoubtedly the most powerful faction in Iraq's civil war. It has more money and more troops than any competitor. It also has the U.S. military behind it, as we have seen recently in Fallujah, where it approved and even provided intelligence for recent American air strikes.

But at the moral level, the Iraqi government is probably the weakest faction, weaker even than the elements still fighting for Saddam. The reason is that it is an American creation and puppet—a Quisling regime, formed and propped up by a now-hated invader. If it is to have any hope of legitimacy, it must cut the strings to the American puppeteer. So far, it shows no ability to do that. Its one serious effort to date has been to hint at some sort of amnesty for anti-American resistance fighters, a move that could help split its opposition. But that move was stopped cold by the United States, in a way that demonstrates to Iraqis and the world who is really in charge. According to the July 18 *Cleveland Plain Dealer*:

the new U.S. ambassador, John Negroponte, disputed suggestions

that a proposed amnesty for Iraqis who have opposed the U.S. occupation could include those who have killed U.S. soldiers...  
“There may have been at one point some language that was ambiguous and led to the interpretation that somehow people would be given amnesty who assaulted U.S. troops,” he said. “My understanding is that ambiguity is no longer there.”

Not only does that let the puppet strings show like chemlights, it also renders any amnesty meaningless, since it does not apply to the people who are doing the fighting.

4th Generation war theory suggests that the Iraqi government's strength at the physical level and weakness at the moral level means it has already peaked. Physical strength plays its greatest role early, while the moral level works most powerfully over time. As has been true ever since Saddam fell, time is on the side of America's enemies, and time is a powerful ally.

What are the other factions in Iraq? Both the Sunnis and the Shi'ites appear to be splitting into smaller, mutually hostile elements. There are indications that among the Sunnis, the secularists, who are mostly Ba'athists, and the Islamists are starting to go at it. Several secularist militias recently made a public announcement that they want the head, severed or otherwise, of al-Qaeda's local rep, Abu Musab al-Zarqawi. Shi'ite leader Muqtada al Sadr's recent war with the Americans had less to do with resisting the occupation than with positioning himself within the Shi'ite community. 4th Generation theory says that once the fractioning begins in a post-state region, it continues.

The resulting civil war may still have Sunni vs. Shi'ite aspects; in fact, it is almost certain to include that fault line. But there will be many other fault lines as well, some within the Shi'ite and Sunni communities, some cutting across them. At the physical level, this works to the government's advantage, in that its relative power increases. But at the moral level, virtually all the other factions have

greater legitimacy than the government. And just as the strategic level trumps the tactical, so the moral level trumps the physical. That is one of John Boyd's more important insights into the nature of war.

Not all King George's bombers nor all of his men can put Mesopotamia's Humpty together again. Since Sen. Kerry's policy on Iraq differs from President Bush's by only the finest of nuances, it is safe to predict that a future King John would fare no better.

*July 22, 2004*

# **The 9/11 Commission Report: Reorganization, Not Reform**

When bureaucracies fail, one of their favorite ways to deflect demands for reform is to offer reorganization instead. That appears to be what has happened in the report of the 9/11 commission and Washington's response to that report. Worse, the reorganization envisioned is to further centralize intelligence by establishing a national intelligence director and creating a counterterrorism center. One is tempted to ask, if centralization improves performance, why didn't the Soviet Union win the Cold War?

What American military and national intelligence really require is that bureaucratic anathema, reform. And reform in turn means not centralization and unification, but de-centralization and internal competition. What did us in both on 9/11 and in the run-up to the Iraq war was an intelligence process that valued committee consensus and internal harmony above the open rough-and-tumble disagreements that surface new ways of looking at things.

The de-centralization American intelligence requires, if it is to grapple with 4th Generation threats, must occur on both a micro and a macro level. On the micro level, we need to create layers of competition within and between our national and military intelligence agencies, including CIA, DIA, the FBI and the NSA. The process should be reformed so that end users, policy-makers, get not a single, consensus assessment, with all dissenting views sanitized, but a summary of the disagreements as well as agreed points. The policy-makers, in turn, need to be able and willing to explore the disagreements themselves, rather than simply deferring to the experts and their compromise consensus.

Such an approach offers far greater promise of creating awareness and understanding in a type of war that is new to us. Unfortunately, it has virtually no chance of happening. The intelligence agencies themselves, like all bureaucracies, hate airing dirty linen. Doing so offers policy-makers a look inside the agency itself, which in turn invites demands for further reform. Like the military services, the intelligence agencies want to offer policy-makers a single, agreed option, coupled with the message, "Everything is fine with us, except we need more money."

The policy-makers, in turn, are mostly elected politicians who avoid making decisions and taking responsibility. What they want from our intelligence agencies is an agreed consensus they can use to cover their own backsides politically. If they go along with the consensus and the result is disaster, they can say, "Blame it on those guys. We just acted on what they told us." But if they get competing estimates they have to actually think about, they end up responsible for the final decision and its outcome. So, in the end, both the politicians and the bureaucrats have common interest in giving the nation reorganization, not reform. That makes the outcome 99 percent certain.

What about the macro level? Sadly, the picture is equally bleak. Much 4th Generation war in America will be most visible on the local level, where people quickly see things that are out of place. The question is what happens to that information. If it must be funneled through layer upon layer of bureaucracy until it finally reaches Big Brother in Washington, it will not be acted upon in time. Worse, Big Brother will see into the local level, which means he will want to control the local level. We will end up with the worst of both worlds, ineffective tyranny.

The key to dealing with manifestations of 4GW on the local level is to keep it local. That, in turn, requires community police: cops who walk a beat in one neighborhood, which they get to know very well. We happen to have a good Federal program to train and create more

community police, called the Police Corps. What has happened to that program since 9/11? Every year, its budget gets cut more, to the point where it may soon be squeezed out of existence. The money all goes to Big Brother, the centralized, Washington-based Department of Homeland Security.

At the heart of our inability to reform instead of merely reorganize and further centralize our national intelligence is the crisis of the state itself. The state cannot reform because reform endangers the money and power of the New Class, which controls the state and feeds richly off its decay. As we will see in Washington's response to the 9/11 commission report, the public is decoyed by puppet shows while the old games continue. And non-state, 4th Generation enemies, who unlike the New Class really believe in something beyond themselves, will hit us again and again.

Remember, government bureaucracies don't get more money and more power when they succeed, but when they fail. With an incentive system like that, it is fairly obvious what the rest of us are going to get more of: the consequences of intelligence failures.

*July 29, 2004*

## Corruption in the Corps

In an earlier column, "[Two Marine Corps](#)", I alluded to the increasing corruption I see at Quantico and in Headquarters Marine Corps. A number of Marines have asked me what I meant by that. Are Marines taking envelopes of money under the table? Are defense contractors flying them to Vegas for free weekends of poker, booze and floozies?

Well, floozies are traditionally a big draw with Marines, but that is not the kind of corruption I am talking about. Even most Congressmen know better than to take money under the table; it is much safer to wait until they retire, then get paid off by the interests they served, often with well-remunerated positions on boards of directors.

The corruption I had in mind is more subtle, and perhaps also more dangerous. It is corruption of institutional purpose.

When I first came to Washington in 1973 to join the staff of Senator Robert Taft, Jr. of Ohio, I assumed naïvely that our armed forces defined themselves in terms of winning battles, campaigns and wars. Senator Taft also thought that is what they should be about, which is why working for him was both a pleasure and an honor. But I quickly discovered that for three of the four, victory was defined less in military than in bureaucratic and political terms. The Army, the Navy and the Air Force had already lost sight of their institutional purposes. What they were about, at senior levels, was selling programs and getting money from Congress. Whether the program had any relevance to war was not important, so long as it sold.

My wake-up call came when the Navy approached the Senate Armed Services Committee, on which Senator Taft served, with a request for \$1.4 billion in 1974 dollars for a nuclear-powered "Strike



Cruiser”. Senator Taft and I had the same response: How do you fight the Soviet Navy, which was largely a submarine navy, with nuclear-powered cruisers? The Navy had no answer, and Taft led the fight to kill the program. The ship was never built, and the Navy has hated me ever since.

At that time, and for many years more, up until the mid-1990s, there was one service that stood out as an exception to the corruption of institutional purpose: the Marine Corps. At all levels, including the most senior, the Marine Corps was still about war, not money. When I began writing on maneuver warfare in 1976, Marines of every rank were interested. They weren't quite sure what I was talking about—there was then very little literature in English on the evolution of German military doctrine—but if it pertained to war, they felt they should learn. That joint effort of civilians, Marines, and Air Force Colonel John Boyd culminated in the adoption of maneuver warfare as the Marine Corps' official doctrine when Al Gray became Commandant.

Sadly, the Marine Corps is no longer an exception. As has long been true with the other services, now, if you talk about war at Quantico or HQMC—especially 4th Generation war, the kind of war Marines are fighting in Iraq and Afghanistan—you are neither right nor wrong, you are simply irrelevant. 4th Generation war does little to justify programs and increase budgets, so it is not of interest. The real world is the world of budget politics, not war.

As I said, this type of corruption, corruption of institutional purpose, is subtle. Few Marines, or soldiers, sailors, or airmen for that matter, ever make an explicit, conscious choice to become corrupt in this way. They merely accept the rules of the game as given and play by them, and that is all it takes. As members of hierarchical, bureaucratic organizations, they have been encouraged since their first day at OCS to play by the rules. Thinking about whether those rules were valid was “above their pay grade”—and still is, even when they become generals.

Ironically, corruption of institutional purpose was one of the reasons the Soviet Union fell. It is inherent in socialism, because it is a natural tendency of government bureaucracies. Absent an annual balance sheet that shows either black or red ink, there is little mechanism to keep an institution's focus on the outside world where its intended purpose lies.

A friend of mine who holds a senior position in the Pentagon gives a briefing around the building in which one slide says, "The Pentagon now controls the world's largest planned economy." No one blinks. Is it fair to say that the American armed forces are now little more than the Soviet refrigerator industry in odd-looking green or blue suits? With individual exceptions, at senior levels and in major headquarters, I think it is. There, the only difference I now see between the Marine Corps and the rest is that the Marines' dysfunctional refrigerators are somewhat smaller.

*August 6, 2004*

## Seeing Through the Other Side's Eyes

In any war, one of the most useful opportunities is a chance to see the conflict through the other side's eyes. A Marine captain recently sent me a fascinating look at the misnamed “War on Terror” through the eyes of al-Qaeda, in the form of an interview by an al-Qaeda journal, *Sawt Al-Jihad*, of Fawwaz bin Muhammad Al-Nashami, who is identified as the leader of the attack at Khobar, Saudi Arabia, on May 29 of this year in which 22 “infidels” were killed.

I have no way of determining whether the account is genuine, though internal evidence suggests it probably is. There is also no doubt that much of what Al-Nashami says is propagandistic. It is intended to rouse other young Islamic militants to emulate his deeds and kill more infidels. But al-Qaeda is a sophisticated operation, sufficiently so to understand that good propaganda contains as much truth as possible.

The story is a blow-by-blow, hour-by-hour tale of the Khobar raid. From the standpoint of 4GW theory, what stands out most strongly is its intense mix of ancient and modern.

Much of Al-Nashami's account could come straight from Homer. It stresses the vast strength and great riches of the opponent, contrasted with the weakness of the four men who made up the al-Qaeda raiding group. Allah is a constant player, just as gods fought for Greeks and Trojans. Defeated enemies are publicly humiliated: “We tied the infidel by one leg [behind the car]...everyone watched the infidel being dragged.” While the enemy was strong in numbers, they were also cowards: “We encountered forces that hastened to defend the Americans...Their great cowardice was evidenced by their behavior. They were very far away, and as we approached them they kept withdrawing and distancing themselves.” Heroes boast and show enemy

heads: “Brother Nimr swaggered around inside the compound...we found a Swedish infidel. Brother Nimr cut off his head, and put it at the gate so that it would be seen by all those entering and exiting.”

Right in the midst of the fighting, when the raiders are hungry they eat and when they are tired they sleep. After the first encounter, “We turned to the hotel. We entered and found a restaurant, where we ate breakfast and rested a while.” Later, surrounded by Saudi security forces, “The brothers slept for an hour...Then we decided we would be the ones to attack.”

Yet the modern is mixed intimately with the Homeric. Sawt Al-Jihad asks, “How did you begin [the operation]?” Al-Nashami replies, “We left the apartment at precisely a quarter to six.” Arab time keeping is usually like Scandinavian cuisine: there isn't much of it and most of what there is is bad. Mission orders show up: “We met with the brothers and I explained to them the goals and plan of the operation.” The raiders did multiple recons, and “we had learned more than one route to the second site.” Most interestingly, the raiders use television both to send and receive information. In the middle of the raid, they call *Al-Jazeera* and do an interview. When they need tactical intel, they turn on the TV: “Then I went to one of the rooms. I watched the news on television...and the news was that the emergency forces 'were now breaking into the compound.' I split up the brothers to certain positions in the hotel, and we got ready to repel an attack by the dogs of the state...”

This mix of ancient and modern is a central characteristic of 4GW, and it is one of the strengths of religiously motivated non-state forces. It is also a very difficult thing for militaries such as our own to understand. It is central to our opponents' strength at the moral level, which shows through strongly in the interview: “Many [of the Arabs and Muslims at the compound] prayed for our victory and success...We spoke with them...until their fear was gone and they began to joke with us and to direct us to the sites of the infidels...”

On the other side, the reported cowardice of the state security forces illustrates a problem with hiring people to fight for a cause they do not believe in: “The tracer bullets frightened these cowards greatly...We shouted ‘Allah Akbar’ and ‘There is no God but Allah, and...We broke through the first ring [of security], and the second, and the third.” Hireling troops often do not have much fight in them, as we have also seen in Iraq.

Not surprisingly, the raiders escape with only one killed by a *deus ex machina* ending: “We ascended above one of the artificial waterfalls which overlooked the road. The distance between us and the ground was very great, 13 meters...But with Allah's mercy, the ground was soft and wet, because of the waterfall.” The only thing missing is Zeus or Athena gently handing the raiders down.

Again, there is no question that the account is propaganda. But propaganda is itself revealing. It allows us to see our enemies as they see themselves, and the self-image of al-Qaeda that emerges from this account is one that should concern us. The seamless blending of ancient and modern, of divinely protected heroism and technological competence, is potent. That is particularly true when, as in this case, al-Qaeda's opponent is the hired troops of a corrupt regime — a regime America depends on to keep the oil flowing.

If, in war, one of the keys to success is pitting strength against weakness, al-Qaeda knows all too well what it is doing. And its chances of victory are substantially greater than any tally of resources or troops numbers would suggest.

*August 12, 2004*

# The Desert Fox

*August 28, 2004*

In Iraq and elsewhere, all eyes are currently on Najaf. As I had guessed, the battle ended with a whimper, not with a bang, as the Mahdi Army militiamen exfiltrated, and Muqtada al-Sadr turned over the keys to the mosque to Ayatollah al-Sistani.

But the real winner is likely once again to be the new Desert Fox, Mr. al-Sadr. How can that be, if in the end his militia could not stand against American troops?

First of all, al-Sadr and his antics in Najaf showed all of Iraq that the new Iraqi “sovereign government” is a false front. How? By making that government rely on American, not Iraqi, troops. From al-Sadr's perspective, the fact that he suffered an inevitable tactical defeat at the hands of the Americans is far less important than the fact he fought the Americans. Iraq and the world saw the same show they witnessed before America “returned sovereignty to Iraq”, namely Iraqis armed only with AK-47s and RPGs fighting American tanks and aircraft. As always, when David fights Goliath, David wins, at least on the moral level.

Second, al-Sadr positioned himself even more strongly as the leader of Iraq's sans culottes, the jobless, hopeless Shi'ite young men who make up the Mahdi Army and any other Shi'ite army. In a recent article in my excellent hometown newspaper, the *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, a University of Michigan professor who specializes in Iraqi Shiism, Juan Cole, described them as “a Shi'ite ghetto youth gang”. In fighting terms, that is a compliment, not an insult. Gangs will be one of

the most important forms of combatants in 4th Generation war. As the police in many an American city can attest, gangs are not easy to defeat. And this particular gang has both an endless source of recruits and a religious identity for which dying is seen as worthwhile. Al-Sistani may have the support of most Shi'ites, but al-Sadr now has the support of most Shi'ite fighters, and that is what is likely to count.

Third, al-Sadr may have moved the Shi'ite areas of Iraq closer to what he seeks, a general uprising against the Americans with himself as the Shi'ite George Washington. This is difficult to gauge from American news sources, because they have focused on Najaf itself. But what has happened in Najaf is less important in this regard than what has happened in the numerous other Shi'ite cities and towns, and in Baghdad's Sadr City, which is al-Sadr's home base (another reason he can easily afford a tactical defeat in Najaf). As is often the case in 4GW, the 9/10ths of the iceberg we cannot see is the dangerous part.

Meanwhile, the U.S. finds itself fighting a two-front war, on one front against the Shi'ite Mahdi Army, on the other against the Sunnis in Anbar Province. The U.S. Marine Corps has blanked out the news from that front, but the reported toll of Marine casualties seems to be rising. To a student of German military history such as myself, two-front wars can bring unhappy memories.

Of course, Muqtada al-Sadr may prove to be a new Desert Fox in more than one way. Rommel was a brilliant tactician, one of the best division commanders of all time. But at the operational and strategic levels, he faltered. As Mr. al-Sistani knows, the best strategy for yielding a Shi'ite-dominated Islamic republic of Iraq is to wait for an election, where Shi'ite numbers will tell. Al-Sadr, more interested in his own future than Iraq's, may be jumping the gun. At any future time he also could get himself captured, which might spur the general uprising he seeks, or killed, which might spark the revolution but leave him awkwardly placed to take full advantage of it. But the probability is that he will be as safe, hale and hearty as old bin Laden himself.

Professor Cole summed up the situation well. “The Americans will win militarily,” he said. “But I think they are losing politically,” because by fighting al-Sadr and his Mahdi Army they “made him a symbol of national resistance.” It seems that we are damned if we do fight and damned if we don't. That's just how 4th Generation war works, folks.



# **Greater Denmark, the Neo-Barbs and the War With Sweden**

When President Al Gore was inaugurated in January 2001, few Americans imagined that before his first term ended, our country would be at war with Sweden. Indeed, Mr. Gore's campaign suggested he would reduce American commitments abroad, avoid foreign adventures and forgo nation building, which American voters long ago realized costs heaps of money and does not work.

That may have been what American voted for, but it is not what we got. What we got was the wildest, most adventuristic and most disastrous foreign policy since Woodrow Wilson—who won the 1916 election with the slogan “He kept us out of war”—led America into World War I a month after his inauguration.

How did it happen? The answer is to be found not in Washington, but in Copenhagen. There, the governing coalition is dominated by the Greater Denmark Party, whose goal is to retake for Denmark all the lands it once governed: Norway, southern Sweden, even northern England. The Party's semi-secret slogan is, “From the River (Thames) to the Sea (the Baltic)”.

The Danish Government knows it is not powerful enough to achieve that goal on its own. It needs someone else to do most of the fighting. And it has found that someone else in the United States.

When the Gore administration came to power, it promptly turned America's defense and foreign policy over to a small group of people who were de-facto members of the Greater Denmark Party. Some had actually participated in drawing up Denmark's new grand strategy, which called for defeating all Denmark's opponents with American help

so completely they would accept whatever terms the Danes offered. Now, from their key positions in the Pentagon, the U.S. State Department and the White House, they have made America into the Greater Denmark Party's tool, at vast cost to America's national interests, its treasury, and the lives of its soldiers.

Just who are these people? Many years ago, they began calling themselves “neo-barbarians”, which was soon shortened to neo-barbs. They see themselves as heirs to Viking kingdoms of a thousand years ago, and are determined to realize their fantasy, no matter the cost to others. Real barbarians scoff at the neo-barbs; as one paleo-barbarian leader recently said, “These guys are such wusses they think you pillage first then rape. None of them ever swung a battle axe in combat, and they would puke at their first sight of a blood-eagle.”

Nonetheless, the neo-barbs have intimidated most of their critics into silence. Not only do they denounce them at every opportunity for anti-Vikingism, they long ago seized control of the nation's herring supply. Anyone who points out that the neo-barbs are unregistered foreign agents quickly finds himself starving.

The result of this colossal sell-out of America by its own leaders is all too well known. President Gore's administration has backed the Greater Denmark Party to the hilt. It has ruined our relations with the rest of Europe, undermining whatever friends we had in the region. It has done what no enemy could ever do; it has made America hated.

Worse, following demands for regime change in Sweden, Norway and Pago-Pago, on the basis of a charge of “building 60-gun ships of the line”, a charge since proven false, the United States invaded Sweden.

At first, the war appeared to go well. The U.S. Army swept into Stockholm in a few weeks, with little resistance. But it turned out that was part of Sweden's strategy. Taking Stockholm did not mark the end of the war, but its beginning.

The Swedes quickly proved to be adept guerilla fighters. One of their most deadly weapons is the IED—the Inedible Device. Swedish guerillas regularly sneak rutabagas into the Americans' mess halls and even insert them in MREs, with catastrophic consequences. American soldiers hit with an IED thereafter refuse to eat anything and starve to death. Another Swedish ambush technique is to stop American troops on the street and tell them Swedish jokes. The Americans die of boredom waiting for the punch line, which does not exist. Worst of all, the Swedes have simply gone on being Swedes, paying high taxes and enjoying a wide variety of government services. All American efforts to transform Sweden in to a laissez-faire capitalist paradise simply fall on barren ground.

Despite America's expenditure of tens of billions of dollars and almost one thousand lives, the Swedes are taking their country back. Stockholm's Gamle Stan is now a no-go area for American troops, with children throwing Swedish meatballs and even being rude. In Skana, which was initially friendly to the Americans, old Saabs now regularly pull in front of American convoys, choking our troops with two-stroke exhaust. Recently, the Swedes recaptured their naval base at Karlskrona and quickly built a new fleet of 40-gun frigates to Mr. Chapman's superb design. A squadron has escaped into the Atlantic, causing the American Department of Homeland Security to warn that our coastal cities may soon suffer Swedish bombardment. While the Gore administration still claims its invasion of Sweden “made the world safer from random sailing warships”, the fact is that there was no danger of Swedish naval bombardment before we attacked while now there is.

Thankfully, the monstrous folly of America's enslavement to a Danish political party will soon end. This year sees another Presidential election, and Republican candidate Bob Taft is stumping the country demanding an end to the Swedish war, the expulsion of the neo-barbs from public office and the return of sanity in American foreign policy.

All over America, Taft's campaign train is being met by wildly enthusiastic crowds, crowds that include many Democrats. Taft's clear, courageous stand against an inane war and the people who caused it has him soaring in the polls. Gore may be beaten worse than Hoover in 1932. There are even rumors that Gore and his neo-barb appointees are negotiating with Taft for a post-election pardon from charges of war crimes, including that rather inclusive Nuremberg standard, “planning aggressive war”.

Yes, folks, in America democracy still works. When issues like war and peace are on the line, the system offers American voters a clear, unambiguous choice. Everyone knows that Gore's and the neo-barbs' real slogan is, “Four More Wars”. The contrast with Bob Taft's foreign policy for Americans an end to wars for foreign interests, could not be clearer. Once again, in a time of national peril, our democratic system has brought forth a candidate of genuine conviction, moral courage and unwavering principle.

Isn't it great to be an American?

*September 3, 2004*

## Stage Three

As I noted in a recent column, the Marines have blanked the news from the Sunni triangle since taking over much of that area. A front-page story in the August 29 *New York Times* lifted the veil, and what it revealed was not pretty. The war in the Sunni triangle is shifting its base from the Ba'ath Party, which still operates within the framework of the state, to religious elements which do not.

This is exactly what 4th Generation theory predicted would happen. The minutes from the January 23, 2004 session of our 4th Generation seminar read:

...then moved the discussion to Iraq and the U.S. occupation there by pointing out that the current situation is characterized by three elements. The first was chaos, the second was a war of national liberation (waged by the Ba'ath Party) and the third was 4th Generation warfare. The second of these elements was decreasing in importance and intensity but the third was increasing.

This is the development the Times now reports:

Events in two Sunni Muslim cities that stand astride the crucial western approaches to Baghdad have moved significantly against American plans to build a secular democracy in Iraq.

Both the cities, Fallujah and Ramadi, and much of Anbar Province, are now controlled by fundamentalist militias...

American efforts to build a government structure around former Ba'ath Party stalwarts...have collapsed. Instead, the former Hussein loyalists, under threat of beheadings, kidnappings and

humiliation, have mostly resigned or defected to the fundamentalists, or been killed. Enforcers for the old government, including former Republican Guard officers, have put themselves in the service of fundamentalist clerics they once tortured at Abu Ghraib.

Last spring, the Marines made a deal with the Ba'ath Party in Fallujah: Keep the place quiet and we'll let you run it while keeping our hands off it. As has so often been the case in the history of war, it was the right move, too late. Throughout Iraq, the balance had already swung away from the Ba'ath and any other forces that might have been able to re-create an Iraqi state, to non-state, 4th Generation elements. The experiment in Fallujah was worth trying—the only other option was destroying the city in order to save it, as we recently did in Najaf—but the Ba'ath was by then already a fading force. Of its Fallujah Brigade, the Times writes:

The Fallujah Brigade is in tatters now, reduced to sharing tented checkpoints on roads into the city with the militants, its headquarters in Fallujah abandoned, like the buildings assigned to the national guard. Men assigned to the brigade, and to the two guard battalions, have mostly fled, Iraqis in Fallujah say, taking their families with them, and handing their weapons to the militants.

Instead of the Ba'ath, what we now face in Fallujah is a genuinely dangerous opponent. Its idol is not Saddam, but Allah. The Times reports that:

The militants' principal power center is a mosque in Fallujah led by an Iraqi cleric, Abdullah al-Janabi, who has instituted a Taliban-like rule in the city...with an Islamic militant group, Unity and Holy War, that American intelligence... [has linked] to al-Qaeda...

By invading Iraq, the United States in effect took Fallujah and much of the rest of Anbar Province from Saddam and gave it to Osama bin Laden. If that is George Bush's definition of victory, it would be interesting to know what he would consider a defeat.

From the standpoint of our forces in Iraq, the main problem the third stage in the war there presents is that we have no one to talk to, no one to make deals with. As we saw in Fallujah in April, it was possible to make a deal with the Ba'ath—a deal the Ba'ath genuinely wanted to carry out, though it proved unable to do so. Mullah al-Janabi and the thousands like him will have no interest in talking with us, unless we tell them we need their assistance in converting to Islam.

The minutes from the January meeting of our seminar concluded:

In Fallujah as the Marines relieve the Army...we should talk to the resistance, if we can. If it is Ba'ath Party members we can probably do some serious negotiations with them. Ultimately, they have as much interest in establishing and maintaining order as we do (if they have any thought of returning to power). However, if the Ba'athists do not control the resistance then all bets are indeed now off.

*September 11, 2004*

# Learning Curves

Last week, I attended and spoke at a conference on armor in urban operations, put on by the U.S. Army Armor School at Ft. Knox, Kentucky. In listening to the other presentations, the question I was asking myself was, “What are these guys learning from combat in Iraq and Afghanistan?”

The question is an important one, because war is a competition in learning curves. Whoever consistently learns faster acquires an increasing advantage. This is the Boyd Cycle or OODA Loop at work on the macro level, and just as in the micro level of actual combat, it is an important determinant of victory or defeat.

So what did I discover? At the level of techniques, when actual units briefed, the learning curve seemed impressive. They had quickly figured out that while techniques tend to be regarded in peacetime as static, in combat they become dynamic: you can't use yesterday's techniques that are always done the same way, the new priority becomes adapting and inventing techniques. Again, the combat units I heard brief seemed to have understood this. They were innovating intelligently, in ways that were relevant to the situation in Iraq as it is, not as we might like it to be.

When we moved up a level, from units that have actually fought to institutions, the picture immediately got cloudy. Here, the internal priorities of budget and bureaucratic politics still hold sway, despite the fact that we are fighting two wars. One example was a brief from the Marine Corps Battle Lab at Quantico where the term “Lab” is a misnomer as the office is about budgets, not battles, and unlike a laboratory, it does demonstrations, not experiments. The briefing stated at the outset that the keys to success in wars like that in Iraq are



“Increased Lethality and Improved Protection.”

Well, no. We already have vast advantages over our 4th Generation opponents in both lethality and protection, yet we're losing. That suggests there is rather more to 4th Generation war than lethality and protection. Indeed, we have so much of both of those qualities that they may work against us more than for us. Recently, the lethality of U.S. Army attack helicopters was turned on a crowd of young men and boys gathered around a burning Bradley, with catastrophic results for our image among Iraqis. And our force protection already seals us off from the people we are supposed to be helping, turning us into an alien and threatening presence. At the mental and moral levels of war, we may need less lethality and protection rather than more.

This points to the big disappointment in all of what I heard at the conference. It was all focused on the physical level of war, to the virtual exclusion of the more powerful mental and moral levels. At the mental level, there were a few mentions of PSYOPS, but even these were misconceived as what we say. Real PSYOPS are what we do, like stepping on the heads of detainees. Only one briefing grasped this essential point.

Of the moral level of war, which John Boyd argued is the most powerful level, there was nothing. Worse, there was no discussion of the central dilemma in 4th Generation war, that what wins at the physical level tends to lead to defeat at the moral level. Goliath may mop the floor with his smaller, weaker opponents, but in doing so he makes himself universally hated.

In classic 2nd Generation fashion, the assumption behind almost all the briefings was that if we can only accumulate enough tactical victories, we are certain to win strategically as well. Vietnam should have put an end to this simplistic belief, but the lessons of Vietnam were filed and forgotten almost as soon as that war was over.

The fault here is not that of the combat units, which were doing all

they could to get their learning curve up, within the understanding of war that they have. The fault lies with those institutions within our military, such as TRADOC and the Battle Lab, that are supposed to grapple with the larger, conceptual issues. They have failed for years to do their job, and they are failing still. Their learning curves are as flat as the landscape of the Sunni triangle, where our soldiers and Marines are doomed to continue winning victories that lead to defeat.

*September 15, 2004*

# Destroying the National Guard

The unit knew it would soon be shipped to the front. Some soldiers responded by deserting. Others got drunk and fought. In response, officers locked the unit in its barracks, allowing the troops out only to drill, not even to smoke a cigarette, until it could be put on the transport that would take it into combat.

It sounds as if I am describing some third echelon Soviet infantry regiment in 1942. In fact, I am talking about the 1st Battalion of the 178th Field Artillery Regiment, South Carolina National Guard, in September 2004. According to a front-page story in the September 19 *Washington Post*, the unit was disintegrating even before it was deployed to Iraq. One shudders to think what will happen once it gets there and finds itself under daily attack from skilled enemies it cannot identify.

One of the likely effects of the disastrous war in Iraq will be the destruction of an old American institution, the National Guard. Desperate for troops as the situation in Iraq deteriorates, Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld is using the National Guard in a mission for which it was never intended: carrying on a war of choice halfway around the world. Most Guardsmen enlisted expecting to help their neighbors in natural disasters, or perhaps maintain order locally in the event of rioting. They never signed up for Vietnam II.

Yes, the Guard was mobilized and deployed overseas in both World Wars, but those were true national wars, in which the American people were all involved one way or another. Cabinet wars, as they used to be called, are something altogether different. As Frederick the Great said, cabinet wars must be waged in such a manner that the people do not know they are going on.

But National Guardsmen are the people. To send them into a cabinet war is to misuse them in a way that will destroy them. Even in the American Revolution, militiamen were seldom asked to fight outside their own state. When they were, they usually responded by deserting.

The fault does not lie with the soldiers of the National Guard. Even within their units, they are being horribly misused. One of the Guard's strengths is unit cohesion: members of a unit come from the same place and usually know each other well, both in the unit, where they serve long-term, and often in the local community as well. In the case of the 1st Battalion, 178th Field Artillery, the Post reports that “to fully man the unit, scores of soldiers were pulled in from different Guard outfits, some voluntarily, some on orders.” Cohesion went out the window. One soldier in the unit said, “Our morale isn't high enough for us to be away for 18 months...I think a lot of guys will break down in Iraq.” That is always what happens when unit cohesion is destroyed, in every army in history.

For many Guardsmen, deployment to Iraq means economic ruin. They have mortgage payments, car payments, credit card debt, all calculated on their civilian salaries. Suddenly, for a year or more, their pay drops to that of a private. The families they leave behind face the loss of everything they have. What militia wouldn't desert in that situation?

The real scope of the damage of Mr. Rumsfeld's decision to send the Guard to Iraq—40 percent of the American troops in Iraq are now reservists or Guardsmen—will probably not be revealed until units return. One of the few already back saw 70 percent of its members leave the Guard immediately.

What the Washington elite that wages cabinet wars does not understand, or care about, is the vital role the National Guard plays on the state and local levels. Once the Guard has been destroyed, who will provide the emergency services communities need when disaster

strikes? One would think that in a so-called War on Terror where the danger to the American homeland is readily acknowledged, someone in the nation's capital would care about the local first line of defense.

The fact of the matter is that Versailles on the Potomac does not care about the rest of the country in any respect, so long as the tax dollars keep coming in.

My old friend King Louis XVI might be able to tell Rumsfeld & Co. where that road eventually ends up.

*September 25, 2004*

# The Grand Illusion

When asked for their solution to the mess in Iraq, both of America's presidential candidates—Tweedledumb and Tweedlephony — advance the same line: “train more Iraqi security forces.” Once enough Iraqis have been trained, they suggest, American troops can be withdrawn and our puppet Iraqi government can stand on its own six legs.

Unfortunately, the problem is not training, but loyalty. All the training in the world is worthless if the people being trained have no reason to fight for those who are training them. And a paycheck isn't much of a reason, especially when the fellow Iraqis they are to battle are fighting for God.

As is so often the case in 4th Generation war, the most useful way to look at the situation is through the prism of John Boyd's three levels of war: the physical, the mental and the moral. On the physical level, American-trained Iraqi security forces may have advantages over their 4th Generation opponents. American training in techniques is often very good. While we are not giving the Iraqis equipment as good as our own, which is a big mistake on the moral level, it may be better than that of their enemies. With salaries of about \$200 per month, our mercenaries are among the best-paid men in Iraq.

Unfortunately for us, as soon as we consider the mental and moral levels, which Boyd argued are more powerful than the physical level, the advantage shifts. At the mental level, the 4th Generation elements have already gotten inside the heads of Iraqi police and National Guardsmen. How? By killing them in large numbers. More than 700 have died in the past year, with many more wounded. A story on four recruits for the Iraqi police in the September 27 Washington Post

quotes one of them as saying, “We're walking dead men.”

That fear opens the door to the sort of deal that typifies Arab countries: the police and Guardsmen collect their paychecks, but look the other way when the resistance is up to something. In some cases, the deal can go further and create double agents, men inside the security forces who actually work for one or more of the resistance organizations. The same day's *Post* announced the arrest of a “senior commander of the Iraqi National Guard” for, as the U.S. military put it, “having associations with known terrorists, for alleged ties to insurgents.” I suspect that if we arrested all the Iraqi Guardsmen who fit that description, Abu Ghraib would again fill to overflowing.

At the moral level, the position of the Iraqi police and Guardsmen is almost hopeless. They are being paid to fight their own countrymen and fellow Mohammedans on behalf of an occupying foreign power that is also nominally Christian. The fig leaf of Mr. Allawi's government deceives no one, especially after last week's pictures of Allawi holding hands with George Bush, the Islamic world's Voldemort. Is it any wonder that, all their training notwithstanding, when it comes to fighting alongside American forces the Iraqis usually change sides or go home?

The American authorities in Iraq argue that thousands more Iraqis volunteer to serve in the security forces than we can train or equip. That is true, but the motive is not one that leads to much willingness to fight. As one of the Iraqi police recruits interviewed by the *Post* said, “Everyone wants jobs, and there really are no jobs but the police.”

Throughout history, armies of hirelings have melted at a touch when faced with people fighting for something they believe in. All the training in the world will make no difference. The core problem is the deepest taproot of 4th Generation war: the state for which Iraqi security forces are being told to fight has no legitimacy. When Bush and Kerry argue that we can avoid defeat in Iraq by training more Iraqis to do the fighting for us, they are indulging in a grand illusion.

*October 2, 2004*



# Situational Awareness

My friend F-18, who occasionally writes to this column, long ago introduced me to “Situational Awareness,” or SA. To a fighter pilot, it means not missing a mortal danger, like someone coming up on “your six”, also known as your six o'clock position. In 4th Generation war, SA means not getting mesmerized by one aspect of war outside the state system to the point where we neglect others. At present, the focus on Iraq and Afghanistan tends to diminish our SA by leading us to define 4GW as war with Islam. Two recent news reports remind us that there is much more to it.

The first concerns Nigeria, where a tribal militia is threatening the oil export industry. A story in the September 29 *Washington Post Express* says, “[Militia leader] Dokubo-Asari claims to be fighting for self-determination in the region and greater control over oil resources for eight million Ijaws, the dominant tribe in the southern delta region, which accounts for most of the daily oil exports.” In a 4th Generation world, tribes will again become important entities that wage war. That it should happen early in Nigeria is not a surprise; Nigeria is a state in name only, and the Nigerian government is merely another gang. But because Nigeria is a major oil exporter, tribal war has suddenly reached out and touched America. Part of the reason that oil last week settled at over \$50 per barrel was the Ijaw threat to Nigeria's oil fields.

The second report was the headline article in the September 28 *Washington Times*: “al-Qaeda seeks tie to local gangs; Salvadoran groups may aid entry to U.S.” The story goes on to report that “Adnan G. El Shukrijumah, a key al-Qaeda cell leader...was spotted in July in Honduras meeting with leaders of El Salvador's notorious Mara Salvatrucha gang, which immigration officials said has smuggled hundreds of Central and South Americans—mostly gang members—

into the United States...authorities said [El Shukrijumah] was in Canada last year looking for nuclear material for a so-called dirty bomb...”

If, or rather when, the U.S. gets nuked, that is how the bomb will most likely be delivered, not by missile but by some Central American gang. Why? Because those gangs have the best delivery system for anything illegal. Mara Salvatrucha is already waging low-level 4GW in the U.S., as many a police department could attest. And gangs, by their nature, are for hire. A few million al-Qaeda dollars could easily rent Mara Salvatrucha's delivery system. Before the rise of the state, when someone wanted to go to war, they rented whatever capabilities they needed: armies, galleys, a cook in their enemy's kitchen who could add some special seasoning to his prince's dinner, whatever. The 4th Generation motto is: “Back to the future.”

These two reports remind all 4th Generationists to follow the old fighter pilot rule: keep your SA up. If you don't, if you allow yourself to focus on just one aspect of the 4th Generation threat, you're going to get hosed.

Let me add a footnote to this:

U.S. and Iraqi government forces are announcing a big victory in taking the city of Samarra. This shows they still don't get it. Following Chairman Mao's advice, the Iraqi guerillas retreated when we attacked. The victor is not whoever holds Samarra today, but who can hold onto it for six weeks, six months or six years. My bet is it won't be us.

*October 7, 2004*

# The Moral Level of War

In recent weeks, the indirect approach the Marines adopted in April in Fallujah, when they withdrew instead of storming the city, began to pay off. A reduction of American pressure allowed fissures within the Iraqi resistance to appear and grow. Fallujah natives were beginning to turn against outsiders, most of whom represent extreme Islamism, America's real enemy. Such splits are of the utmost importance in 4th Generation war, because they operate at war's most powerful level, the moral level. There is a vast moral difference between us killing fighters for Abu Musab al-Zarqawi in Fallujah and the locals doing so.

If American military leaders understood 4th Generation war, they would slowly, patiently encourage the local Iraqi resistance to go after the outsiders, providing rewards and even assistance, if that was wanted, all done covertly of course. The first genuine American victory in Iraq would be the day the local resistance asked for our covert help.

Unfortunately, our leaders do not understand the 4th Generation, so it appears we are about to throw this opportunity away. We continue to bomb and shell Fallujah, which pushes our enemies toward each other. We seem to be readying an all-out assault on the city, which will have the usual result when Goliath defeats David: a moral defeat for Goliath. Many Iraqis will die, the city will be wrecked, and any losses the insurgents suffer will be made up many times over by a flood of new recruits. Never was it more truly said that “we have met the enemy, and he is us.”

Our nightly bombing of Fallujah illustrates another important point about 4GW: to call it terrorism is a misnomer. In fact, terrorism is merely a technique, and we use it too when we think it will benefit us. In Madam Albright's boutique war on Serbia, when the bombing

campaign against the Serbian Army in Kosovo failed, we resorted to terror bombing of civilian targets in Serbia proper. Now, we are using terror bombing on Fallujah.

Of course, we claim we are hitting only Mr. al-Zarqawi's fighters, but anyone who knows ordinance knows that is a lie. The 500, 1,000, and 2,000-pound bombs we drop have bursting radii that guarantee civilian casualties in an urban environment. More, it appears we see those civilian casualties as useful.

The October 12 *New York Times* offered this interesting quote from “one Pentagon official:”

*“If there are civilians dying in connection with these attacks, and with the destruction, the locals at some point have to make a decision...Do they want to harbor the insurgents and suffer the consequences that come with that, or do they want to get rid of the insurgents and have the benefit of not having them there?”*

As the article goes on to make clear, American officials believe such terror bombing will split the resistance. In fact, the whole history of air warfare says it will have the opposite effect.

The point here is not merely that in using terrorism ourselves, we are doing something bad. The point is that, by using the word “terrorism” as a synonym for anything our enemies do, while defining anything we do as legitimate acts of war, we undermine ourselves at the moral level, which is the decisive level in 4th Generation war.

Imagine Mr. al-Zarqawi himself said the following about the suicide car bombs his group uses, bombs that have killed many Iraqi civilians:

*If there are civilians dying in connection with these attacks, and with the destruction, the locals at some point have to make a decision. Do they want to harbor the Americans and suffer the*

*consequences that come with that, or do they want to get rid of the Americans and have the benefits of not having them there?*

Would we denounce that as justifying terrorism? Of course we would—and rightly so.

What is sauce for the goose is also sauce for the turkey. Obvious double standards put us on the moral low ground. The rest of the world can see the hypocrisy, even if what passes for America's leaders cannot. As the old saying goes, it is worse than a crime; it is a blunder.

*October 22, 2004*

# Election Day

An old guy in the barbershop summed up this election best. Choosing between Bush and Kerry, he said, “is like being asked which of the Mendez brothers you like better.” As Paul Craig Roberts wrote, it is “the worst election ever.” If we look at both candidates from the standpoint of national security, what do we see? Both talk about the subject endlessly, but neither has anything to say. On Iraq, Kerry, like Bush, refuses to recognize the war is lost. Kerry refuses even to say what Ike said in 1952: “I will bring the boys home.” Like Bush, he pretends that the key to victory is training more Iraqi forces, as if training, not loyalty, were the problem.

The landscape is equally bleak if we look beyond the Iraqi debacle – America’s Syracuse Expedition. If a voter were trying to determine which candidate would do better at defending the country against 4th Generation enemies, the checklist might look something like this:

- To be able to confront 4th Generation opponents, our own armed forces must first move from the 2nd Generation, French-style attrition warfare to 3rd Generation, German-style maneuver warfare, which includes a decentralized, initiative-oriented military culture. Bush has done nothing to make this happen, instead pushing us further up the blind canyon of the “Revolution in Military Affairs,” where future enemies are all 2nd Generation state armed forces whom we defeat through superior and more complex technology. Kerry has said nothing to suggest he knows the 2nd Generation from Second Grade.
- Adopting a defensive rather than an offensive grand strategy. So long as we are on the grand strategic offensive, threatening to impose our ways on every one else through military force, we will be defeated regardless of how many battles we win. Like Germany

in both World Wars, we will generate new enemies faster than we can defeat old ones. Bush promises in every other sentence that “America will stay on the offensive,” while Kerry’s foreign policy utterances sound as Wilsonian as any neocon. Can we be sure Kerry isn’t in fact a neocon? No.

- Developing a counter-terrorism capability that, instead of pretending the whole thing is a law-enforcement problem, mimics the way 4th Generation entities fight and turns it on them. Our armed services can’t do this because it requires a non-hierarchical organization free of the 1st Generation culture of order. Bush and Kerry both seem as clueless about this as Bart Simpson.
- Developing contingency plans for what we do when a 4th Generation force such as al-Qaeda nukes an American city, which is going to eventually happen. Both Presidential candidates suggest their response will be a headless chicken act; in Bush’s case, the chicken never had a head.
- Finally, if we are to be able to fight 4th Generation war we need to figure out what it is. The Pentagon is willfully ignorant, because 4th Generation war doesn’t justify high tech systems and vast budgets. Which candidate will undertake the serious military reform we need to re-focus our military on war instead of on money? Bush obviously won’t, because he hasn’t. Kerry hasn’t said a word about it.

So what is a voter who cares about national security to do? Bush has already spectacularly failed. Kerry seems to be an empty vessel. Hope would suggest a vote for Kerry. Unfortunately, hope is a fool.

What voters need to do is realize we are facing systemic failure. Our vaunted two-party system offers us two choices, neither of whom is fit to be the dog-catcher of Podunk, much less the President of the United States. It was the same in 2000, in 1996 and in 1992. Reagan looked good, as an actor should, but the last President we had who actually understood things like grand strategy was Richard Nixon. Oh for a happy monarchy, where Nixon would have been foreign minister

for 50 years.

As for this monarchist, the political landscape seems so barren to me that it doesn't matter much who we vote for. What we will get is more of the same. It is not just time for a new king; it is time for a new dynasty.

*October 30, 2004*



# The Sling and the Stone

For at least a decade, Colonel Tom Hammes has been one of the Marine Corps' leading intellectuals. His new book, *The Sling and the Stone*, should be read by anyone who has an interest in 4th Generation warfare (4GW).

In some ways, this is two books in one. One book describes 4th Generation war and the reforms our military needs in order to fight it, and here Colonel Hammes is at his best. His distinction between the first and second intifadas is especially valuable.

He writes that the Palestinians won the first intifada because they were careful to present themselves as victims of a vastly more powerful Israeli military. Avoiding the use of weapons other than the stone, and taking full advantage of the television camera, the Palestinians "transformed (Israel) from the tiny, brave nation surrounded by hostile Arab nations to the oppressive state that condoned killing children in the street." This is the power of weakness which is central to 4th Generation war.

In contrast, in the second (al-Aqsa) intifada, the Palestinians resorted to violence, including suicide bombers, and gave up the power of weakness. Hammes writes, "It is almost impossible to overstate how perfectly Arafat and the radical elements in Palestinian resistance have supported the Israeli effort. Their suicide bombing campaign has given Israel complete freedom of action." As is so often the case in the 4th Generation, what seems weak is strong and what seems strong is weak.

Hammes's descriptions of the situations in Iraq and Afghanistan are equally good. So is his analysis of the Pentagon's faith that future wars will be decided by high technology. Correctly, he argues that developments such as the Internet favor our 4th Generation adversaries,

because they have “flat,” cooperative organizations while we are stuck with industrial-age, bureaucratic hierarchies. In effect, they are the free market while we represent the centrally-planned Soviet economy. Finally, Hammes’s proposed reforms, while largely derivative, are also mostly sound.

The second book is a book on military theory, and here Hammes is on less solid ground. He makes a major error early, in that he equates 4th Generation war with insurgency. In doing so, he equates the 4th Generation with how war is fought. It is usually fought guerilla-style, but that misses the point: what changes in the 4th Generation is who fights and what they fight for. This error leads to others, such as believing that 4th Generation war focuses on the mental level. Hammes writes, “The 4th Generation has arrived. It uses all available networks – political, economic, social and military – to convince the enemy’s political decision makers that their strategic goals are either unachievable or too costly for the perceived benefit.” In fact, 4th Generation war focuses on the moral level, where it works to convince all parties, neutrals as well as belligerents, that the cause for which a 4th Generation entity is fighting is morally superior. It turns its state enemies inward against themselves on the moral level, making the political calculations of the mental level irrelevant.

Hammes still makes some useful contributions to 4th Generation theory. For example, his short discussion of a difficult theoretical problem, the role of the OODA loop in 4th Generation war, notes that, “the focus is no longer on the speed of the decision but on a correct understanding of the situation. Observation and orientation become the critical elements of the Observation-Oriented-Decision-Action loop.” I think the OODA loop’s originator, Colonel John Boyd, might agree with that.

But in the end, Colonel Hammes remains trapped in the framework of the state. He writes that 4GW in itself cannot win a decisive victory: “The techniques [of 4GW] can only weaken the enemy’s will and

reduce his resources to the point that a conventional military campaign can defeat him entirely.” In fact, 4th Generation war can unravel a state opponent so completely that he ceases to exist. We saw that with the Soviet Union, we are seeing it now with Israel, and if the United States fails to isolate itself from the 4th Generation we may see it here as well.

*November 6, 2004*

# Germany's Blunder

If there is one point on which all of America's leaders, civilian and military, seem to agree, it is that the United States must remain on the offensive in the misnamed "War on Terrorism." The offensive is the only form of war that offers hope for a decisive victory. Clausewitz would disagree. In his *On War*, Clausewitz writes, "defense is simply the stronger form of war, the one that makes the enemy's defeat more certain...We maintain unequivocally that the form of war that we call defense not only offers greater probability of victory than attack, but its victories can attain the same proportions and results." If the U.S. were to take Clausewitz's advice, what might a defensive grand strategy look like? I answer that question in detail in the November 22 issue of Pat Buchanan's magazine, *The American Conservative*. Here, I can only summarize. But the key to the answer is Colonel John Boyd's definition of grand strategy. Grand strategy, Boyd said, is the art of connecting yourself to as many other independent power centers as possible, while isolating your enemy from as many independent power centers as possible.

What does that definition mean for America in a 21st century that will be dominated by 4th Generation, non-state war? As I write in TAC, "it means America's grand strategy should seek to connect our country with as many centers of order as possible while isolating us from as many centers and sources of disorder as possible." That, in turn, leads toward a defensive, not offensive, military strategy.

In the main, connecting ourselves to other centers of order will mean maintaining friendly relations with other states, wherever the state endures. Surviving states (their number will decline as the century extends) will be centers of relative order. So may other cultures that tend toward order; here, Chinese culture comes first to mind. China, if

it can hold together internally, may be the single greatest center of order in the 21st century.

For the Establishment, the hard part will be accepting the need to isolate ourselves from centers and sources of disorder.

Centers of disorder will be the growing number of failed states. Sources of disorder will certainly include Islam, thanks to the concept of jihad, even if some Islamic societies are ordered internally. Isolation, I write in TAC, “will mean minimizing contacts that involve flows of people, money, materials and new primary loyalties, such as religions ideologies, into the United States.” First and foremost, that requires ending the current de facto policy of open immigration. In a 4th Generation world, open immigration is akin to leaving the castle gate open at night when the Huns are in the neighborhood.

How does a grand strategy based on Boyd’s concepts of connection and isolation lead to a defensive military strategy? As we have seen in Iraq, if we attack another state, the most likely result will be the destruction of that state and its replacement by a region of stateless disorder. This works for, not against, our 4th Generation opponents. If an American offensive punches into a stateless region, it works directly contrary to our goal of isolation from disorder. There is no better way to enmesh yourself in disorder than to invade it (the French are now learning that unpleasant lesson, again, in Ivory Coast). A defensive strategy, in contrast, leaves regions of disorder to stew in their own juice. In some cases, it may achieve another of Colonel Boyd’s favorite aims, folding the enemy back on himself so that he expends his energies inward, not outward against us.

As Clausewitz also argues, a defensive strategy must include a powerful counter-offensive. When 4th Generation opponents attack us at home, as on 9/11, our response should be Roman, which is to say annihilating. But the defensive sends a strong message on the moral level of war: if you leave us alone, we will leave you alone. 4th Generation enemies may find it difficult to motivate their people to

attack us if we keep our side of that bargain.

In contrast, so long as we continue on the military and grand strategic offensive, we will be making Germany's blunder in both World Wars. We will appear so threatening to everyone else, states and non-state elements alike, that every victory we win will generate more enemies until, fighting a hydra, we go down in defeat. Washington needs a Bismarck, but in the camp of the neocons, all it can find are many Holsteins.

*November 12, 2004*

## Tactics of the Crescent Moon

U.S. forces have taken Falluja. Were we fighting a war in the Spanish Netherlands in the 17th century, and were Falluja the fortress city of Breda, the victory might mean something. Caught up as we actually are in a 4th Generation war in Iraq, the event is almost meaningless. Most of the guerillas fled before we attacked, as guerillas are supposed to do (“When the enemy attacks, we retreat.”) U.S. forces are finding few dead resistance fighters; the 1,200 to 1,600 “body count” the American command is claiming will prove as phony as those in Vietnam. Meanwhile, the resistance is hitting us elsewhere.

When U.S. forces leave Fallujah, they will return there too. And the U.S. military has again destroyed the village in order to save it, giving its enemies a victory at the moral level. Will we ever learn? If we do ever learn, a good bit of the credit should go to one of the most innovative and practical modern writers on military tactics, retired Marine John Poole. His first book, *The Last Hundred Yards*, was the best small unit tactics manual published in many years. Now, just in time for Iraq, Afghanistan and wherever else the neocons want to send American soldiers to die, he is offering his take on how Islamic non-state forces fight. *Tactics of the Crescent Moon: Militant Muslim Combat Method* should be in the backpack of every American soldier and Marine.

Here’s a sample paragraph that might usefully have been read by those who planned the Falluja operation:

*Through better tactics, U.S. forces could take fewer casualties at close range without alienating the local population and without*

*sacrificing their long-range capabilities. More powerful than firepower in this new kind of war will be the preservation of infrastructure. For it is the lack of social services that gives the foe his recruiting base. In the 21st century – as it was at the end of World War II – food, water, clinics and jobs will do infinitely more to secure the ultimate victory than bombs. Better small-unit technique costs nothing. It requires only a slower operational pace and the authority to experiment at the company or school level.*

Interestingly, Tactics of the Crescent Moon begins at Gallipoli, where the British were handed a major defeat by the Ottoman Turks during World War I. How did they do it? Poole argues that the Turks won in part because of better tactics.

It would appear that Middle Easterners were using “maneuver warfare” at the individual and squad level some 65 years before Americans could do it at the regimental level. To lure an entire British battalion into a trap, the Turks had needed only bogus orders, harassing fire, and deliberate withdrawal...When they reemerged to stalk the flanks and rear of the British formation, they may have further enticed it to advance. By the time their quarry realized that it was alone and fragmented, it was too late.

After examining lessons from the Iran-Iraq war and Israel’s expulsion from southern Lebanon, Poole goes on to consider each of the main Islamic 4th Generation forces the U.S. may find itself facing. His discussions of the Afghan resistance to U.S., not just Soviet, invaders and the Iraqi opposition could not be more relevant.

Part Three of Tactics of the Crescent Moon offers his prescription for how U.S. forces should act. As in his other books, Poole stresses small-unit tactics and techniques. Seeing clearly the moral disadvantages that massive use of American firepower brings, he notes how good small units – true light infantry, which America sadly lacks –



can win without the vast collateral damage and civilian casualties that work against us. The keys are high levels of small unit autonomy and far better peacetime training, training that permits experimentation and adaptation rather than forcing everyone into a cookie-cutter sameness.

For those who want to learn, *Tactics of the Crescent Moon* is an invaluable resource. The question is whether the U.S. military can learn and adapt. At the small unit level, it can, when it is allowed to do so. The problem is that, typical of a 2nd Generation military, the U.S. armed forces must bear the burden of a vast, centralized, bureaucratic command structure that has little interest in adaptation. Populated with rafts of modern major generals who cannot tell at sight a Mauser rifle from a javelin, but know all too well how to grab more bucks for irrelevant high-tech weapons, our headquarters resemble the British at Gallipoli more than the Turks. The result is likely to be more flattened Iraqi cities like Falluja, more victories on the moral level for our opponents, and in the end, ignominious withdrawal and defeat. Now, if we could just convert all those headquarters and their staffs into mine-clearing platoons...

*November 18, 2004*

# **Last Dignified Exit**

Between now and January, the Bush administration will have to decide whether or not to take the last dignified exit from Iraq.

That is to announce before the Iraqi elections that we will be leaving soon after them. If Bush and his neocon handlers miss this opportunity, our only choice will be to remain in Iraq until we are driven out in a humiliating defeat. Like the kid who knows he has to eat his spinach, we will be better off pretending to choose the inevitable.

What is the chance this will happen? Behind the scenes, a growing number of conservative leaders are working to make it happen. But events are moving the other way. The elevation of the Tea Lady, Miss Rice, to Secretary of State is intended to silence any voices of prudence from that Department. New CIA Director Porter Goss recently told his people, "As agency employees we do not identify with, support, or champion opposition to the administration or its policies." If you want to guarantee disaster, there is no better tool than turning your intelligence agency into a closed system. Most indicative is the fact that not a single neocon has been given his walking papers. So long as they are running the show, substantive change is unlikely.

But what are the neocons going to do about Iraq? The insurgency is growing, American casualties are rising, and at some point the American public will demand something better than the nonsense being mouthed by our commanders. (My favorite last week was the American general who claimed Falluja had "broken the back" of the insurgency. Insurgencies, like octopi, are invertebrate.)

With other fools throughout history, the neocons' answer to defeat will probably be escalation. What I had predicted as a likely "October Surprise" may instead be a Christmas present: a joint Israeli-American

air and missile attack on Iran's nuclear facilities.

Amazingly, Colin Powell already has launched a repeat of the same strategy that led us to war in Iraq. Based on a single, unvetted intelligence source, he last week accused Iran of attempting to weaponize nuclear warheads to fit on ballistic missiles.

It is improbable Iran has any nuclear devices to weaponize (though it is certainly trying to get them, for obvious reasons). But apparently just an accusation is enough to justify preemption. And we recently sold Israel several hundred deep-earth penetrator bombs. It is safe to bet they are not for destroying tunnels between Egypt and the Gaza Strip.

We may, of course, officially deny any role in a strike on Iran, leaving Mr. Sharon to take full credit. But Iran, which expects such an attack and has prepared for it, already has said it will hold the US as accountable as Israel.

Knowing nothing about war, the neocons probably expect any Iranian response to be symmetrical: an air and missile counterstrike. But Iran cannot do much that way, and surely knows it. Why shoot a few ineffective missiles at Israel when you have two juicy targets right next door, in the form of American troops in Afghanistan and Iraq? An Iranian riposte in Afghanistan probably would come slowly, in the form of a guerilla war in that country's Shi'ite regions. That might also be Iran's response in Iraq, where it already has Revolutionary Guard troops in Shi'ite areas. But there is another possibility. Under the cover of bad weather, which winter often provides, Iran could strike suddenly into Iraq with several armored divisions. Our forces are scattered throughout Iraq, and they cannot mass rapidly because Iraqi guerillas control the roads. With skill that is not beyond what Iran might manage (the Iranian Army is better than Saddam's was) and a bit of luck, they could roll us up before American air power could get the clear weather it needs to be effective. America would not only lose a war in Iraq; it would lose an army.

At that point the analogy I have suggested from the outset would have come to full fruition: Athens' Syracuse Expedition. Like the Syracuse Expedition, a victory in Iraq would have given America little in the war against its real enemies, Islamic non-state forces. But a defeat that resulted in loss of an entire army would be a catastrophe.

Unfortunately, the only Syracuse Expedition most neocons will know about was a college road-trip to some school in upstate New York. Take it from me, guys; the hangover this time could be a whole lot worse.

*November 25, 2004*

## **4GW on the Homefront**

Focused as we are on 4th Generation war in Iraq and Afghanistan, it is easy to forget that the phenomenon is vastly larger than any single war or opponent, even Islam. An article in a local Washington paper, *The Journal*, reminds us that 4GW is also being fought on American soil, by parties that have nothing to do with the armies of the Prophet.

The article, by staff writer Robert Arkell, was titled “Police: MS-13 threatened Maryland officers:” The notorious E1 Salvadoran gang known as MS-13 has threatened to execute Prince George’s County police officers as tensions continue to escalate between officers and gang members, police said.

MS-13, which stands for Mara Salvatrucha, has increased its presence in Prince George’s County with more than 600 active members...

Some of those MS-13 gang members recently confided to police about carrying out a deadly ambush plan that targeted county police officers...

If members of a gang based on a foreign ethnic identity ambush cops, it is more than a crime: it is an act of war, 4th Generation war to be precise. Hopefully, it will not happen in Prince George’s County. But it has happened elsewhere in the United States. It is not for nothing that the Los Angeles Sheriff’s Department is a more avid student of 4GW theory than any American military service.

Future historians will find it interesting that at the same time a supposedly conservative President has enmeshed us in 4th Generation wars abroad, he has opened the flood gates to importing 4th Generation enemies at home. President Bush’s first act upon reelection was to

resurrect his proposal for an amnesty for illegal immigrants. It is a safe bet that MS-13 gang members would be among those who benefit from such an amnesty if Congress were so foolish as to allow it to become law.

As I have said before in these columns, in a 4th Generation world, invasion by immigration easily can be more dangerous than invasion by a foreign army. At some point, the foreign army will go home. But immigrants stay, and if they do not acculturate, they permanently change the cultural landscape. As the Dutch recently discovered, the changes may go beyond introducing some highly spiced dishes into an otherwise bland cuisine.

If an American President were seriously interested in protecting this country from 4th Generation threats, aka the “War on Terror,” his top priority would be real immigration reform. Real reform means:

- Controlling our borders. Given the magnitude of illegal immigration across our southern frontier, we need to put in place something like the old East-West German border. Anyone trying to cross it unlawfully risks getting shot.
- Immediate deportation of any non-citizen who commits a felony, along with all identifiable family members. That would give immigrant communities an incentive to control their own members who might be criminally inclined. There should be no such things as gangs made up of immigrants.
- A neutral policy of Americanization of all immigrants. As was true for the forefathers of many American citizens, they are welcome to maintain their national language and customs in their homes, but all business in the public square must follow American norms, starting with English-only. Far from hurting immigrants, that policy made it possible for children born in Ukraine ghettos to join the American middle class.
- Mechanisms to foster Americanization, beginning with the public schools. If we need a model, look at New York City’s superb

public schools of 100 years ago.

- Restriction of the rate of immigration so that we do not take in more people than we can Americanize.

These measures, taken together, would do far more to keep 4th Generation war away from our doorsteps than hundreds of billions of dollars in additional defense spending. If our grandchildren end up cursing us, it will probably be for an open-borders immigration policy that left them a civil war to fight.

*December 2, 2004*

# The March of Folly, Continued

Was Ukraine's November 21st presidential election stolen? Probably. Would it be nice if Ukraine were a democracy? Sure. Are those the considerations that should drive American policy in the region? No.

The most important factor in American policy toward the countries of the former Soviet Union ought to be our need for a strategic alliance with Russia. Geo-politically, Russia holds Christendom's vast eastern flank, which stretches all the way from the Black Sea to Vladivostok. As the remnants of the Christian world begin to wake up to the reality that Islam has resumed the strategic offensive, that flank takes on renewed importance. It is already under pressure, as events in Chechnya show all too clearly. If it collapses, Christendom will have suffered an epic defeat.

Not surprisingly, the Bush administration, the scope of whose strategic vision is measured in microns, gets none of this. In its continuing march of folly, it has dismissed Russia's vital interests in its "near abroad," which includes Ukraine. Washington did everything in its power to secure the election to Ukraine's presidency of Victor Yushchenko, the anti-Russian candidate. When the pro-Russian candidate, Mr. Yanukovych, won instead (illustrating Stalin's maxim that what is important is not who votes, but who counts the votes), Secretary of State Colin Powell said the United States would not recognize the result. Now, a new election has been ordered, in which Yushchenko's victory is all but certain. The result will be a heavy defeat for our vital ally, Russia. Russia is already reacting as it must. The December 4, 2004, The Washington Post reports Russian President Vladimir Putin as saying that Washington wants a "dictatorship of international affairs. Even if dictatorship is wrapped up in a beautiful



package of pseudo-democratic phraseology, it will not be in a position to solve systemic problems.” If anything, Putin puts the case too mildly. The Bush administration believes it already has a dictatorship of international affairs, and everybody else, including Russia, is an American satellite. Washington need not take account of anyone’s interests.

The folly of ignoring Russia’s vital interests may lead to a worst possible outcome, namely a renewed civil war within Christendom. Three previous such civil wars in the 20th century – World War I, World War II, and the Cold War – have left our culture merely one contender among many, whereas a century ago it dominated the world. A fourth such conflict, in the form of a revived cold war, would truly be a gift from Allah to the warriors of the Prophet. Christendom would spend what little energy it has left fighting itself.

Continued American meddling in Ukraine may have equally dire consequences for that unhappy country, which both America and Russia should want to see prosperous and stable. Eastern Ukraine, which is heavily populated by Russians, is making noises about seceding if Yushchenko wins. If Russia feels humiliated by Washington in a Yushchenko victory, it might think it has noway to recoup but by supporting such secession movements. That could lead to civil war in Ukraine, a breakup of the country and a direct confrontation between Washington and Moscow. As a Russian general said a few years ago, it is true that most of Russia’s nuclear weapons are old and rusty, but a good number probably still work. It is to such consequences that the march of folly inevitably leads. Regrettably, that march is what marked George W. Bush’s first term. Now, with dissenting voices in the administration being purged, it seems the march tempo will quicken, and not only in the Middle East. Is there anyone left in Washington who can think strategically? If there is, it seems their voices go unheard.

*December 8, 2004*

## Election Ju-Ju

If we find African ju-ju funny, why do we fail to see the humor in the American Establishment's equally firm belief in ju-ju? They call their ju-ju "ee-lek-shuns." Take a "state" with no functional institutions, a government that is a gang of rip-off artists and foreign hirelings, more religious and clan divisions than Arkansas and 4th Generation war spreading like crabgrass. All you have to do is hold "ee-lek-shuns," and Presto!, a real state emerges. Peace reigns triumphant, American troops can go home and secular democracy has converted another flea-bitten, fly-blown Third World hellhole into Switzerland.

Election ju-ju is supposed to work its magic in Iraq in late January. What is actually likely to happen? The elections will go forward, because Ayatollah Sistani demands they go forward. He has put together a unified Shi'ite candidate list, which is guaranteed to win. That in turn will give us the Islamic Republic of Iraq, on a model different from Iran's, but like Iran representing the Shi'ite branch of Islam.

What is the chance that Sistani can recreate a real state in Iraq? Unfortunately, not very good. First of all, the Sunnis, who are not likely to take meaningful part in the election, will not accept Shi'ite rule. Contrary to what the Bush administration suggests, I do not believe the Sunni insurgents want to stop the elections. Why? Because a Shi'ite victory allows them to say to all Sunni Iraqi Arabs, "Now your only choices are to join the resistance or submit to the Shi'ite heretics." Enough Sunnis will rally to the resistance, given that choice, that it will emerge from the elections strengthened, not weakened.

That, in turn, points to civil war in Iraq. How will that turn out? If

the Kurds join the Shi'ites in a general offensive against the Sunnis, the Sunnis will probably lose. A Sunni defeat means a vast out-migration of Sunnis from Iraq; many will end up in Europe, where they will strengthen the Islamic invasion of Christendom's historic heartland. If the Kurds stay out, the Sunnis may be able to defeat the Shi'ites; there are a lot more Shi'ites, but the Sunnis are better militarily. However, a Sunni victory is likely to be only a defensive victory; it will not enable Sunnis to re-establish their rule over Shi'ite Iraq. That in turn suggests partition of Iraq, with a Shi'ite southern Iraq that would become a *de facto* province of Iran and a Turkish invasion of Kurdistan to prevent the establishment of an independent Kurdish state.

On the other hand, a Shi'ite victory over the Sunnis would reverberate throughout the Arab and Islamic worlds. Can the majority Sunnis accept a strategic victory by the despised Shi'ites, or are other Arab and Islamic forces drawn into what becomes a wider war? One of the great dangers of the war in Iraq has always been potential "spillover effects," and a Shi'ite victory might trigger them.

Also, if the Shi'ites win, can they maintain internal unity or do they also splinter, especially if Ayatollah Sistani dies, of natural causes or otherwise? Just as in religious schism begets schism, so in a 4th Generation world the breakup of states portends further breakups, in smaller and smaller factions, most of which fight.

Do all these clouds have any silver linings? I can see the possibility of two. First, Ayatollah Sistani, who appears to be not merely clever but wise, may be able to cut a deal with the Sunni insurgents after the elections. In the Arab world, deals are usually possible, and I think he will seek one. The Sunnis for their part need a deal that gives them some access to Iraq's oil revenues.

The other silver lining is that I believe Sistani will demand American forces leave Iraq. The legitimacy of the new government will depend on its doing so. Sistani has been careful to keep his distance from the Americans, refusing to meet with them, for exactly this

reason. Any cooperation with the hated foreign invaders, any contamination by their touch, is utterly delegitimizing.

He has to order us out or Shi'ite loyalties will start to shift to his rival-in-waiting, Muqtada al-Sadr. Sadr has already established his anti-American *bona fides* by fighting us, twice.

If both of these happen – Sistani cuts a deal with the Sunni insurgents and he orders all American forces out – there is a chance, just a chance, he might be able to re-establish the state in Iraq. That state will not be an American friend, much less the American satellite that was the neocons' objective in starting this war. But any state in Iraq (including Saddam's) is better than what remains the more likely outcome, Iraq's descent into a condition of permanent stateless disorder.

*December 18, 2004*

## Little Stalingrad

According to people who have been there, Fallujah is not a very big city. You can walk across it in half an hour. Yet when the history of this miserable war is written, I suspect it may loom large. Like Stalingrad, it will mark the point where the war turned against the invader.

You may recall that the U.S. Marine commanders on scene declared some weeks ago that the battle was won and Fallujah was ours. It now appears they were Panglossing through reality, in a way that seems universal among American generals. Fighting still continues in Fallujah. Far from fleeing, resistance fighters are now infiltrating back into the city. Sectors we have “pacified” spring back to life in IED attacks and ambushes. There is talk about letting a few civilians return to Fallujah’s ruins, but only under conditions that would make normal civilian life impossible.

Of course, Fallujah itself was largely destroyed in the American assault. The American military did the only thing a 2nd Generation military can do: it put firepower on targets. 2GW armed services are one-trick ponies: they only have one act, and they perform it regardless of whether it fits the circumstances or not. In 4th Generation war, the usual result is what has happened in Fallujah: a moral victory for the other side. As Colonel Boyd argued, and as this column has pointed out time and time again, the moral level of war is the most powerful, the physical level the least powerful.

Correspondent Patrick Cockburn, who is in Iraq, reports another result of Fallujah:

*Just at the moment that the U.S. troops were moving into Fallujah, suddenly, most of Mosul – a city in the north, which is at least five*

*or six times the size of Falluja – fell to the insurgents... This is far more important in some ways than what's happened in Falluja.*

Not only did most of the insurgents leave Fallujah before our assault, they realized that if we had concentrated in Fallujah, we had left openings elsewhere. They took full advantage of those openings. It is perhaps time to ask which side has the better commanders?

Stalingrad is now seen as one of history's great defeats. But in fact, the Germans had largely won in Stalingrad on the tactical level, before they were outflanked and encircled operationally, then defeated strategically.

If we look at Fallujah through that lens, the parallels become clearer. It is not certain we will ever fully control Fallujah, just as the Germans never took full control of Stalingrad. Nevertheless, we will claim a tactical victory.

Operationally, Fallujah, like Stalingrad, proved to be a trap. It led us to concentrate so many of our few combat troops in one place that the insurgency was able to make major gains in other, more important places. It again drew a glaring contrast between how America fights – by pouring in firepower – and the stated aim of the American invasion of Iraq, liberating the Iraqi people. You cannot liberate people by destroying their homes, their jobs and their cities. If operational art is the art of linking tactical actions to strategic goals, American generals have once again shown the world that they have no operational skill – a situation that is typical of a 2nd Generation military. (It may be useful to remember that the American military failed operationally in the first Gulf War as well; Saddam's Republican Guard escaped 7th Corps' slow, inept attempt at operational encirclement.)

After the first Marine assault on Fallujah in April – an assault that was wisely abandoned, since it threatened to set off a nationwide uprising against the occupation – Pat Buchanan said that Fallujah will probably mark the high water line of neocon imperialism. I think the

outcome of the second battle of Fallujah will confirm that prescient assessment. Just as Stalingrad marked the turning point in *Fall Barbarossa*, so Fallujah will go down in history as the “tipping point” in America’s Last Crusade.

NB: This will be the last column for this year, though sadly not for this war. Let me close by wishing a hearty “Bah! Humbug” to fellow Realists everywhere.

*December 22, 2004*



# Jena

As OHL regulations require, on New Year's Day I picked up my 1918 telephone and called my reporting senior, Kaiser Wilhelm II. Of course, he already knows what's going on down here – he's seen it before – but he usually shares a bit of the view from Potsdam with me, and that can be interesting.

“So, how's the new Liman von Sanders doing?” His Majesty enquired, referring to my position as Royal Prussian Military Advisor to the U.S. Marine Corps.

“I feel like a Jesuit among the Iroquois, *Majestaet*,” I replied. “If the ideal army has German generals, Turkish infantry and American logistics, what I've got to work with has American infantry, German logistics and Turkish generals. Liman von Sanders at least got an occasional Zeppelin to support him. All I can look forward to is the V-22 ‘Albatross’, which will be easier to shoot down than any Zeppelin.”

“Well, things are better up here,” the Kaiser replied. “I'm just about to commission our latest *Mackensen*-class battlecruiser. What a splendid ship!”

“So there are battlecruisers in Heaven?” I asked.

“How could it be Heaven without battlecruisers?” His Majesty replied.

“Good point. If I may be so bold, what does Your Majesty foresee for the Americans in Iraq in 2005?”

“Jena.”

“That bad?” I asked. Jena was the battle where Napoleon beat the pants off the Prussian Army in 1806.

“That bad,” His Majesty confirmed. “You know, we didn’t lose at Jena because we were no longer the army of Frederick the Great. We lost because we were still the army of Frederick the Great, but war had changed. The Americans in Iraq have the same problem. They seem unable to adapt to a new kind of war.”

“*Majestaet*, Jena was not merely a defeat, it was a rout. Are you saying the Americans risk a rout in Iraq? If so, I have to tell you that no one in Washington can foresee such a possibility.”

“No one in Berlin could imagine my fleet would mutiny in 1918, but it happened. Unless the American government pulls out, a rout is in the cards. The Americans don’t know how to fight the kind of war they now find themselves in, so the situation won’t get better. The present mess can’t sustain itself. So there is only one way for the war to go, and that is for the American position to get worse. And it will get worse at an accelerating pace. Where do you think that leads?”

“To a rout where the Americans have to fight their way out, if they can.”

“Exactly. And I will tell you that is coming sooner than any of your Turkish generals can imagine.”

“*Majestaet*, Prussia’s defeat at Jena led to real military reform. Does the prospect of an American rout in Iraq have a similar silver lining? Will it finally force the American military to move from 2nd Generation war to the 3rd Generation, with at least a serious attempt to come to grips with the Fourth?”

“Well, we’re not supposed to give away too much, you know,” His Majesty replied. “But you are aware that the American Military Reform Movement of the late 1970s and 1980s was a response to the defeat in Vietnam. I think it is safe to say that the defeat in Iraq will create a new movement for military reform in America. Whether that will succeed or not, I will have to leave for time to unveil. Let me just say that the more dramatic the American defeat is, the stronger the demand will be

for genuine reform.”

“And routs tend to be dramatic,” I added.

“Indeed. And now I must excuse myself, as my train for Wilhelmshaven is about to depart. Wait until you see the *Mackensens* yourself! Come *Der Tag*, they’ll give those old *Queen Elizabeth’s* a drubbing they won’t forget!”

“Even though the *Queens* have fifteen-inch guns and the *Mackensens* have only 13.5 inch?” I asked the Kaiser.

“*Machts nichts*,” His Majesty replied. “You see, the British still leave the anti-flash doors to their magazines open. Closing them would interfere with tea time.”

“There will always be an England, *Majestaet*.”

“Not if I have anything to say about it,” the Kaiser replied as he hung up.

If only we could fight the Iraqi insurgents in battlecruisers in the Persian Gulf, I thought, how much simpler it would be. That’s the problem when you invade someone; you end up having to fight on their turf.

*January 5, 2005*

# The Sorrows of Old Werther

In the 18th Century, Goethe's romantic novel *The Sorrows Of Young Werther* led than more than one "sensible" young gentleman to emulate the protagonist and kill himself. I hope a happier end awaits Old Werther, the northern Virginia defense analyst who writes under that nom de plume for Chuck Spinney's DNI web site. Just as DNI is one of the best places to find thoughtful material on 4th Generation war, so Werther is perhaps that site's most insightful contributor.

Werther's December 30, 2004 column, "4GW and the Riddles of Culture," is one of his best. Among its services is debunking the French Resistance, the only object in human history of which it can be said that the farther you get away from it, the larger it appears. As Werther, citing John Keegan, writes,

*for most of the war, the 30-50 German occupation divisions took no part in anti-resistance activities...the number of actual anti-resistance security forces in France (the Feldsicherheitsdienst) probably did not exceed 6,500 at any stage of the war. That in a country of over 40 million!*

I would add that, other than during the Warsaw uprising of 1944, I do not know of any case where German occupation forces used bombers or artillery on cities they occupied, something U.S. forces now do routinely in Iraq.

Werther references World War II resistance movements to pose the question of why they did not amount to much while the Iraqi resistance now faces the U.S. with a very serious challenge indeed, in the form of 4th Generation war. That, in turn, leads to another question: just what is 4th Generation war? What lies behind its power to defeat state armed

forces that vastly overmatch it in terms of resources, technology and technical skills? Werther concludes,

*4GW is a “riddle of culture,” to paraphrase the anthropologist Marvin Harris. It is perhaps bound up with identity politics, absolutist religious claims, and the aspirations and resentments of the wretched of the earth. Why it should have arisen just when man conquered the moon, the atom, and achieved other triumphs of rationalism is one of those paradoxes by which history is always surprising us.*

As one of the founders of the concept of 4th Generation war, I would like to take a stab at solving this riddle. The key to it, I think, is precisely “the triumphs of rationalism.” Rationalism, or more broadly modernity, believes in nothing. Belief is the opposite of rationalism. 4th Generation war is triumphing over the products of rationalism because people who believe in something will always defeat people who believe in nothing at all.

If we look at those who are fighting 4th Generation war, America’s opponents in Iraq and elsewhere, one characteristic they share is that they believe very powerfully in something. The “something” varies; it may be a religion, a gang, a clan or tribe, a nation (outside the West, nationalism is still alive) or a culture. But it is something worth fighting for, worth killing for and worth dying for. The key element is not what they believe in, but belief itself.

As Martin van Creveld points out in his key book on 4th Generation war, *The Rise and Decline of the State*, up until World War I the West believed in something too. Its god was the state. But that god died in the mud of Flanders. After World War I, decent Western elites could no longer believe in anything: “the best lack all conviction.” Fascism and Communism offered new faiths, but in the course of the Twentieth Century they too proved false gods (all ideologies are counterfeit religions). Now, all that the West’s elites and the “globalist” elites

elsewhere who mimic them can offer is “civil society.” Unlike real belief, civil society is not worth fighting for, killing for or dying for. It is far too weak a tea to serve in the global biker bar which is the 4th Generation’s world of cultures in conflict.

Old Werther gets at the central fact when he writes that “the modern age that dawned in the Renaissance is no longer alive –World War II was the last gasp of modernity, industrialism and linearity.” The death of the Modern Age actually comes with World War I; in 1914, the West, which created modernity, put a gun to its head and blew its brains out. The ninety years since have merely been the thrashing of a corpse. The rise of 4th Generation war, and its triumph over state armed forces in Iraq and elsewhere, mark the real beginning of the new century, a century that will be defined and dominated not by the West’s ghost, nor by the Brave New World that is that ghost’s final, Hellish spawn, but by people who believe.

*January 13, 2005*

# Coming Unglued

As I pondered what theme would be appropriate for this 100th On War, one of Colonel John Boyd's favorite phrases popped into my mind: "coming unglued." As the column's primary purpose is to view events through the prism of 4th Generation war, and 4GW is both a sign and a further cause of many things "coming unglued," the phrase seemed apt.

Nowhere is it more so than with regard to America's grand folly in Iraq, where our invasion destroyed a state and created in its place a vast new breeding ground for 4th Generation forces. In an interview with The Associated Press in December, 2004, the European Union's counterterrorism coordinator, Gijs de Vries, said, "There are some who have gone to Iraq (from Europe), as indeed there have been youngsters from outside Europe, from Arab countries, who have gone there to receive military training." We invaded Afghanistan to eliminate terrorist training camps, then created new terrorist training camps by invading Iraq.

On the ground in Iraq, America's war is coming unglued. Most of the soldiers and Marines I've talked to who have recently returned say the situation is much worse than American newspapers report. Evidence of that came last December, as the U.S. moved to shift its resupply efforts from ground to air. Why? Because the Iraqi resistance controls so many of the roads, including the road from Baghdad's Green Zone to the airport.

"They have had a growing understanding that where they can affect us is in the logistics flow," said Central Command's Lt. Gen. Lance Smith. "They have gotten more effective in using IEDs.

The enemy is very smart and thinking. It is a thinking enemy. So he

changes his tactics and he becomes more effective.”Do we do the same? Increasingly, it seems not. An article on another of my favorite subjects, the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad, noted that, “In retrospect, the railroad succeeded largely by making bad decisions and then making corrections.” In Iraq, America has made bad decisions and then not made corrections. That too, Boyd argued, is a mark of coming unglued: paralysis.

The Army, especially the Army Reserve and National Guard, are coming unglued under the stress of deployments that go far beyond what they were led to expect. The general in charge of the Army Reserve recently said that the Reserve is “rapidly degenerating into a ‘broken’ force.” Within 48 hours, the Pentagon responded – by leaking plans to increase the length and frequency of Reserve deployments. That is another Boydian sign of coming unglued: actions directly at variance with facts.

Back in Washington, the neocon gang of adventurers who pushed us into this war is starting to come unglued. Leading neocons now nip at Mr. Rumsfeld’s ankles. Conservative ranks abound with rumors, with more hope than evidence behind them, that once Iraq holds its elections, the White House will declare victory and pull out. One senses political careers at risk, with players setting themselves up to say, “Who, me? I didn’t want this war.” If we cannot say Afghanistan is coming unglued, that is only because it was never glued to begin with. Panglossian accounts of springtime for Karzai notwithstanding, American-occupied Afghanistan is now the world’s premier narco-state. We can, of course, take on the poppy cultivators and opium traffickers, but if we do we will find ourselves facing a wider war and losing all the sooner.

Most significantly, if we look at the larger world, we see ever more states coming unglued, which is the root phenomenon of 4th Generation war. The Saudi regime is in trouble, and its replacement will not be parliamentary democracy. Pakistan’s General Musharraf is one bomb



away from his destiny, at which point al-Qaeda will have nukes (if it doesn't already). Russia's President Putin is acting to strengthen the Russian state because he knows the state's existence is on the line in Russia. In West Africa, the state is almost gone, and it is going in the rest of Africa. Most interestingly, as the next few months will likely show, the state is fracturing in Israel, a modern, Westernized country. That is how 4th Generation war works: it pulls the state apart at the moral level. Soon, just as Arab is fighting Arab, Jew will be fighting Jew.

For the most part, all these evidences of a world coming unglued fall in the tragic category; we can only chronicle them, and weep. But one massive fiasco promises high comedy: that of the so-called "Revolution in Military Affairs," the vast Pentagon money tit through which an army of Congressmen, contractors and colonels is sucking the country dry. Based on hucksters' promises of video game war, where General Swami "sees all, knows all" through a vast array of hyper-priced "systems," the RMA is coming unglued in Iraq's gritty streets. To the grunt on the ground, it has proven as useless as a regiment of lancers.

For the moment, the same Pentagon that pretends we are winning in Iraq can also pretend the RMA represents "future war." In fact, it is war as it never was and never will be. To employ one of Boyd's less elegant phrases, reality is about to give the RMA and its military, Congressional and industry pimps "the whole enchilada right up the poop chute." Frankly, that is going to be funnier than fighting Frenchmen or drowning cats.

*January 22, 2005*

## FMFM 1-A

As regular readers of this column know, the small seminar on 4th Generation warfare that meets at my house, made up mostly of Marines, is writing its own field manual, FMFM 1-A, 4th Generation War. Since the U.S. Marine Corps is in one of its anti-intellectual periods, the FMFM will appear as a publication of the Imperial and Royal Austro-Hungarian Marine Corps; Kaiser Otto, at least, recognizes the importance of ideas in war. But we hope it will prove useful to U.S. Marines as well.

We are currently working on the second (incomplete) draft, and I thought a progress report would be in order. The introduction, which is in close to final form, makes two points about 4GW. First, past is prologue; Marines who face war waged by entities other than states are encountering armed conflict as it was before the Peace of Westphalia of 1648, which gave states a monopoly on war. Second, because the root of 4GW is what the FMFM calls “a political, social and moral revolution, the decline of the state,” it can have no purely military solution. Military force is as likely to undermine a state’s legitimacy as to uphold it, more likely, in fact, when that military force is foreign.

As the manual notes, “this is not just a problem, it is a dilemma – one of several dilemmas Marines will face in the 4th Generation.” At present, the FMFM has two long chapters (that may change). The first is “Understanding 4th Generation War.” As the draft says, “Before you can fight 4th Generation war successfully, you have to understand it.” The chapter begins with the three classical levels of war – strategic, operational and tactical – but quickly adds three new ones identified by John Boyd as the moral, the mental and the physical. These intersect like two games of three-dimensional chess, where every disharmony (on all sides) creates an opening.

As the manual says, “At this point, Marines may find themselves saying, ‘My head hurts.’” So we take a lesson from the excellent Command and Control FMFM the U.S. Marine Corps published when Al Gray was Commandant and we tell a story: the story of “Operation David.” In the face of Operation Goliath, which bears a not incidental resemblance to what the United States has done in Iraq, an innovative battalion commander comes up with his own approach based not on escalation but on deescalation.

It doesn’t offer a 100 percent solution, but 51 percent solutions may be the best we can do in 4GW situations. His Operation David stresses the moral level, understands the power of weakness, integrates his troops with the local population, draws on that integration for good cultural intelligence and, we hope, illustrates the key characteristics of 4th Generation war. Chapter I is not yet in final form, but it is getting there.

In contrast, Chapter II, “Fighting 4th Generation War,” still has a lot of blank spots. Part of our problem is that only two of the seminar’s members were in Iraq during the 4th Generation phase of the war; another of our members just left, and he will do some writing for us over there. In the meantime, we identify two basic models for fighting 4GW: the de-escalation model and the “Hama model,” based on what Hafez al-Assad did to the Moslem Brotherhood in the Syrian city of Hama (basically, he flattened the place). We draw one critically important point from Martin van Creveld: you can use either model with some hope of success, but if you fall between the two, you will certainly fail. If you are going to be brutal, it has to be over fast. If you can’t get it over fast, you must de-escalate.

We stress that in fighting 4GW, “less is more.” Try to keep your physical presence small, if possible so small you are invisible.

If you can’t do that, then keep your footprint small in time – get in and get out, fast. Finally, if you have to take the least desirable route,

invading and occupying another state, you must do everything you can to preserve that state at the same time you are defeating it. As we see in Iraq, if you destroy the state itself, there is a good chance nobody will be able to recreate it.

Getting down more to specifics, we stress that 4GW is above all light infantry war – real light infantry, jaegers, not what the U.S. calls light infantry, which is just line infantry with less equipment. We talk about “Out G-ing the G,” in Hackworth’s phrase. We discuss your most important supporting weapon: cash. We go into how to integrate your men with the local population (American-style “force protection” makes this impossible). We look at how intelligence changes in 4GW (humint is everything, and IPB goes out the window) and how to win the fight at the mental and moral levels.

Again, in these areas we still have a lot of blanks. It looks like some Marine captains may be willing to form another seminar to help us fill in those blanks; as with the Marine Corps’ earlier work on maneuver warfare, captains are key to this effort. Our goal is to have a complete first draft some time in the next couple months; we will then post that draft on a new 4th Generation web site so anyone who is interested can help us improve it.

It may have been a while since the Austrian flag flew over squadrons of battleships in the Mediterranean, but the K. und K. Marineinfanterie may still have something to offer to Marines everywhere who face the challenge of 4th Generation war.

*January 29, 2005*

## Duce? Not to Us

Serious conservatives, men such as Scott McConnell of The American Conservative and economist Paul Craig Roberts, along with such eminent libertarians as Justin Raimondo of Antiwar.com and Lew Rockwell, are raising a surprising question: do the war in Iraq and the Bush administration's desperate attempts to shore up support for that war have a whiff of fascism about them? In the February 14 issue of TAC, McConnell quotes his old history professor at Columbia, Fritz Stern, writing in The New York Times:

Now the word "freedom" has become a newly invoked justification of the occupation of a country that did not attack us, whose people have not greeted our soldiers as liberators...The world knows that all manner of traditional rights associated with freedom are threatened in our own country...the essential element of a democratic society –trust – has been weakened, as secrecy, mendacity and intimidation have become the hallmarks of this administration...Now "freedom" is being emptied of meaning and reduced to a slogan.

To these wise words, Scott McConnell adds his own:

*I don't think there are yet real fascists in the administration, but there is certainly now a constituency for them – hungry to bomb foreigners and smash those Americans who might object. And when there are constituencies, leaders may not be far behind. They could be propelled into power by a populace ever more frustrated that the imperialist war it has supported – generally for the most banal of patriotic reasons – cannot possibly end in victory.*

These voices, which should be heard thoughtfully, are pointing to a real danger. Yet I do not think that danger can rightly be labeled

“fascism.” Beyond the facts that W. as dictator suggests not so much Hitler or Mussolini as Charlie Chaplin and that the greatest threat to freedom in America is the left’s ideology of cultural Marxism, there is a larger problem: the intellectual core of fascism itself.

Fascism is not merely dictatorship. The core idea of fascism is will as the highest virtue. Fascism sought to drop the whole Judeo-Christian content of Western culture and return to the values of the classical world, where power was the greatest good.

What astonished Greeks and Romans about Christianity was not that it had a Savior who died and rose from the dead; many eastern mystery cults claimed the same. What astonished them was that these Christians’ God said, “I came not to be served, but to serve.” To fascists, the exercise of power, will, was the supreme moral act.

This was a serious error, because it turned an instrumental value, will, into a substantive value. In reality, will is good or evil depending upon what is willed. By attempting to turn will into a substantive value, fascism destroyed itself: will led to Mussolini’s entry into World War II (had he remained neutral, like Franco, he would probably have survived Hitler’s defeat), to Hitler’s offhand declaration of war on America (even after Pearl Harbor, Roosevelt would have had trouble getting an offensive declaration of war on Germany through Congress) and, ultimately, to the Holocaust: when the Nazis’ original aim of expelling the Jews from Europe became impossible because there was no place to send them, will demanded a Final Solution.

Thankfully, America has a long way to go before “triumph of the will” could become the American creed. The Christians who make up George W. Bush’s political base would gag well before reaching that point; they know their Bible better than that.

I would suggest that, instead of fascism, the danger now facing America is one of the many ills released from that Pandora’s Box, the French Revolution: abstract nationalism. As Burke pointed out,

conservative patriotism is very different from the abstract nationalism of “la Patrie.” It is a concrete attachment to our own places: our own valleys or towns, our farms, hills or plains. It is local, it is real and it rightly sees Walmart as a far greater threat than tin-pot dictators in Third World countries.

Abstract nationalism, what Martin van Creveld calls “the state as an ideal” in his book *The Rise and Decline of the State*, has spread widely in America. As conservatives, we need to do a better job of explaining to our fellow citizens why that kind of nationalism is radical, not conservative. But van Creveld’s book also points to the likely fate of such a nationalism: it will crumble after it fails in war.

In Europe, the state as an ideal died in World War I, in the mud at places like the Somme and Verdun. I suspect that the same thing is going to happen here after the American people have to confront the reality of America’s defeat in Iraq. Bush’s wild Wilsonianism is out of time; it is a ghost from an era long past, an illusion that is now sustained only by the public’s trust that somehow, our troops’ unquestionable valor in Iraq will bring victory. When it becomes clear to that public that valor alone is not enough, that a failed strategy brings defeat no matter how courageously soldiers and Marines may fight, the grand illusion will be followed by a profound bitterness and a turning inward. That turning inward could be a good thing for conservatives, if we can lead it toward a restoration of the American republic as a curative for the follies of empire.

There is one not unlikely event that could bring, if not fascism, then a nationalist statism that would destroy American liberty: a terrorist event that caused mass casualties, not the 3,000 dead of 9/11 but 30,000 dead or 300,000 dead. We will devote some thought to that possibility in a future column.

*February 2, 2005*

## More Election Ju-Ju

Bands played, children sang, millions of Iraqis turned out to vote and the whole world hailed Iraq's election as an historic epiphany. Success in the voting process means that Iraq will emerge as a peaceful, democratic state. America has won its war.

Sorry, but I don't buy it. The problem in Iraq is still exactly what it was before the election: there is no state. Elections alone do not create a state, as we saw not long ago in Afghanistan. An occupying American army can protect an election, but it cannot create a state. Yes, millions voted. But the Kurds voted for an independent Kurdistan, the Shi'ites voted for a Shi'ite-controlled Islamic republic (if any outside power won the election, it was Iran, not the U.S.) and the Sunnis stayed home and cleaned their weapons, getting ready for the next round of war. The insurgents know that history is made not by majorities who vote but by minorities who fight. The prospect of a Shi'ite-run Iraq helps the Sunni insurgents more than it hurts them.

While the elections themselves did not re-create a state in Iraq, they may have opened a door to doing so – a narrow door, but one Iraq and the U.S. might pass through if both prove more adroit than they have in the past. The key to success – and success remains less likely than failure – is for both the new Iraqi government and Washington to understand that the critical issue is legitimacy. No Iraqi regime can retain legitimacy if it is seen as a creature of the United States.

In specific terms, what does that mean? Iraq's new government should take steps along the following lines: Refuse to move into Baghdad's infamous Green Zone, or anywhere else where it would depend on American troops for its security. A Shi'ite-dominated Iraqi government can be safe enough in Sadr City.



Exclude Americans from all participation in writing Iraq's new constitution.

Separate Iraq's new army and police from the Americans. If they need advisors, get them from some country other than the U.S. or Britain. Order the new army's equipment from Europe, Russia or China. Get rid of the American-style uniforms. Appearances are immensely important to the question of legitimacy.

Order all American troops out of Fallujah so the local citizens can finally come home. Iraqis, not Americans, should rebuild the city. This would be an important message to the Sunnis.

Sit down with as many of the insurgents as possible and try to cut a deal. Make it clear that Iraq's new government will eventually order the Americans out, and be willing to negotiate the timetable with the Sunni insurgents. So long as American troops are present, the insurgency will continue.

Find as many issues as possible on which to disagree with the Americans, do so publicly and force the Americans to back down. The more often the new government stands up to the Americans, the greater its legitimacy will be.

For its part, Washington could help this process along. Quietly encourage the new Iraqi government to override us. Complain loudly about how it is disregarding our advice. Most importantly, stop saying that American policy is to "kill or capture" every Iraqi who dares resist us. Don't try to impose a military defeat on Iraq's Sunnis, forcing them to come crawling to us and beg for mercy. That is never going to happen. Our goal should be peace, not victory. In much of Sunni Iraq, that means American troops should pull out. Quietly, we should also be talking to insurgent elements, trying to make deals.

Will any of this happen? As I have said before, Ayatollah Sistani seems like that rarest of men in today's world, a wise man. The Iraqi government he controls may take steps along these lines. Will

Washington? Almost certainly not. Nor will our senior military leaders; they pride themselves on not being Machiavellian. But one silver lining is that genuine American anger toward the new Iraqi government is as useful as feigned anger. And our political and military leaders are both dumb enough to get angry at any real signs of Iraqi independence.

Actions along these lines could create chance – just a chance – of rebuilding a real Iraqi state. If so, Iraq's election might have marked a turning point. If not, all that will come out of them is an intensification of the civil war that is already under way in Iraq, plus a greater likelihood that war will spread beyond Iraq as Sunnis throughout the Arab world rally against a triumphant Shiism. That remains the more likely outcome.

*February 9, 2005*

## Fin de Siecle

“In the early morning of Feb. 9, Tokyo informed Beijing’s embassy here that the Senkaku Islands would be administered by the Japanese coast guard.” In that small story in the *Christian Science Monitor* are some interesting portents.

Few other newspapers bothered to report what undoubtedly seemed to editors a trivial matter. It may in fact prove trivial. But possibly not. History is well larded with small events that had large consequences, as devotees of the War of Jenkins’ Ear know.

In this case, Japan told an increasingly nationalistic China to stuff it on a question, ownership of the tiny Senkakus and the possibly quite large oil and gas deposits around them, that has echoes in modern Chinese history. From the Meiji Restoration in Japan to the end of World War II, the Japanese frequently told the Chinese to stuff it. Then, there was nothing a weak China could do about it. Now, China is no longer weak.

China’s present grand strategy is to avoid conflicts and build up her economic strength. She is happy to watch potential rivals dissipate their strength in wars while she drives their industry into the ground. The Chinese government takes a long view of history. But it is not only democracies that must pay attention to public opinion. If the Chinese people react strongly to Japan’s unilateral move, things could get interesting.

A face-off between the Chinese and Japanese navies would have unpredictable results. On paper, the Chinese fleet is stronger, but it is more a collection of ships than a real navy. The Imperial Japanese Navy was a first-rate organization, but how much of its quality survives in the Japanese Maritime Self-Defense Force is unknown. Would the

United States intervene in support of Japan? If it came to shooting, my guess would be yes. But at that point, the U.S. would have set itself up for a potential strategic disaster, because an obvious Chinese response would be to tell North Korea, "Go for it!" A North Korean nuke on Osaka would set Japanese ambitions back a mite, and an America trying to fight one war in Korea while already enmeshed in another in Iraq would give real meaning to the phrase, "imperial overreach."

To an historian, a crisis over the Senkakus would fit in a larger and not comforting pattern: the world before 1914. Then, an unstable European order blundered from crisis to crisis, just avoiding a general war in each, until some shots fired in Sarajevo brought down the whole house of cards and with it Western civilization. Today, we have the war in Iraq, the Israeli-Palestinian mess (the Balkans of our time?), the Balkans themselves, a threatened American attack on Iran, a resurgent FARC in Columbias and a North Korea that just declared itself a nuclear state. The *fin de siecle* feeling grows ever stronger; what small incident will it be this time that causes the house of cards to collapse, the house of cards that is a world of "unipolar" American dominance?

The tragedy here is that states continue to play the game of rivalry between states, paying no attention to the prime fact of a 4th Generation world: when states fight each other, the likely winners will be non-state elements. Again, the analogy with 1914 is hard to avoid. Then, the ancient Houses of Hapsburg, Romanov and Hohenzollern remained focused on each other, thinking only in terms of which would triumph over its rivals. In fact, the events they allowed to be set in motion destroyed them all. The real victors were a guy named Ulyanov sitting in a café in Zurich and a transatlantic republic, the United States.

So it will be today when states fight other states, regardless of which state "wins" the formal conflict. We see that already in Iraq, where the American victory over the Iraqi state created a new and fertile field for Islamic non-state forces. China could easily come apart

internally as a result of war; God knows what might emerge out of a Japan that again suffered nuclear attack, or the ruins of Korea. Nor is the internal stability of the United States guaranteed in the event of military defeat and strategic disaster. Thanks to the cultural Marxism of “Political Correctness” and “multiculturalism,” we are no longer “one nation, under God, indivisible.”

The 21st century will be a time for what Russell Kirk called “the politics of prudence.” But prudence is seldom a cardinal virtue in national capitals, whether we are speaking of Tokyo, Pyongyang, Beijing – or Washington.

*February 16, 2005*

# Opportunity Knocks

The February 15 *Washington Post* carried as a front-page story that most valuable of war reports, an in-depth look at our enemy in Iraq. It was the story of an insurgent named Abu Shaiba, who was killed on December 17 in Fallujah in a firefight with U.S. forces.

Abu Shaiba was not some kid high on Islamic fervor. He was 39 years old, a father of nine children. Why was he fighting us? Because on October 11, U.S. troops had shot and killed his 13-year old son. He came from a culture that demands revenge. Abu Shaiba sought death in Fallujah, and found it, because when he left the city to take his family to safety, other insurgents thought he had shown cowardice. His culture demanded that he die to prove he was no coward, so he did. To the degree the U.S. military regards opponents like Abu Shaiba with contempt, it makes a grave mistake.

What is most interesting about the *Post* piece is its suggestion that Abu Shaiba, and others like him, could be our allies instead of our enemies – providing we stop killing their children. Over and over, the Iraqis who are fighting us because we have occupied their country express their anger toward the foreign fighters who represent militant Islamic *jihad*.

After Abu Shaiba's death, his brother and friends spoke of divisions within their own ranks ... all of them said they had been betrayed by zealous Arab fighters from abroad ... They said Abu Shaiba especially disliked them, believing they had hijacked the insurgency, transforming Fallujah into a bastion of beheadings, summary executions, kidnappings and draconian justice...

Walid agreed: "He used to call them locusts, sweeping into an area and eating everything, green or dry ..."

Together, they went to get help to bury him (Abu Shaiba). On their way, they saw a dozen foreign fighters, some of whom they blamed for his death. Abu Gailan (Abu Shaiba's brother) said he raised his gun at the fighters, mostly Syrians and Saudis, and locked a round in the chamber.

"It was revenge for me and my brother," he said. "I intended to kill them."

"Your sisters are prostitutes!" Salam recalled Abu Gailan shouting. "Saadi is dead!" You betrayed him!" Salam and Walid restrained him...

"Fallujah became a shelter for them," he said. "We realized this too late..."

"His fight, Abu Gailan said, was with the Americans – "the occupation," as he put it. But at another point in the conversation, he said that if U.S. forces announced they would withdraw in a year or two, the insurgency would probably diminish.

Any G-2 worth his paycheck would hear opportunity knocking in this first-hand account of tensions between Iraqi nationalist and foreign Islamists. What if, instead of continuing to try to kill or capture anyone resisting us in Iraq, which only generates endlessly more enemies, we tried talking to some of them? What if we said to the Abu Shaibas and Abu Gailans, "We don't want to fight you. We don't intend to rule over you. This is your country, not ours. If you want to fight these foreign Islamists, we will stay out of your way. If you want us to, we will help you against them – with you making the decisions and giving the orders, not us. And if we have wronged any of you, by killing or injuring members of your family or destroying your property, we will pay compensation."

What if Washington were enlightened enough to add, "The last American soldier will leave your country soon, in two years or less. Why fight us when we are leaving anyway?"

Time magazine recently reported that U.S. representatives are now talking with representatives of some of the insurgents. Thank God. Splitting our opposition and working with as much of it as we can is the only possible light at the end of the Iraqi tunnel. That will not accomplish the single remaining strategic goal in Iraq, re-creating an Iraqi state – only Iraqis can do that, if anyone can – but at least it might offer us a way out with a few of our tailfeathers intact.

A number of Marine Corps officers contacted me after my recent column on the progress of the FMFM 1-A, *4th Generation War*, asking if they could get involved in helping write it (the answer is yes, to anyone who wants to help – it is an open process). One of them, an infantry major recently back from Iraq, said, “I’m where Colonel Mike Wyly was after Vietnam. I don’t know what will work, but I know what we are doing now is not working.”

The *Post*’s story of the life and death of Abu Shaiba offers a way that might work. We should be fighting alongside the Abu Shaibas, not against them. A good first step would be to find Abu Shaiba’s widow and children and offer them some help, as testimony that the U.S. military honors brave opponents it would rather not have to fight.

*February 24, 2005*



# Turkish Delight

The February 15 *Christian Science Monitor* describes a situation which, to anyone familiar with American-Turkish relations in the post-World War II period, is almost beyond imagining: an American attack on Turkey. According to the *Monitor*'s story,

*The year is 2007. After a clash with Turkish forces in northern Iraq, US troops stage a surprise attack. Reeling, Turkey turns to Russia and the European Union, who turn back the American onslaught.*

*This is the plot of "Metal Storm," one of the fastest-selling books in Turkish history. The book is clearly sold as fiction, but its premise has entered Turkey's public discourse in a way that sometimes seems to blur the line between fantasy and reality.*

*"The Foreign Ministry and General Staff are reading it keenly," Murat Yetkin, a columnist for the Turkish daily newspaper Radikal, recently wrote. "All cabinet members also have it."*

Here we see in dramatic fashion America's loss of the "Global War on Terrorism" at the moral level. By invading and occupying Iraq, a country that posed no threat to us, and threatening to do the same to other countries around the world, we have made America into a monster – even in Turkey, the country that has been our closest Islamic ally since the onset of the Cold War. So dramatically has America managed to reverse its post-9/11 moral ascendancy that not only can Turks imagine us attacking Turkey, they see Russia coming to their rescue! Russia has been Turkey's number one enemy for centuries.

It seems America has managed to bring about what historians call a “diplomatic revolution,” a fundamental shift in alliances, by encouraging everyone else, ancient enemies included, to ally against herself. The *Monitor* goes on to report that

*Egemen Bagis, a member of Turkey’s ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) and chairman of the Turkey-US friendship caucus in parliament, says the unpopular war in neighboring Iraq continues to fuel anti-American feelings.*

*“This public feeling, this public tension, is not any different from what is happening in other European countries or other Middle Eastern countries,” Mr. Bagis says.*

The Bush administration, one of whose ‘droids reportedly recently said that “we make up our own reality,” will take comfort in the fact that Turkey’s government, like governments elsewhere, remains our humble and obliging servant. To observers who seek rather than shun reality, that is cold comfort. In today’s world, public opinion is strategically more important, not less important, than the attitudes of governments. It is one of the many ironies in the jumble of contradictions that make up this administration’s policies that the democracy it promotes would quickly worsen, not better, America’s diplomatic position. We can bully or buy elites much more easily than we can do the same to world opinion.

The *Monitor* quotes an American diplomat, speaking of the situation in Turkey post-*Metal Storm*, saying “We’re really pulling our hair out trying to figure how to deal with this.” That unhappy diplomat now knows how it felt to work in the German Foreign Office before both World Wars. The task he faces goes beyond what diplomacy can hope to accomplish. So long as a powerful country is on the grand strategic offensive, demanding that everyone else in the world bow to its wishes and adopt its ideology or be subject to attack (Wilhelmine Germany did not actually go that far, though America’s neocons now

do), it will push everyone else into coalition against it. Just as Bismarck's successor Holstein could not imagine an alliance between republican France and Tsarist Russia, and watched it happen nonetheless, Metal Storm now portrays an equally unimaginable alliance between Turkey and Russia. Will that too come to pass? An American attack on another Middle Eastern country, which I think likely, may bring about many unimaginable alliances.

Russell Kirk, the grand old man of the post-war American conservative movement, put it best:

*There is one sure way of making a deadly enemy, and that is to propose to anybody, "Submit yourself to me, and I will improve your condition by relieving you from the burden of your own image and by reconstituting your substance in my image."*

Not only will that make an enemy of anybody, it will make an enemy of everybody.

*March 2, 2005*

## More Newspeak

One of the classic signs of ideology at work is the redefinition of words to empty them of their meaning. An article by Greg Jaffe in the February 16 *Wall Street Journal*, “New Factor in Iraq: Irregular Brigades Fill Security Void,” describes the rapid spread of militias in that unhappy place, which is probably now more accurately called Mesopotamia. The story is based largely on the work of one U.S. Marine Corps officer, Major Chris Wales, in tracking the new militias. But it also quotes Major Wales as saying, “We don’t call them militias. Militias are ... illegal.”

Well, that certainly solves the problem. A militia isn’t a militia if we don’t call it a militia. And we can’t call it a militia, because we have decreed there shall be no militias in Iraq. King Canute, call your office.

Let me quickly add that I am not pointing a finger at Major Wales. In today’s Marine Corps, a major is a minor, and any major who didn’t use Newspeak (especially when talking to the press) would quickly find himself the MWR officer in Barstow.

Generals, it seems, can be a bit more frank. The March 2 *Washington Post*, reporting on General Abizaid’s testimony to the Senate Armed Services Committee, had this to say:

*Asked by lawmakers about irregular Iraqi militia springing up around the country, Abizaid said the help of such militia in providing security for the elections was “in some ways a good thing.” In the long run, however, they should be incorporated with Iraqi government forces. “Ultimately .... it’s destabilizing,” he said*

The proliferation of militias, growing dependence of the Iraqi government and the U.S. on those militias to fight Sunni insurgents and our obvious inability to control the militias all point to the bottom line of the war in Iraq: Iraq is not moving closer to becoming a state again, and it may be moving further away from doing so. Local, private armies, often for hire, are a classic sign that the state is weak or non-existent. If a state does not have a monopoly on organized violence, it is not a state.

It cannot bring order. Such order as exists is local and is enforced by local military forces, which are militias whether or not Americans call them that.

The absence of a state breeds militias, and the militias are in turn both a sign and a cause of the absence of the state.

The proliferation of militias points to another fact about the war in Iraq: it is increasingly taking on the nature of a civil war. In the 4th Generation stew of militias, gangs, groups of insurgents and so on, some fault lines seem to be emerging. The new militias are largely Shi'ite (the Kurds have an old and very capable militia, the Peshmerga), they are aligned loosely in support of Iraq's new Shi'ite-dominated government (but not controlled by that government) and their main purpose is to fight the insurgents, who are Sunnis. It is fairly clear where this script is heading.

Like the American destruction of Fallujah and the recent Iraqi elections, the rise and spread of Shi'ite militias devoted to fighting Sunni insurgents puts ever-greater pressure on Iraq's Sunnis to cast their lot with the insurgency. Shi'ite militias in particular leave them little choice; who else but the insurgents will protect them from Shi'ite militiamen? The situation in Germany during the Thirty Years' War may be an analogy: though many tried, few German princes could avoid casting their lots either with the Protestants or with the Catholics. Neutrality meant you became the victim of both.

So what is the U.S. to do, beyond not calling Iraqi militias “militias?” There is nothing we can do. The *Wall Street Journal* quotes Lt. Col. James Bullion, who works for General Petraeus, as saying, “There is no way we can stop the Iraqis from doing something they want to do. This is their country and their army now. We can’t put that genie back in the bottle.”

Better still is General Petraeus’s own comment: “I want to get the hell out of here.” Amen.

*March 9, 2005*

## Where Is Charles Martel?

I spent last week in one of the few remaining bits of the real “Old Europe,” Europe before it was commercialized and Americanized, namely Portugal. The Portuguese deserve their reputation as the nicest people in Europe, and Lisbon is a delight for any true conservative, because it is a city that clings tenaciously to its past. Tiny, four-wheeled streetcars, built in the 1920s to an American design of about 1905, still clatter and clang through the twisting, narrow streets of the old Moorish quarter, the Alfama. Streetcars are a sign of high civilization, just as television is a sign of advancing barbarism.

I went to Lisbon for a NATO conference on defense of the Mediterranean, a vital topic at a time when Europe is again being overrun by invading Moslems. As I noted in my remarks to the conference, immigrants who do not acculturate are a greater danger than an invading army. The army eventually goes home, while the immigrants stay, permanently changing the cultural landscape. With 500,000 illegal immigrants now entering Europe each year from North Africa, Islam’s muftis in mufti are rapidly reversing the verdict of the Battle of Tours. Strategically, Islamic immigration is a far greater threat to Europe than al-Qaeda’s terrorism.

Looking around the room at the conference’s first session, my expectations of learning something new were not high. Most of the presenters were either diplomats or academics, two groups with well-earned reputations for taking a great many words to say little or nothing. That has always been true of diplomats, of course; saying nothing while speaking at length is exactly what they are paid to do. But I am astonished again and again at the degree to which academics have become vapid dispensers of commonplaces, ideas so banal and contentless that only other academics could give them serious

attention. It seems the words “academic” and “intellectual” have become opposites.

To my surprise, the conference nonetheless proved valuable, not so much for the specifics of what was said as for its dynamics, and perhaps a small bit of hope for Christian Europe’s future that emerged from those dynamics. The first dynamic was the degree to which all the Islamic spokesmen had the same message: any attempt by the West to defend itself from the hordes of Islam was a violation of “Political Correctness,” aka the cultural Marxism of the Frankfurt School. All the usual PC bugaboos and hobgoblins were dragged out and paraded before us: “racism,” “oppression,” “discrimination,” “fear of The Other” (my response to that one was that many vanished peoples could explain why fear of “The Other” was reasonable and prudent), even the latest PC coinage, “Islamophobia,” of which I am certain we will be hearing a great deal more. It is, of course, all humbug, but it is humbug that has cowed Europeans for at least a generation.

I was not surprised to see Islamics use cultural Marxism as a weapon, any more than it surprises me to watch cultural Marxists use mass immigration as a weapon. Both have the same objective, the destruction of the Christian West, and the equivalent of a Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact between them makes sense. No matter that the cultural Marxists hate Allah as much as they hate Jhw-h or the Holy Trinity, or that the Islamic scimitar would quickly be put to the necks of the cultural Marxists; until the Christian West is dead and buried, each can use the other.

Here was the second, and more surprising, dynamic of the conference: a number of participants (not just myself, old Templar that I am) dared defy the rules of cultural Marxism and call upon the Christian West to defend itself. The Islamics’ frantic waving of the “racism” and “discrimination” bugaboos did not entirely work. By the end of the conference, I thought the Islamics seemed beaten. It certainly did not go according to their plan, with the West groveling in



the dirt and praising the “benefits” of Islamic immigration.

In a European context, such an outcome was, until very recently, impossible to imagine. But it seems that even in Europe, morally devastated as it was by the 20th Century’s three Western civil wars, a spark of the will to live may still flicker. As growing portions of once-ordered European cities are turned into Third World hellholes by hundreds of thousands of immigrants bitterly opposed to European culture, a few people are daring to speak about what they see.

From a 4th Generation perspective, the question is whether the European state system can stem the Islamic invasion. That state system is now embodied more in the European Union than in individual European states, and so far the EU has done little more than serve as the undertaker in the death of the West.

If the state system cannot defend Europe, non-state elements may rise to do so. From that perspective, perhaps the best lastwords of the conference were found on the wall of a building across the street from the conference hotel, in a graffito that said, “They’ve got the numbers, we’ve got the guns.” It seems that Charles Martel is not entirely forgotten.

*March 16, 2005*

# On Killing

*On Killing* is the title of a book by my old friend Lt. Col. Dave Grossman, and it is a book that anyone who has any interest in war should read. Obviously, killing is a central aspect of war, the aspect that distinguishes war from almost all other human endeavors. Nonetheless, I find myself forced to disagree with a commentary one Marine infantry officer recently sent to the 4th Generation seminar after he read the draft of our FMFM 1-A, 4th Generation War. He wrote, “First, as tactical guys, killing is still the essence of the business. I think any manual written for Marines needs to take this into account as the bottom line.” Again, killing always has been and is likely to remain a central aspect of war. But I would suggest that we should not define it as the “essence” or “bottom line” of war, especially 4th Generation war. It seems to me that the bottom line needs to be, not killing, but winning.

If we define killing as our bottom line, then our understanding of war will lead us to kill, whether killing moves us toward or away from winning. One of the central points of our draft FMFM is that especially in 4GW, de-escalation, not escalation, is key to winning (the first of our seminar’s members to return from Iraq, where he was a company commander, said his experience there strongly supported that point).

While escalation and killing are not identical – in many situations, you may need to do some careful, limited, targeted killing in order to de-escalate – a bias toward killing could easily feed a tendency to escalate. (The officer who wrote to us added, “I do agree with the need for targeted killing – use a knife so to speak. This should be more the norm.”) Escalation, in turn, will almost always work in favor of our non-state enemies. In other words, at least in 4th Generation war, winning and killing are likely to be in some tension with each other.

More, if we define killing as our bottom line, we fall back into 2nd Generation war with its inward focus. 3rd Generation “maneuver warfare” focuses outward, on the enemy, the situation and the result the situation requires. Defining killing as the “bottom line” is a form of inward focus, not in the sense of being one of the processes that are central to the 2nd Generation, but rather in seeing our ‘essence’ defined as “what we do.” From a maneuver warfare perspective, what we do must always be infinitely flexible, based only on what the situation requires in order for us to win. Any form of inward focus contradicts maneuver warfare doctrine and undermines the institutional culture a 3rd Generation military must sustain.

It is easy to see why soldiers and Marines, “as tactical guys,” would define killing as the bottom line. Even in 3rd Generation wars such as the German “*Blitzkrieg*” campaigns of World War II, that was true of the tactical level (with the modification that German infiltration tactics, which date to late World War I, worked to bypass and collapse the enemy rather than kill him even on the tactical level; many of the enemy ended up POWs rather than dead). But one of the characteristics of 4th Generation war is the compression of levels; a single tactical action can also work directly on the strategic level. We cannot normalize killing on the tactical level if it works against us on the strategic level, as in 4GW it generally will. Nobody wants to be “liberated” by being killed.

I am grateful for this Marine officer having taken the time to read our manuscript and write to use in response. The discussion he generated is exactly what the Marine Corps and our country need if they are to succeed in grappling with the dragon of 4th Generation war. Nobody has all the answers, or even most of the answers, at this point. The most we can try to do is get the questions right, and open debate is the only tool through which we can hope to accomplish even that much.

*March 23, 2005*

# Lebanese Baloney

On Tuesday, March 29, Syria informed the U.N. that it would withdraw all of its troops from Lebanon before that country holds elections later this spring. The neo-Jacobins are celebrating Syria's eviction from Lebanon as another great victory for democracy and the Rights of Man. But given what the removal of Syrian forces from Lebanon is likely to mean, they are slicing the baloney a bit thin. It is too easy to see through it.

As Washington now conveniently forgets, America and the rest of the world welcomed the entry of Syrian troops into Lebanon.

Why? Because they came to put an end to Lebanon's 15-year civil war, which raged from 1975 to 1990. Now, the departure of those same troops has an excellent chance of reigniting that civil war. Already, three bombs have gone off in Christian neighborhoods. The "democratic" forces Washington is supporting are Christian-led; with the expulsion of Syria, they see a chance to re-establish Christian domination of Lebanese politics. Hezbollah will be willing to fight to prevent that from happening. As usual, the neocons are smoking in the powder magazine.

Here is where they have cut the Lebanon baloney too thin. The likelihood of a renewed Lebanese civil war is sufficiently great that no one can overlook it – including the neocons themselves. They are ignorant of the world, but not that ignorant. So the key question becomes this: why would the neocons and the Bush administration they dominate want a renewed Lebanese civil war?

I suspect the answer is to be sought less in Washington than in Tel Aviv. The most effective of the non-state enemies Israel now faces is Hezbollah. Hezbollah drove Israel out of Lebanon. While it remains

comparatively weak in the West Bank and Gaza, where Hamas has the lead, it is striving to build up its influence there. From Israel's perspective, what better way could there be to diminish Hezbollah's power than to embroil it in a new civil war in Lebanon? The well-orchestrated demands for Syrian withdrawal from Lebanon appeared across the board, in Lebanon and internationally, immediately after the car bomb assassination of former Lebanese prime minister Rafik Hariri. Syria has been blamed for the assassination. But if we ask who benefited from it, the answer is Israel, not Syria. Could the whole thing have been a Mossad operation? The choreography of the anti-Syrian reaction, including Washington immediately jumping on board, suggests it could.

A renewed Lebanese civil war in turn fits into a larger Likud strategy, a strategy that leading Washington neocons helped draft.

In essence, that strategy calls for destabilizing every existing Middle Eastern regime, on the grounds that Israel would then dominate the region as the only remaining stable country. The neocons camouflage the call for destabilization by dressing it up as "democracy" and "freedom," but even they know that democracy in the Middle East is about as likely as old Bessie, teets flailing, jumping over the moon. Plus, if any Moslem country in the region did hold a genuinely free election, Osama bin Laden would win it.

The irony here is that destabilizing existing Middle Eastern governments will not improve Israel's security. Quite the contrary, it will greatly benefit the non-state entities such as Hamas, Hezbollah and al-Qaeda that are Israel's and America's far more dangerous opponents (if Lebanon does return to civil war, Hezbollah will win it). Those organizations do not seek to take over states, but to replace the state with a new caliphate that would unite all Moslems. Their immediate enemies are precisely the authoritarian governments in Syria and elsewhere that Israel and Washington are now trying to push over the brink.

Destabilization is a “win-win” pact with the devil, an alliance of schlemiels and schlimazels in which both Israel and the U.S. are schlimazels, but we are the schlimazel’s schlimazel. That’s what you get when you combine neocon advisors with an American President who, as Hitler said of General Keitel, has the mind of a hotel doorman.

*April 2, 2005*

## Are Iraq's Insurgents Losing?

The last few weeks have seen a spate of press reports suggesting that Iraq's insurgency is on the ropes. A combination of the Iraqi elections and relentless U.S. military pressure has brought the resistance to the point of ineffectiveness if not disintegration. Larry Kudlow, writing in the *New Republic*, summed it up:

*Depending on which official you ask, insurgent attacks have dropped by either a third or nearly half. The number of Americans killed in action has declined. Civilians have begun killing terrorists. Over the last week alone, U.S. forces have killed scores of insurgents in lopsided battles—in the latest, Iraqi forces spearheaded the offensive.*

Is this actually what is happening in Iraq? From this remove, it is impossible to tell. Could it happen? Certainly. Wars do not move in straight lines, most of them anyway. The fortunes of war shift back and forth, favoring one party today, another tomorrow. Just as we have blundered, so have the insurgents. Just as we face vast obstacles, so do they. As I have said from the outset of this strategically disastrous war, which is America's own Syracuse Expedition, I think it will end with an American failure if not outright defeat. But the path to that end is likely to have ups as well as downs, for all parties.

More importantly, I think 4th Generation theory enables us to gain a better perspective on the current situation than we obtain from arguing who is ahead on points. From a 4th Generation perspective, we need to remind ourselves that the terms we all use, myself included, such as "the insurgency" or "the resistance," are an inherently misleading shorthand. In Malaya or Algeria or Vietnam, one could speak of the opponent as a something. In 4th Generation situations such



as Iraq, one cannot.

There is no single opponent. Rather, what we face is a vast array of armed elements operating outside the control of the state.

They range from true insurgents, such as the Ba'athists, through kidnapers, gangs of robbers, hostile tribes, foreign mujaheddin seeking martyrdom and party or faction militias to men out to avenge their family's honor. The essence of the problem is not that they are fighting the American occupation – some are, some aren't – but that they are armed elements not controlled by the state. Their very existence undermines the state to the point where it becomes a fiction.

Looking at the other side of the coin, we see that the American challenge is not merely defeating an insurgency but re-creating an Iraqi state. Attaining that goal can be very far away even if “the insurgents” lose. If “the insurgency” were defeated tomorrow, remaining obstacles would still include a general breakdown of order in Iraqi society, mutual hatreds among Sunnis, Shi'ites and Kurds (one possible turn of events is that the Shi'ites and the Sunni “insurgents” might unite against the Kurds over Kirkuk), basic services such as power and water that don't work, a dead economy that leaves most Iraqis un- or underemployed and an unworkable political system imposed by foreigners (how did Bremer & Co. forget that in our political system, we require two-thirds majorities when we want to make any action almost impossible?). Looming over everything is the question of legitimacy: how can a state be legitimate when its government is a foreign creation propped up by foreign troops? For America to win in Iraq, it has to leave behind a real state. Further, that state must not be an enemy to America. The chance of meeting just the second requirement is small, given the Iraqi people's resentment toward the occupation and the strongly Islamic character of any likely new regime. It is improbable that we will meet the first requirement either. We may leave behind us the form of a state – a capital, a parliament, a government, etc. – but in most of the country, the real power will

remain where it is now, in the hands of armed elements operating outside the state. That is true whether we defeat “the insurgency” or not.

Contrary to what a number of writers on 4GW have said, 4th Generation war is not merely a new name for insurgency or guerilla warfare. What is at stake in 4GW is not who rules the state, but the fate of the state itself.

*April 7, 2005*

# On Strategy

Last week, a group of Marines asked me to meet with them to discuss the question of what America's strategy should now be in Iraq. Rather than answer that issues that get at a more fundamental point: how to think about strategy itself.

There are two basic ways to design a strategy. The first is to set a single strategic objective which, if you attain it, is decisive.

However, if you fail to attain it, you lose. A classic example of this type of strategy is Germany's *Schlieffen* Plan in World War I.

The *Schlieffen* Plan sacrificed everything for one objective, getting behind Paris and encircling the French Army in a single *vast Kesselschlacht*. Graf von Schlieffen had no illusions about what failure meant. Shortly before his death, someone asked him what Germany should do if his plan did not work. He answered, "Make peace."

An alternative type of strategy is one where you have a series of objectives, one maximalist, but others that yield partial successes or at least avoid outright defeat. This is how strategy tended to work in eighteenth century wars. My recommendation to the Marines was that they attempt to devise a strategy of this second type for the U.S. in Iraq. That will not be easy, as early blunders have left us in a weak strategic position. But it may be important, because the current all-or-nothing strategy, where the only acceptable outcome is a "democratic" Iraq that is an American ally, is likely to leave us with nothing.

The next step is to consider means. I suggested to the Marines that we need to identify a much broader range of means than we seem to be employing at present, where we too often consider only the "kinetic

approach.” Then comes the hard part: you need to relate your means to your new variety of ends in an intensive, iterative process where you carefully consider how means useful to one end may foreclose others. Indeed, you need to think about how one goal may foreclose other goals. This is a process far different from the sterile, mechanistic “Marine staff planning process.” It is an ongoing, intense back-and-forth discussion of the sort Colonel John Boyd emphasized was critical to approaching any strategic problem.

As part of this process, you may need to consider what bold, trend-altering actions you could take if your present course is not carrying you to your goal. In Iraq, one example would be announcing a date by which the last American troops would be gone from the country. I favor that, because I think the general trend in Iraq is unfavorable to even our minimal goal, leaving behind a functioning state that is not openly hostile to American interests. But here too there is a danger: you can end up taking an action that does shift the trend of a war, but shifts it against you. A classic example is Germany’s resumption of unrestricted submarine warfare in 1917.

My final suggestion to the Marines was that they think about our strategy in Iraq as a real-world problem, not simply as an exercise. It would be comforting to believe that in the Pentagon or at CENTCOM or in Baghdad’s “Green Zone” the sort of strategic analysis I have described is going on. Sadly, I doubt that is the case. An administration that has made “loyalty” to the White House’s maximalist objectives its most important test is not likely to encourage consideration of alternative strategies.

When it becomes clear that we will not attain those maximalist objectives, there could be a sudden, desperate quest for some way out that leaves a few of our tail feathers intact. At that point, the thoughtful work of a small group of Marines might find an audience.

*April 14, 2005*

## MS-13 vs. Minutemen?

One of the more hopeful signs that some life remains in the American republic is the re-emergence of Minutemen. Today's Minutemen exist to defend us from wetbacks rather than lobsterbacks, but they are no less needed now than in the 1770s. With both political parties united in their desire to flood America with illegal immigrants, the efforts of the new Minutemen to defend our southern border are highly to be praised. Citizens acting when a corrupt government will not are signs of health in a republic; endless deference to government marks the replacement of citizens by mere subjects.

At the same time, 4th Generation war theory cannot overlook the meaning of armed elements outside the control of the state operating on American territory. I refer here not to the Minutemen, most of whom are unarmed and whose role is to call in state forces, the Border Patrol, when they spot illegal immigrants. Rather, I am talking about a very real 4th Generation threat, the Salvadoran gang MS-13, which reportedly has declared war on the Minutemen. According to a piece in the March 29 *Washington Times*,

*The notorious crime syndicate Mara Salvatrucha is threatening Arizona's Project Minuteman and reportedly plans to teach it "a lesson" . . .*

*It is not hard to see why Mara Salvatrucha prefers the border status quo . . . The gang grew from Salvadoran refugees in California in the late 1980s into one of the largest criminal syndicates in North America, with as many as 20,000 members . . .*

If a 4th Generation entity, which MS-13 is, has grown powerful enough to undertake military action on American soil against

citizens who are helping to protect our border, then 4GW is further advanced here than many will have recognized. So far, that has not happened, and Mara Salvatrucha's threat may be hot air. But if it does happen, it will be an act of war, strategic in nature: MS-13 needs an open border, the Minutemen threaten to close the border, so MS-13 attacks them. That is not just crime, it is war.

Yet if MS-13 does not attack the Minutemen, that too may be an act of war, and a highly sophisticated one. A common mistake that many analysts and commentators make is to think that 4th Generation forces must replace the state or at least the government. A recent study issued by the Army War College's Strategic Studies Institute, *Street Gangs: The New Urban Insurgency* by Max. G. Manwaring, illustrates this error. It says right up front, on page 2,

*Although gangs and insurgents differ in terms of original motives and modes of operation, this linkage (between gangs and insurgents) infers that street gangs are a mutated form of urban insurgency.*

*That is, these nonstate actors must eventually seize political power to guarantee the freedom of action and the commercial environment they want.*

I would argue that, on the contrary, many 4th Generation actors, not just gangs, will deliberately not take over the government or overturn the form of the state because they will benefit greatly by operating within the state, below the radar of the state's armed forces. In effect, the hollowed-out sovereignty of the state is their best protection, especially against the armed forces of the United States or other outside powers. The current situation in Columbia provides an example. If the FARC or the drug lords took over the Columbian government, they would immediately make themselves subject to American attack or other action by the world community. Operating as they do, like viruses within the body of the state, they are protected by Columbia's

sovereignty. And they are quite capable of dealing with whatever the Columbian government itself can throw at them.

Looking at an internal threat, MS-13 in the U.S., I think the same logic applies. If MS-13 attacks the Minutemen in an act of open war, it will work against its own objectives, especially profit, by making itself a much higher profile target for the forces of the state. It serves its own strategic interests best by keeping the lowest possible profile while simultaneously expanding its real power in the areas of direct concern to itself, such as the Hispanic immigrant community.

It would be interesting to be a fly on the wall in meetings of MS-13's leadership and hear if these arguments are actually being stated. I may overestimate their strategic sophistication. But if I am correct and they are debating these issues, that is not good news for the state in the old U.S.A. It would suggest that the state's enemies are thinking more clearly than is the state itself, with its suicidal insistence on open borders.

*April 21, 2005*



## More on Gangs & Guerillas vs. the State

A story in the April 26 *Washington Times*, “Drug smugglers, rebels join hands,” by Carmen Gentile, offered an interesting illustration of the argument I made in my last column, that 4th Generation entities may do everything they want to do within the framework of hollowed-out states. The article reports that

*Brazilian drug traffickers have teamed up with Columbian rebels to smuggle narcotics through Paraguay, creating a lucrative new channel for distribution to the United States and Europe. . .*

*Using a precisely orchestrated system of flights from the Columbian jungle, Marxists rebels from the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Columbia, or FARC, are shipping 40 to 60 tons of cocaine annually to farms in Paraguay owned by Brazilian drug lords, who then put the cocaine in cars and small trucks and drive them across the nearly unmonitored border into rural western Brazil ... in return for arms, dollars and Euros from Brazilian traffickers (for the FARC).*

Of course, the states in question – Columbia, Paraguay and Brazil – would like to put a halt to this arrangement. But what can they do? If the United States cannot control its border along the Rio Grande, how can Brazil possibly keep drug traffickers from crossing its vastly longer land border, much of it through difficult country? Columbia is a hollow state, with the FARC, drug gangs and other non-state elements in effective control of much of its territory.

Paraguay illustrates another effective technique non-state forces use against armed forces of the state: taking them from within.

The *Washington Times* article quotes the U.S. State Department's 2005 *International Narcotics Strategy Report* concerning "corruption and inefficiency" within the Paraguayan National Police, "who have been accused of protecting Brazilian narcotics traffickers." What a surprise! Given the profits involved in drug smuggling, how hard would it be to buy off some Paraguayan cops? Or all Paraguayan cops?

Meanwhile, drug smugglers and guerrilla forces like the FARC work together more easily than states do. The state system is old, creaky, formalistic and slow. Drug dealing and guerrilla warfare represent a free market, where deals happen fast. Several years ago, a Marine friend went down to Bolivia as part of the U.S. counter-drug effort. He observed that the drug traffickers went through Boyd Cycle or OODA Loop six times in the time it took us to go through it once. When I relayed that to Colonel Boyd, he said, "Then we're not even in the game."

Not surprisingly, the FARC and others find they can use the drug trade for political ends. The *Washington Times* piece noted,

*But the (State Department) report did not mention FARC's recent cultivation of ties with leftist rebels in Paraguay ... Columbian Marxists infiltrating Paraguay beyond the drug trade made headlines in February when former presidential daughter Cecilia Cubas was found dead after being held captive for more than two months.*

How long will it be before al-Qaeda and other Islamic non-state forces make their own alliances with the drug gangs and people smugglers who are experts in getting across America's southern border? Or use the excellent distribution systems the drug gangs have throughout the United States to smuggle something with a bigger bang than the best cocaine?

Just as we see states coming together around the world against the non-state forces of the 4th Generation, so those nonstate forces will

also come together in multi-faceted alliances. The difference is likely to be that they will do it faster and better. And, they will use states' preoccupation with the state system like a matador's cape, to dazzle and distract while they proceed with the real business of war.

*April 29, 2005*

## Fool's Paradise

About a year ago, I had lunch with someone who then held a relatively high position in America's homeland security forces.

During our conversation, I casually referred to "somebody setting off a suitcase nuke in an American city." He replied, "That will happen."

I therefore found striking the headline in this Sunday's *Washington Post*: "U.S. Sees Drop in Terrorist Threats." The first paragraph of the story went on to say,

*Reports of credible terrorist threats against the United States are at their lowest level since the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, according to U.S. intelligence officials and federal and state law enforcement authorities.*

*The intelligence community's daily threat assessment . . . currently lists, on average, 25 to 50 percent fewer threats against domestic targets than it typically did over the past two years, said one senior counterterrorism official.*

What is going on here? Are we really safer, or is Washington living in a fool's paradise? Three factors seem to have led to this new confidence in our homeland security. The first is real, the other two are delusions.

The real factor is that our security forces may have gotten over the Chicken Little Syndrome, where any indicator sent them squawking in panic. As the *Post* story reports,

*Counterterrorism officials said the atmosphere, particularly in*

*the Washington area, also has calmed because they are less jittery and less inclined to warn the public about every vague, unsubstantiated threat.*

*“People are more hesitant to pull the trigger, and now think, 'Let's wait a day or two' to investigate,” said John Rollins, former chief of staff for DHS's intelligence unit . . .*

This change is for the better. The Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) color-coded warnings had become a national joke.

Less good is the second factor: our Washington-based intelligence services are forgetting the threat of the “unknown unknown,” terrorists who understand how our intel system works and know how to evade it. The Post reports that people outside Washington see this danger:

*Several officials in urban areas that are considered prime targets, said they worried most about what law enforcement is not detecting. “I'm not so comforted” by the drop in intelligence warnings coming out of Washington, said one senior U.S. intelligence official based elsewhere. “I'm concerned about what is going on under our radar scope. And I'm worried about the radar scope.”*

This concern is valid. It would not be difficult for our enemies to game our sometimes less-than-sophisticated intelligence process, and thus learn how to spoof or bypass it.

The third factor is an even greater worry: Americans seem incapable of grasping our enemies' concept of time. We are an impatient people; they are not. We want results fast; they please Allah by simply carrying on the struggle, leaving results in his hands. To Americans, “oldies” are ten years old; Osama bin Laden muses about the loss of Spain in the 15th century.

In his new book, *The Fourth Power*, which argues that America

today has no grand strategy and needs one, former Senator Gary Hart hits this nail on the head:

*The war in Iraq shortly led to guerilla operations against U.S. and UN presences but did not immediately stimulate retaliation against the U.S. homeland. It is necessary to recall, however, that al-Qaeda documents captured in Afghanistan substantiate the connection between the stationing of American troops in Saudi Arabia following Gulf War I in 1991 and the wave of terrorist attacks that began with the first attack on the World Trade Center two years later. It will take some time before we know whether initiating a war against a major Arab state makes us safer or more in danger, more secure or less. Terrorists have proved to be patient.*

Patient indeed, as you can be when you have, literally, all the time in the world.

It could be years before a suitcase nuke goes off in an American city. It may be several decades before America gets hits with a genetically engineered plague that kills millions or tens of millions of Americans. But so long as we continue pursuing an offensive grand strategy, the goal of which is world domination, it is only a question of when, not whether, such events will happen. The paradise of fools turns into the purgatory of fools' successors.

*May 5, 2005*

# The Reality Gap

When people ask me what to read to find an historical parallel with America's situation today, I usually recommend J. H. Elliott's splendid history of Spain in the first half of the 17th century, *The Count-Duke of Olivares: A Statesman in an Age of Decline*. One of the features of the Spanish court in that period was its increasing disconnection with reality. At one point, Spain was trying to establish a Baltic fleet while the Dutch navy controlled the Straits of Gibraltar.

A similar reality gap leapt out at me from a story in the May 3 *Washington Post*, "Wars Strain U.S. Military Capability, Pentagon Reports." Were that the Pentagon's message, it would be a salutary one. But the real message was the opposite: no matter what happens, no one can defeat the American military. According to the *Post*,

*The Defense Department acknowledged yesterday that the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have stressed the U.S. military to a point where it is at higher risk of less swiftly and easily defeating potential foes, though officials maintained that U.S. forces could handle any military threat that presents itself. . .*

*The officials said the United States would win any projected conflict across the globe, but the path to victory could be more complicated.*

*"There is no doubt of what the outcome is going to be," a top defense official said. "Risk to accomplish the task isn't even part of the discussion."*

It isn't, but it certainly should be. The idea that the U.S. military cannot be defeated is disconnected from reality.

Let me put it plainly: the U.S. military can be beaten. Any military in history could be beaten, including the Spanish army of Olivares's day, which had not lost a battle in a century until it met the French at Rocroi. Sooner or later, we will march to our Rocroi, and probably sooner the way things are going.

Why? Because war is the province of chance. You cannot predict the outcome of a war just by counting up the stuff on either side and seeing who has more. Such "metrics" leave out strategy and stratagem, pre-emption and trickery, generalship and luck. They leave out John Boyd's all-important mental and moral levels. What better example could we have than the war in Iraq, which the Pentagon was sure was over the day we took Baghdad? Can these people learn nothing?

The *Post* article suggests the reality gap is even greater than it first appears. It quotes the Pentagon's classified annual risk assessment as saying "that the risk is increased but is trending lower"—as we prepare to attack Iran. It reports that the Army obtained less than 60 percent of the recruits it needed in April. Most strikingly, it says that so far in fiscal 2005, which is more than half over, the Army has trained only 7,800 new infantrymen. 4th Generation war and urban warfare are above all infantry warfare. My guess is that our opponents in Iraq alone have probably recruited 7,800 new fighters in this fiscal year.

Why do our senior military leaders put out this "we can't be beaten" bilge? Because they are chosen for their willingness to tell the politicians whatever they want to hear. A larger question is, why do the American press and public buy it? The answer, I fear, is "American exceptionalism"—the belief that history's laws do not apply to America. Unfortunately, American exceptionalism follows Spanish exceptionalism, French exceptionalism, Austrian exceptionalism, German exceptionalism and Soviet exceptionalism.

Reality tells us that the same rules apply to all. When a country adopts a wildly adventurist military policy, as we have done since the Cold War ended, it gets beaten. The U.S. military will eventually get



beaten, too. If, as seems more and more likely, we expand the war in Iraq by attacking Iran, our Rocroi may be found somewhere between the Euphrates and the Tigris rivers.

*May 12, 2005*

# The Greatest Blunder

I regard a war with China – hot or cold – as perhaps the greatest strategic blunder the United States could make, beyond those it has already made. The end result would be the same as that from the 20th century wars between Britain and Germany: it reduced both to second-rate powers. In the 21st century, the real victors would be the non-state forces of the 4th Generation, who would fill the gap created by the reduction of both Chinese and American power.

Given my foreboding – in George W. Bush’s Washington, it seems the rule is that any blunder we can make, we will make – I was struck by the title of Robert D. Kaplan’s article in the June *Atlantic Monthly*, “How We Would Fight China.” Kaplan has written some excellent material on the breakdown of the state and the rise of non-state elements.

Here, however, I think he gets it wrong. Kaplan sees the 21st century being defined by a new Cold War between China and the United States, rather than the clash between states and non-state forces. I believe this phenomenon will be far more century shaping than any conflict between states.

While Kaplan writes about how the U.S. could use naval power – subtly – to contain a rising China, within the framework of a Bismarckian *Realpolitik* that accommodates everyone’s interests, he recognizes the danger to all of a Cold War turning hot. He writes, “Only a similarly pragmatic approach (similar to Bismarck’s) will allow us to accommodate China’s inevitable reemergence as a great power. The alternative will be to turn the earth of the twenty-first century into a battleground.”

Regrettably, there are influential voices in Washington that want a

war with China, the sooner the better. The most likely cause is Taiwan. Few in Washington understand why China is so adamant about Taiwan remaining officially part of China. The reason is China's history, throughout which her greatest threat has not been foreign invasion but internal division. China has often fractured, sometimes into many parts. Today, Beijing fears that if one province, Taiwan, achieves independence, others will follow. China will go to war, including with the United States, to prevent that from happening.

Correctly, Kaplan observes that China is not able to successfully fight a sea and air war with America:

*China has committed itself to significant military spending, but its navy and air force will not be able to match ours for some decades. The Chinese are therefore not going to do us the favor of engaging in conventional air and naval battles, like those fought in the Pacific during World War II.*

So how would China fight us? If we send some carrier battle groups to intervene in a war between China and Taiwan, I think China will do something Kaplan does not mention. She will go nuclear at sea from the outset.

When the Cold War ended, we found out that the Soviet Union planned to do exactly that (so much for Reagan administration plans to send our carriers charging up to the Kola Peninsula). The Chinese might employ nuclear-armed anti-ship missiles and torpedoes, fired from submarines or surface ships, but I think her little surprise for us may be nastier. Kaplan briefly mentions that China "may eventually be able to lob missiles accurately at moving ships in the Pacific" from deep in Chinese territory. I think those missiles, ballistic missiles with nuclear warheads, may be ready now – perhaps with a bit of clandestine targeting assistance from a Russia whose sphere of influence the United States is aggressively invading.

The Chinese way of war is indirect. In most cases, that means

China will engage us with “soft power,” as she is already doing on multiple fronts. But in the case of American intervention in a Taiwan crisis, what if a Chinese ballistic missile popped a nuke say, 100 miles from an advancing American carrier battle group? No one gets hurt, but the message would be loud and clear: keep coming and you’re toast.

If we kept coming anyway and the Chinese did nuke a carrier, we would immediately face an asymmetrical situation. How would we respond? By nuking a Chinese carrier? China doesn’t have any. If we drop a nuke on Chinese territory, we have initiated a strategic nuclear exchange. Is Taiwan worth Seattle or L.A.?

The right answer, as Kaplan recognizes, is don’t go to war with China. Perhaps if someone could talk to Karl Rove about the importance of the Chinese vote . . .

*May 19, 2005*

## Of Cabbages and Kings

Two weeks ago, a small, single-engine plane inadvertently strayed into the closed air space above Washington. The result was panic. Both the White House and the Capitol were evacuated, with police shouting “Run! Run!” at fleeing staffers and visitors. Senators and Congressmen abandoned in haste the floors of their respective Houses. Various RIPs (Really Important People) were escorted to their Fuehrerbunkers. F-16s came close to shooting the Cessna down.

The whole episode would have been funny if it weren't so sad. As an historian, I could think of nothing other than the behavior of an earlier profile in courage, the Persian king Darius, at the battle of Issus. As the Roman historian Arrian described it,

*The moment the Persian left went to pieces under Alexander's attack and Darius, in his war chariot, saw that it was cut off, he incontinently fled—indeed, he led the race for safety ... dropping his shield and stripping off his mantle even leaving his bow in the war-chariot—he leapt upon a horse and rode for his life.*

Not surprisingly, Darius's army was less than keen to fight to the death for its illustrious leader. As one British officer said, commenting on U.S. Marines' love of running for exercise, “We prefer our officers not to run. It can discourage the troops.”

I suspect that more than a few of our soldiers and Marines in Iraq and Afghanistan, enjoying as they do a daily diet of IEDs, ambushes and mortarings, were less than amused at watching Washington flee from a flea. More importantly, what message does such easy panic send to the rest of the world? Osama bin Laden has whole armies trying to kill him, but as best I know he has shown no signs of fear. Here again

we see the power of the moral level of war. In cultures less decadent than our own, few men are likely to identify with leaders who fill their pants at one tiny blip on a radar screen.

The episode also reveals what has become one of the main characteristics of America's "homeland defense:" a total inability to use common sense. We have already seen that in our airport security procedures, our *de facto* open borders immigration policy and the idiotic "Patriot Act." Here, it seems that no one was willing to act on the obvious, namely that if a small plane is approaching Washington, it is probably because the pilot got lost (which pilots do frequently). Why? Because to bureaucracies what is important is not external reality but covering your own backside politically. Putting on shows serves that purpose well, even if the shows make us look like both fools and cowards.

There was also a message to the American people in the Cessna affair, and from a 4th Generation perspective it was not a helpful one. The message was that the safety of the New Class in Washington is far more important than the safety of other Americans. As the first really serious terrorist incident is likely to show, America remains ill-prepared either to prevent or to deal with the consequences of a "dirty bomb" or a suitcase nuke or an induced plague. Not only will ordinary people die in large numbers, it will be realized in retrospect that many of the deaths could have been avoided had the New Class cared about anyone other than itself. But, of course, it doesn't.

As I have said many times before, what lies at the heart of 4th Generation war is a crisis of legitimacy of the state. In America, that crisis can only be intensified by any instance where the Washington elite draws a distinction between itself and the rest of the country. When the same people who have sent our kids to die in Iraq and left our borders wide open run in panic because of a Cessna, the American people get the message: Washington is "them," not "us." At some point, that gap may grow wide enough to swallow the state itself. Kings

who become cabbages, like Darius, end up history's losers.

*May26, 2005*

# Wreck it and Run

Among the many unhappy developments in American industry in recent decades has been the advent of “wreck it and run” management. A small coterie of senior managers takes over a company and makes a brilliant show of short-term profits while actually driving the business into the ground. They bail out just before it crashes, cashing in their stock options as they go, and leave the employees, ordinary stockholders and customers holding an empty bag.

It is increasingly clear that under Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, the U.S. armed forces have also been taken over by “wreck it and run” management. When Rumsfeld leaves office, what will his successor inherit?

- A volunteer military without volunteers. The Army missed its active-duty recruiting goal in April by almost half. Guard and Reserve recruiting are collapsing. Retention will do the same as “stop loss” orders are lifted. The reason, obviously, is the war in Iraq. Parents don’t want to be the first one on their block to have their kid come home in a box.
- The world’s largest pile of wrecked and worn-out military equipment, or perhaps second-largest if we remember the old Soviet Navy. I’m talking about basic stuff here: trucks, Humvees, personnel carriers, crew-served weapons, etc. This is gear the Rumsfeld Pentagon hates to spend money on, because it does not represent “transformation” to the hi-tech, video-game warfare it wrongly sees as the future. So far, deploying units have made up their deficiencies by robbing units that are not deploying, often National Guard outfits. But that stock has about run out, and some of the stripped units are now facing deployment themselves, minus their gear.



- A military tied down in a strategically meaningless backwater, Iraq, to the point where it can't do much else. A perceptive reader of these columns recently wrote to me that "China has the luxury of the U.S. inflicting grievous wounds, economic and military, on itself from our commitment to spread democracy...Although the Iraqi insurgents may have the limited purpose of ending an occupation, other global actors can sit back and watch us bleed ourselves slowly to, at least, a weakened state. From that point of view, the last thing these other actors wish to see is either a victory or a quick defeat. Instead, events are proceeding nicely as they are." Exactly correct, and those other actors include al-Qaeda.
- Commitments to hundreds of billions of dollars worth of future weapons programs that are militarily as useful as Zeppelins but less fun to watch. If the Army had its Future Combat System, a semi-portable Maginot Line that will cost more than any Navy or Air Force program of equal uselessness, in Iraq or Afghanistan today, would it make any difference? No. Maybe FCS really stands for Funnels Cash System.
- A world wary of U.S. intentions and skeptical of any American claims about anything. In business, good will is considered a tangible asset. In true "wreck it and run" fashion, Rumsfeld & Co. have reduced the value of that asset to near zero. A recent survey of the German public found Russia was considered a better friend than the United States.
- Finally, the equivalent of an unfavorable ruling by a bankruptcy judge in the form of a lost war. We will be lucky if we can get out of Iraq with anything less than a total loss.

Earlier today, I attended the funeral and burial of one of America's real military heroes at Arlington cemetery. Colonel David Hackworth would not have sat silent, as our current senior military leadership sits, while "wreck it and run" civilian management drove America's armed forces into the ground. Rumsfeld & Co. will bear primary responsibility for the disaster, which will no doubt disturb them greatly as they enjoy their luxurious retirements. But our senior generals and

admirals are the equivalent of the board of directors, and they would have some difficulty convincing Hack that they were just the piano players in the whorehouse. It would not surprise me if when the current crowd finds itself approaching the Pearly Gates, Hack has a few claymores waiting for them.

*June 2, 2005*

## Striking Back at the Empire

The recent votes in France and the Netherlands against the proposed constitution of the European Union are not merely political phenomena. They represent significant actions in the development of 4th Generation war. Why? Because the root cause of 4th Generation war is a crisis of legitimacy of the state, and the two referenda saw the French and Dutch people rebel against their elites' efforts to empty the state of its content.

Understanding what happened in these two votes requires a counterintuitive mindset. Normally, we would think of elites as representing the state and the common people rebelling against the state. That is not what happened here. On the contrary, the elites represent the destruction of the state and the French and Dutch people rebelled in defense of their historic, national states. In effect, the aristocracy was crying "Down with the king!" while the peasants shouted "*Vive le roi!*" (which happened quite frequently during both the French and Russian Revolutions).

Today's European political elites, like most of their counterparts elsewhere, do not give their primary allegiance to the state. Rather, their first loyalty goes to a New World Order that advocates world government (even the EU is just a way station on that journey), a globalized economy in which European and North American living standards are averaged with those of the Third World, and the general abolition of religions, customs and traditions in favor of a culture based on commercialism, materialism and sensual pleasure. Western elites, especially Europe's, add one more element: the ideology of cultural Marxism, the Marxism of the Frankfurt School, which says that the white race (especially males), the Christian religion and Western civilization are all evils that must be repressed and, in time, eradicated.

In the 1930s, the British novelist Aldous Huxley wrote a book about that kind of future; he called it *Brave New World*.

The Western political elites began to transfer their allegiance away from the state after World War I, in response to the horrors the state created at places like Ypres, the Somme and Verdun. They intensified their new loyalty to the internationalist superstate after World War II, and began the slow, painstaking creation of actual superstates in the form of the United Nations, the World Court, the Common Market (now the European Union) and similar bodies. They expected that in time, the common people — the plebs, the *narod*, the *riah* — would follow the wise example of their betters and give their loyalty too to Brave New World.

But they were wrong. As the French and Dutch referenda showed, ordinary people would rather offer their loyalty to something real, their historic nation-state, than to an abstract scheme in which they rightly perceive totalitarian tendencies (a number of former Soviet dissidents are warning that the European Union looks increasingly like the Soviet Union). *Das Volk* prefers its own culture to the poison of “multiculturalism,” its own neighbors to hordes of semi-barbaric immigrants and its own customs to regulations handed down by Gosplan bureaucrats in Brussels.

How will the Brave New World elites respond to this unenlightened effrontery on the part of the great unwashed? By realizing they made a mistake — the mistake of letting ordinary people have a say about their future. They will hem and haw for a bit, slow things down for a little while and then resume their previous course, this time making sure there are no referenda. Brave New World only holds elections when they offer voters no real choice other than more Brave New World.

And so the state’s legitimacy will crumble further, and 4th Generation war will spread, including in Europe. Denied the option of giving their loyalty to their historic state and its way of life, ordinary people will indeed transfer that loyalty, not to Brave New World but to

a plethora of causes, ideologies, religions, regions, ethnic groups, tribes and gangs. And for these new loyalties, they will fight.

Like the French Bourbons, the Euroelites forget nothing and they learn nothing. The future does not belong to them.

*June 9, 2005*

# The Other War

In view of the steady stream of bad news from Iraq – five dead Marines in Saturday’s paper, two more in Sunday’s and four soldiers in Monday’s, along with the Ba'athist element of the resistance so “weakened” it is now striking targets in Iran – it is easy to forget that we are fighting, and losing, not one 4th Generation war but two. Five U.S. troops were killed in Afghanistan last week. On June 9, the *Washington Post* reported that

*Insurgents linked to the former Taliban regime have set off a wave of violence in Afghanistan, launching a string of almost daily bombings and assassinations that have killed dozens of U.S. and Afghan military personnel and civilians in recent weeks . . . a virtual lockdown is in effect for many of the . . . roughly 3,000 international residents of Kabul . . .*

As recently as April of this year, the senior U.S. commander in Afghanistan, Lt. Gen. David Barno, said he envisioned “most of (the Taliban) collapsing and rejoining the Afghan political and economic process” within a year. He seems to have projected the winter’s quiescence as a trend, forgetting that Afghan wars always shut down in wintertime, as war did everywhere until the 19th century. Afghanistan is not so much Iraq Lite as Iraq Slow, the land that forgot time. Our defeat will come slowly. But it will come.

The reason we will lose is that our strategic objective is unrealistic. Neither America nor anyone can turn Afghanistan into a modern state, aka Brave New World. In attempting to do so, we have launched broad scale assaults on Afghanistan’s rural economy and culture, guaranteeing that the Pashtun countryside will eventually turn against us. Afghan wars are decided in the countryside, not in Kabul.

The Pashtun countryside's economy depends on opium poppies. Columnist Arnaud de Borchgrave, an old Afghan hand, recently wrote that poppy cultivation generates 12 times more income than the same acreage planted in wheat. 400,000 acres now grow poppies.

*Ministers or their deputies are on the take. Police cars carry opium through roadblocks . . . Former anti-Soviet guerillas, known as the mujahideen, now populate the national highway police, which give the smugglers total security on the main roads.*

Opium is the Pashtun economy. Yet we are now waging a war against it, a war where every victory means impoverishing the rural population. A story in the March 25 *New York Times*, "Pentagon Sees Antidrug Effort in Afghanistan," reported that

*On March 15 the American military in Afghanistan provided transportation and a security force for 6 D.E.A. officers and 36 Afghan narcotics policemen who raided three laboratories in Nangahar Province. . .*

*Under the new mission guidance, the Defense Department will provide "transportation, planning assistance, intelligence, targeting packages" to the counternarcotics mission, said one senior Pentagon official.*

*American troops will also stand by for "in-extremis support," the official said, particularly to defend D.E.A. and Afghan officers who come under attack . . .*

Our assault on traditional Afghan culture is also guaranteed to unite the rural Pashtuns against us. A story in the May 10 *Christian Science Monitor* began,

*A bearded man from the bazaar is whisked into a barber shop, where he's given a shave and a slick haircut. After a facial, he*

*visits fashion boutiques.*

*In a few tightly edited minutes of television, the humble bricklayer is transformed into an Afghan metrosexual, complete with jeans, sweater, suede jacket and sunglasses.*

This was on Kabul's new Tolo TV, which was established with a grant from U.S. A.I.D. The story goes on to note that "Modesty in male-female relations and respect for elders are two important parts of Afghan culture that Tolo is challenging." Not surprisingly, in March Afghanistan's senior Islamic council, the *ulema shura*, criticized such programs as "opposed to Islam and national values."

In consequence of these blunders, assailing rural Afghanistan's economy and its culture, de Borchgrave reports that "Britain's defense chiefs have advised Tony Blair 'a strategic failure' of the Afghan operation now threatens." That term is precisely accurate. Our failure is strategic, not tactical, and it can only be remedied by a change in strategic objective. Instead of trying to remake Afghanistan, we need to redefine our strategic objective to accept that country as it is, always has been and always will be: a poor, primitive and faction-ridden place, dependent on poppy cultivation and proud of its strict Islamic traditions.

In other words, we have to accept that the Afghanistan we have is as good as it is going to get. Once we do that, we open the door to a steady reduction in our presence there and the reduction of Afghan affairs to matters of local importance only. That, and only that, is a realistic strategic objective in Afghanistan.

*June 22, 2005*



# The Sun Also Rises

For the first time since 1942, Japan has resumed the strategic offensive. Since the beginning of the year, Japan has claimed the island of Takeshima, now occupied by South Korea; seized control of an area in the South China Sea also claimed by Beijing; and, most ominously, announced that Tokyo might intervene militarily to defend Taiwan.

Taiwan was Japanese from 1895 to 1945, a fact that neither the Chinese nor the Taiwanese have forgotten; if they had to choose, many Taiwanese would rather be governed from Tokyo than from Beijing.

I do not know what has motivated the Japanese government to resume the strategic offensive. I do know it is a mistake. Japan's low-profile, defensive strategy has served her well for more than half a century. It is exactly the right strategy for a 4th Generation 21st century, where survival will depend heavily on staying off other people's hit lists. As in the 1930s and early '40s, Japan shows an odd sense of timing.

The Takeshima issue offers an example. A divided Korea is very much in Japan's interest. By laying claim to what is now Korean territory, Japan brings South and North Korea together. In fact, North Korea missed an opportunity. Had Pyongyang said that in the face of any Japanese claims, the armed forces of both Koreas were one in defending Korean soil, it would have scored a propaganda triumph.

While a united Korea would be no danger to the United States, it would be perhaps the most dangerous state threat to Japan. Even today, South Korea's navy and air force are structured more for a war with Japan than for a conflict with North Korea. Any war with Japan, including an aggressive one, would be wildly popular with the Korean people. Asian memories run deep, and Japan's current military

weakness offers an opportunity that may not last forever (although given Japan's demographics, it might).

Taking the offensive against China is an even greater blunder on Tokyo's part. Here, the danger is less Chinese aggression than internal Chinese dissolution and the regional instability that would result. Any humiliation of China by Japan damages the legitimacy of the Beijing government. A Chinese defeat by Japan and America in a crisis over Taiwan could well bring that government down. Contrary to neocon blather, its likely successor would not be parliamentary democracy but a new "Period of Warring States" within China, which is to say 4th Generation war throughout the most critical part of the Asian landmass. The resulting chaos would not be good for Japanese interests, especially if nukes started to fly. Throwing a few at Japan would be an easy way for a Chinese contender to establish its patriotic credentials.

Predictably, the strategically imbecilic Bush administration is supporting Japan's new offensive posture. In reality, with its military forces tied down in the Middle East, the last thing America needs is a new source of crises in East Asia. The mix there is already volatile enough; adding a Japan on the strategic offensive is the equivalent of smoking in the powder magazine.

American interests require that both China and Japan follow defensive strategies – as indeed they require the United States to follow a defensive strategy. China wants to do exactly that, knowing that time is on her side. Only the Taiwan question is likely to push here to take the offensive, which means we should let that sleeping dog lie. As for Tokyo, I suspect the new Japanese offensive would collapse quickly if Washington quietly signaled its disapproval. Without American support, any rising of the Japanese sun will quickly prove a mirage made of hot air.

All that is required is a morsel of strategic sense in Washington. Alas, that horizon remains blank.

*June 25, 2005*

## Doing it Right

An article in the June 23rd *Christian Science Monitor*, “A US patrol gains trust in Baghdad neighborhood,” tells the story of an American unit that gets 4th Generation war.

*When the patrol (in Humvees) passes a busy street, Lieutenant Waters . . . tells his men to get out and start walking. As the foot patrol makes its way through the streets, an old Shi'ite woman in a black hejab invites Waters into her house. At the threshold, Waters politely waits.*

*“I don't want to track the dirt from the street into your house,” he tells her. . .*

*Waters is trying to gain the trust of this tense district, where the US has previously been regarded with hatred and suspicion. . .*

*After long months in this sector of Baghdad, Waters's company has not killed anyone nor has it lost a single soldier.*

*“We are not killing machines; we are men,” Waters explains. “I think if we can deal with the separation from our families, and not become hardhearted, we might just be able to leave here changed in a positive way.”*

*“It's just like the Hippocratic oath,” he says. “‘First, do no harm.’”*

What has enabled Lt. Waters and his unit of California National Guardsmen to get it right? Lt. Waters is a cop. Specifically, he is a sheriff from Sacramento. He is dealing with the people of Baghdad the same way he deals with the people back home, politely and with a genuine desire to help. His unit has not killed anyone because Lt.

Waters knows cops succeed by de-escalating, not by escalating violence. Cops try very hard not to kill people. In fact, cops don't want to fight at all.

Just as having soldiers who want to fight is important in Second and 3rd Generation war, so not wanting to fight is key to success in the 4th Generation. Any fight, whether won or lost, ultimately works against an outside power that is trying to damp down a 4th Generation conflict. Fighting ramps up disorder, and 4th Generation entities thrive on disorder. Disorder undermines the local government's legitimacy, because disorder proves that government cannot provide security. Fighting usually means that locals get killed, and when that happens, the relatives and friends of the casualties are then obliged to join the fight to get revenge. Violence escalates, when success requires de-escalation.

Again, cops know all this. Here we see another lesson for 4GW: Reserve and National Guard units are more valuable than regular troops. Why? Because they contain a lot of cops. Lt. Waters is not the only cop who has succeeded in Iraq. Other Guard and Reserve units have let their cops take the lead, working the same way they do back home to de-escalate violence and bring security. Like Lt. Waters, they have achieved some local successes.

In order to turn local successes into success on a larger scale, American policy needs to focus more broadly on de-escalation. Here again there is some tentative good news. According to the London Sunday *Times*, the U.S. is now negotiating with several of the Sunni insurgent groups. Tensions between Ba'athist elements of the Iraqi resistance and Islamist elements, especially those employing foreign fighters, have already escalated to the point of firefights between the two. We should be able to make deals with some of the Ba'athists.

The *Times* reported that the resistance leaders we are talking with have one main demand: that we set a date for leaving Iraq. One of the Iraqi negotiators was quoted as saying, "We told them it did not matter

whether we are talking about one year or a five-year plan but that we insisted on having a timetable nonetheless.” That is a demand the U.S. should be willing to meet. Not only would a set date for American withdrawal undermine much of the resistance, it would turn our opponents back on themselves by allowing the Ba'athists to focus on fighting the Islamists, assuming we are smart enough to let them do so. It would also help the American public see some end to a conflict with which it is understandable growing weary.

4th Generation theory says that to have any hope of victory, an outside force needs to de-escalate on every level. If other American units in Iraq could learn from cops like Lt. Waters how to de-escalate on the local, tactical level, and we could combine that with de-escalation on the strategic level through a deal with Ba'athist insurgents, we might still be able to avoid outright defeat. Given the consequences of earlier errors such as disbanding the Iraqi army, that is as close to victory as we can now realistically hope to come.

*June 29, 2005*

# Hunting for Cops

Until very recently, an article titled “Hunt for Cops” might have described a city’s effort to recruit more police officers. Sadly, that was not the message of an article in the July 3, 2005 *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, my hometown newspaper.

*Residents of the capital of the poor and chaotic Russian province of Dagestan have come to call it “the hunt for cops”—more than two years of bold and brutal attacks on police... 26 police officers have been killed in gun and bomb attacks this year alone...*

What is true in Dagestan is also true in Iraq: Iraqi police are being hunted and killed in large numbers by the Iraqi resistance. As one commentator recently put it, it is safer to be a door-to-door Bible salesman in Peshawar than to wear a police uniform in Baghdad. And, it is happening in some American cities. Police officers are being killed — assassinated, really—not because they get in the way of some bank robber but because they are symbols of the state. A 4th Generation fighter, usually a gang member, simply walks up to a police cruiser and shoots a cop.

It is easy to understand why 4th Generation entities would go hunting for cops. The police are not only the first line of defense in the state’s attempt to maintain order (remember that maintaining order was the state’s original *raison d’etre*), they are an irreplaceable line. If the police fail and the military has to be called in, the state has probably lost. Why? Because troops, who are trained for combat, not police work, usually act in ways that alienate the population they are supposed to protect. That in turn further undermines the legitimacy of the state, which is both the origin and the goal of 4th Generation war. This

dynamic is one of the principal reasons why the legitimacy of Iraq's American-installed government remains tenuous at best. It continues to depend on troops, many of them foreign, rather than being able to rely on police to create and maintain order.

It is less easy to see what police should do about 4th Generation threats, to themselves and to the communities they are supposed to protect. Two approaches do not work. The first is brutality. The *Plain Dealer* article reports that

*The roots of the hunt for cops reach back to fall 1998, when Dagestani authorities moved to fight back against growing criminality by forming a special police division to combat kidnapping...*

*The division was under pressure to show results, and its officers started employing torture regularly to squeeze confessions out of suspects, said an officer in the regional prosecutor's office who spoke on condition of anonymity.*

A second approach that does not work is militarizing the police. This is a phenomenon which we already see too often in American police departments, where citizens increasingly face police officers in fatigues, helmets and body armor, armed with automatic weapons. Such units are needed, but they must remain largely invisible to the public. Why? Because their intimidating appearance separates the public from the police, while effective police work demands the closest possible relationship between the police and the public.

This points to what is probably the most effective approach police can use against 4th Generation elements: community policing. Community policing relies on police officers who always work the same neighborhood, often on foot. They come to know that neighborhood intimately, including many of the people who live there. With the help of the people they protect, they can quickly see any



abnormality and move to nip it in the bud. And, just as the cop protects the neighborhood, the neighborhood protects their cop. A close, working relationship between citizens and police faces any 4th Generation fighter with a very difficult problem.

Cops, most of them anyway, understand this. Several years ago, I gave my standard 4th Generation of Modern War talk to a police conference in Salt Lake City. Whereas maybe 10 percent of a military audience gets what I am saying, 90 percent of the cops understand it.

Unfortunately, American government, on local, state, and federal levels, does not. The Bush administration has effectively destroyed the best community policing program in the country, the Police Corps. State and local governments are happy to spend money to militarize the police, but they regard community policing, which is labor-intensive, as inefficient. They remain content with the L.A. model, where police isolated in cruisers respond to calls. If the goal is to preserve order, by the time a call comes, it is too late. Order has already been undermined by an incident that community policing might have prevented.

When it comes to 4th Generation war, an ounce of prevention is worth many pounds of cure.

*July 15, 2005*

# The Duke of Alba

In the sixteenth century, Europe was devastated by wars of religion, a fact which gives that unhappy time some relevance to our own. The foremost soldier and commander in sixteenth-century Europe was the Duke of Alba. An excellent new biography of the Duke by Henry Kamen offers some less than encouraging lessons.

In the 1560s, Spain faced a minor revolt in the Netherlands, which were then controlled by the Spanish crown. Hundreds of Catholic churches were sacked and desecrated by mobs of Calvinists. Philip II of Spain decided to send an army, commanded by the Duke of Alba — despite the fact that by Spring, 1567, the Netherlands' regent had put the rebellion down. In effect, Philip and Alba embarked on a “war of choice,” against the advice of both local authorities and many of Philip’s counselors.

The Duke of Alba’s arrival in Brussels on Friday, August 22, 1567, at the head of an army of 10,000 men — it was the first to follow the famous “Spanish Road” — created a problem where none existed. Henry Kamen writes,

*The duke of Alba, observers guessed, was there to restore order, arrest dissidents and check the growth of heresy. But the situation, according to Margaret of Parma (the Regent), was under control, so why was an army needed? It was in any case the first time that heresy in another country had ever appeared to be a concern of the Spanish crown.*

Once Alba got himself settled, he began arresting Flemish aristocrats, including some of those who had helped Margaret suppress the previous year’s rebellion. King Phillip wrote to Alba in November,

1567, “you have a free hand.” He did so despite some excellent advice from Friar Lorenzo de Villavicencio, who had lived in the Netherlands.

*The situation, Villavicencio insisted to the king, could not be resolved with an army. Nor must force be used against the Netherlanders, for that would unite them all against Spain... ‘Don’t let Your Majesty be persuaded that the Flemings are beasts and drunks, for they are human beings and if not so now they will be so one day, standing together and in their own land and with neighbors who will help them; and even if they kill one of ours and we kill ten of theirs, in the end they will finish us.’ Spaniards could not be allowed to govern in the country, ‘for they neither know the language nor understand the laws and customs.’*

Philip and Alba ignored this advice; Alba’s motto was “Hombres muertos no hazen guerra” — dead men make no war. His army did what armies do, kill people and break things, and the result was a string of local victories. By the summer of 1570, Kamen writes,

*Alba felt he could congratulate himself on having achieved what no other general in history had ever achieved: the pacification of a whole province, “and without losing a single man, because I can assure you that in the two campaigns barely a hundred soldiers died.”*

But that wasn’t the end of the story. The Dutch rebels adapted in a way the Spanish had never imagined: they based themselves where no Spanish troops could reach them, at sea. On April 1, 1572, the Sea Beggars, as the maritime rebels called themselves, seized the offshore port of Brill. On April 14, the Prince of Orange called on the Dutch people to revolt against “cruel bloodthirsty, foreign oppressors,” and they did. The resulting war would last for 80 years and result in Dutch independence and Spanish ruin.

As to the Duke of Alba himself, and his policies in the Netherlands,

the best summary was offered by his successor there, Luis de Requesens. As Henry Kamen quotes him,

*All I know is that when he came to this post he found the disturbances in them settled and no territory lost, and everything so quiet and secure that he could wield the knife as he wished. And by the time he left all Holland and Zealand was in the power of the enemy, as well as a good port of Guelderland and Brabant, and all the opinion of these provinces, with the finances wholly ruined.*

Whether this epitaph will apply equally well to America's invasion of Iraq, time will tell. But it is all too possible that the Middle East will end up being America's Netherlands. In any event, I somehow doubt that history will accept the Bush administration's newspeak name for the invasion of Iraq, "Operation Iraqi Freedom." Might "Operation Duke of Alba" be a more credible substitute?

*July 28, 2005*

## Modern Warfare Symposium

I spent last week in Pittsfield, Maine, at a symposium on modern war called by Colonel Mike Wyly, USMC retired. Col. Wyly was one of the heroes of the maneuver warfare movement in the Marine Corps in the 1970s and 80s, and when he suggests it's time for a new effort, people listen. My hope was that we might make some progress on 4th Generation war theory, and while I am not sure we accomplished that, we did gain some ground on one important question: what might a state armed service designed for 4GW look like?

To address that question, we first had to answer another one: what would such a force's mission be? Not being neo-Trotskyites, we derived our answer within the framework of a defensive grand strategy. The new service's (and it should be a new armed service) primary mission would be to prevent outbreaks of 4th Generation war on American soil. The focus must be on prevention, not "first response," because if we are forced into a response mode the enemy has already won. And, the new service must be oriented not only to preventing imported 4GW, like that we saw on 9/11, but also the home-grown variety such as London just experienced.

But—and here was the kicker—the new service has to keep us safe without pushing America further toward Big Brother, the all powerful, centralized, national security state represented by the Department of Homeland Security, the "Patriot Act" and much else coming out of Washington.

So what should this new 4GW armed service be? The answer of our working group at the symposium was, "a militia."

The militia was the basis of America's defense through most of our history as a republic. More, there are two contemporary models. One is

volunteer fire departments, which small town and rural America depend on and which almost always perform well. The other is community policing, where cops walk the same beat in the same neighborhood for a long time, long enough to understand the neighborhood and prevent crimes instead of just responding to them. Neither volunteer fire departments nor community police serve as control mechanisms for the federal government. They respond to their local communities, not to Washington.

The new militia's most important function would be neighborhood watch. The only way to prevent 4GW attacks is to find out about them before they happen, and that means the militia, like community police, must know what is happening in their neighborhoods. But again, we don't want to feed Big Brother. Almost all of what the militia knows should remain on the local level.

How can we make this happen? Our working group decided the militia should normally report to the county sheriff, a local, elected official who has a lot of independence. Sheriffs' powers, defined over centuries in common law, allow them to tell the feds to stick it. Nor are they under the thumb of local or state politicians. If they violate citizens' rights, they can be unelected real fast. The militia, we also decided, would not have powers of arrest unless deputized. A separation of powers between the militia and law enforcement would also help maintain citizens' rights.

Another danger we wanted to avoid was allowing the 1st Generation culture of order, still characteristic of America's 2nd Generation armed forces, to carry over to the new service. Like 3rd Generation militaries, the militia must be outward focused, prize initiative over obedience and depend on self-discipline, not imposed discipline. We therefore determined that there should be very little in the way of formal ranks or commands and no saluting, drill, uniforms (at least none required) etc. The largest unit would be the company, with an elected captain. The captain's duties would be mostly

administrative, and sub-units could elect adjutants to handle their paperwork if they wanted to. The militiamen would be free to choose leaders on a task basis, picking whoever they thought was best qualified depending on what they had to do. Yes, this means trusting ordinary citizens to show some common sense. Republics do that; if they can't or won't, they are no longer republics.

Another characteristic of our anti-4GW militia is that unless mobilized, the militiamen would not be paid. Instead of pay, they would collect points toward retirement benefits and—we thought this could kill two birds with one stone—they would receive health insurance for themselves and their families. Instead of health coverage just becoming another “entitlement,” citizens who did something for their country would find their country doing something for them. We thought long-term benefits like pensions and health insurance would also help recruit the kind of people the militia needs, solid citizens capable of delayed gratification.

Next week's column will continue this report on the results of Colonel Wyly's symposium, including the militia. And no, the fact that we met in Maine did not lead us to consider using moose as crew-served weapons carriers.

*August 4, 2005*

# Organizing the Militia

This column continues on the results of Colonel Mike Wyly's Modern War Symposium, and specifically the discussion of what a state armed service designed for 4th Generation war might look like. Since our number one goal should be to prevent 4GW attacks on American soil, our working group at the Symposium concluded such a service should be a militia.

The militia would be organized into three levels of types of companies. The first would be deployable world-wide, when our country had to respond to some event overseas. We anticipate that many of its members would be cops, as is true now of some Reserve and National Guard units, which means it would have a natural inclination toward de-escalating situations. This is what the FMFM 1-A, 4th Generation War, suggests is the key to success in many 4GW situations.

The second type of militia company would be deployable nationwide. It would be equipped with fewer weapons than first-line companies, and would be called up to maintain domestic order and control our borders. The third-line companies would be something entirely new. They would not be armed at all. Rather, they would contain people with skills needed to restore basic services after a 4GW attack. For example, these companies would have a lot of old guys who know how to make things like water treatment plants and banks work without computers, since one obvious target of 4GW warriors will be our computer systems. All militia units, but especially the third-line companies, would have networks of civilian experts they could plug into immediately for any knowledge or skills they needed.

As is traditional with militia, no company could be called up for



more than 90 days. When called up, they would be paid by whatever level of government called them up. Of course, they would perform their most important 4GW function, neighborhood watch, all the time, not just when mobilized.

We tried in our discussions to identify and find remedies to typical militia weaknesses. One weakness seen often in militia history is that units degenerate into mere social clubs. To prevent this, all companies would participate in annual play-offs in the form of free-play exercises against other companies. The winner would advance to the next level. Our hope is that these competitions would become big deals in communities across America, spurring the militiamen on to greater efforts.

Another typical militia weakness is doctrinal stagnation. To counter this, the militia would have its own General Staff, made up of the kind of “military dinks” who have been into military history and war games since they were kids. The General Staff would oversee doctrine, training and the regular round of free-play exercises. It would not vet individual militia members, since this would create centralization, but it would have the power to dissolve companies that performed poorly, became social clubs or got taken over by MS-13 and the like.

All recruitment would be voluntary. Volunteers could choose what type of company they wanted to join, level one, two or three, depending on their interests and skills. Companies could refuse any volunteer. Volunteers for first-line companies would provide their own gear, including personal weapons; crew-served weapons would be provided by the General Staff, which would also provide training funds. Second-line companies would be given basic gear, including light weapons. Third-line companies would bring their own tools. We thought carefully about where funding was to come from, because regardless of formal chains-of command, real control goes to whoever provides the money.

This thought led to one last innovation: the militia's General Staff would report to Congress, not the Executive Branch, except for those units which were mobilized, where the General Staff would report to the mobilizing authority (often a state governor). Congress will be generous to local militia units, because they will be made up of voters. But that was not our motive. Rather, we feared that if the militia came under the Executive Branch, it would promptly move to destroy it because it hates anything that does not give more power to Big Brother. All a President would have to do is turn the militia over to the Pentagon or DHS; either would delight in putting the knife into something that was bottom-up instead of top-down. That's exactly what the Bush Justice Department did to the country's most promising community policing program, the Police Corps.

Unfortunately, the Modern War Symposium broke up before each working group made a final presentation, so I cannot report on what the other groups did (lesson: three days is the maximum length for a conference; everyone leaves on the fourth). But I think we did make some progress on the question of what a state armed force intended for 4GW might look like. If the militia idea is on the right track, it would reinforce rather than undermine the qualities of a true republic. That in turn means it could strike directly at the origin of 4GW, the state's crisis of legitimacy. Of course, it also means that everyone in Washington will see it as a threat, because Washington is united in its pursuit of the national security state and the total power it offers to the center. And that, in turn, is at least part of the origin of the state's legitimacy crisis.

Like the original, I suspect this Gordian knot may end up getting cut rather than unraveled.

*August 11, 2005*

# Getting Swept

The past couple weeks have been a hard time here in my home town of Cleveland, Ohio. Third Battalion, 25th Marines, a reserve unit headquartered just ten minutes from my house, lost 20 guys in two days in Iraq. It was a kick in the stomach for the whole city.

Those Marines were our neighbors and sometimes our friends. The battalion commander of 3/25 is an old friend of mine, from his days as a captain. Last winter, before they deployed, I held a seminar on 4th Generation war for him and some of his officers and staff NCOs. The FMFM 1-A was barely in draft form then, but I did get them a pre-publication copy of John Poole's *Tactics of the Crescent Moon*. It is probably the best thing out there on the Islamic way of war. I hope it helped. Like everyone in Cleveland, I am frustrated that there is so little we can do for our own guys over there.

There is one thing I can do, and that is use this column to raise a question: why are units such as 3/25 being used to conduct sweeps? It was on a sweep that the 14 Marines were killed when their Amtrack was hit. The battalion took a similar hit last May in another sweep.

I am not criticizing 3/25 here. The policy of conducting sweeps is set at a level far above battalion. Maybe these things are decided in the Emerald City in Baghdad, maybe in Washington. In either case, it is in some vast headquarters where everything is reduced to PowerPoint briefs and spoon-fed to generals who know more about promotion politics than they do about war.

Why do I say that? Because anyone who knows anything about counter-insurgency warfare knows that sweeps don't work. In a sweep, a conventional military unit, designed to fight other units like itself, is sent into bad guy country. It is not going to stay there; it's just passing

through. Inevitably, the insurgents know for days if not weeks beforehand when and where it is coming. Most of the bad guys simply leave. Enough stay behind to set some ambushes and plant mines and booby-traps. The unit doing the sweep comes through like ducks in a shooting gallery. It gets hit, sometimes hard. Maybe it picks up a few insurgent weapons dumps. Typically, it rounds up any young men it finds as “possible insurgents” (units like 3/25 now report that they find no young men on their sweeps – no surprise). Then it leaves. The insurgents come back. Nothing has changed, except places like Cleveland hold a lot of military funerals. In the end, it’s us that gets swept.

So why do we keep doing it? Beyond the facts that many of our generals are military idiots and more are politicians in uniform (do I hear Lincoln up there sighing?), the standard answer is that we don’t have enough troops in Iraq to occupy the place. That is true. But instead of wasting the troops we do have by conducting sweeps, why don’t we adopt the “ink-blot strategy” where we can? Deriving from British experience in Malaya and what American Special Forces and Marines did in the early stages of the Vietnam war (and it was working when we abandoned it), the ink-blot strategy uses however many troops we’ve got to come into an area and stay. They move right into the towns and villages. They live with the local people. They provide long-term security, so local people can work with us without getting their throats cut three days later once we’ve gone.

No, we do not have enough troops to do this in all of Sunni Iraq. But we can start with part of it. Yes, that will give the insurgents a free hand elsewhere, for a time. But sweeps don’t change that fact; they only change the appearance, which may be what is wanted for briefings back in Washington but means nothing on the ground. Over time, our ink-blot can slowly expand, as areas become genuinely secure and can be turned over to someone else (probably local militias willing to take American dollars).

The root problem here is one I have pointed to many times before: the seeming inability of the American military's higher echelons to learn. The officers and men of units like 3/25 learn and adapt quickly. But our vast, overstaffed and underled headquarters seem to live on another planet. They don't learn from the experiences of others, through history, and they also don't learn from the experience of 3/25 and other similar units. They just keep ordering the same failed tactics, like sweeps or dropping bombs on populated towns and cities, over and over again. I'm not a psychologist, but I believe that is a traditional symptom of neurosis.

Yet on another level their behavior is rational. American generals become senior commanders by pleasing politicians. They please politicians by telling them what they want to hear. The Bush administration wants to be told that what we are doing is working, so that is what the generals tell them. And it's so much easier to tell someone else that it's working if you believe it yourself. It all makes perfect sense — in a closed-system fantasy-land that has no relationship whatever to the war units like 3/25 are fighting.

If the people of Cleveland and other places like Cleveland ever figure out what's really going on, there's going to be hell to pay. Anger is a short step from grief.

*August 19, 2005*

## Some Responses

My two columns on the idea of a national militia as the best response to the 4th Generation threat generated some responses that are worth thinking about. We will take a look at some of them here.

Let me first clarify one point: the militia we are talking about is a public, not a private militia. It is funded by government, and it reports to government (it is adcon to Congress and, unless mobilized, opcon to the county sheriff). Our working group thought it was important to keep the militia away from the federal executive branch as much as possible, because the executive branch will try either to destroy it or to turn it into a tool for Big Brother. But this militia is not just a bunch of guys running around in the woods. It is a state armed service, just like the four we now have — the Army, the Navy, the Marine Corps and the Coast Guard.

Now, some responses:

Myke asks, “I assume that by reporting to Congress he means that the militias would become tools of their particular representatives... Isn’t this the very sign of state collapse that van Creveld warned us of?” Our working group never envisioned the militia reporting to their local Congressman. Unless mobilized, it would report to the county sheriff; if mobilized, to a state governor or a CINC. As to whether it might contribute to the decline of the state, that depends on what kind of state we envision. The militia does represent decentralization away from Washington. But I think America’s current over-centralization is itself a factor in the state’s crisis of legitimacy. Both here and generally, it seems to me that decentralization and citizen involvement may help restore legitimacy to the state.

Two readers, Marion and Herbert, asked whether the Swiss militia

model might be relevant. The answer is clearly yes. Switzerland's defense has been based on a militia for a very long time, and it has enabled Switzerland to preserve its neutrality, maintain its liberties and decentralized political system (real power lies at the cantonal, not the federal level of government) and keep its defense expenditures down. The Swiss militia is an ideal basis for defending Switzerland from 4GW. In fact, Switzerland already has an arrangement other countries will need to move to in a 4GW world: the regular armed services support the militia, instead of the other way around.

Keith asks, "Is Mr. Lind expecting the militia force he refers to, to replace existing 'standing armies?'... I could not imagine such a force being suitably equipped (or trained) for expeditionary warfare... how can we do without modern, professional armed forces?" Our working group, and some though not all others at Col. Wyly's conference, saw the current armed forces as "legacy" forces. They represent a way of war that is passing, war between states. As we see in Iraq and Afghanistan, they do not succeed very well in 4th Generation wars. We thought the first-line militia companies we envision would be better suited to 4GW, in large part because they would be trained to de-escalate confrontations, rather than call in F-18s to drop 2000 pound bombs in urban neighborhoods. The winding down of the legacy forces would come gradually, but the combination of their vast cost and declining utility means they are passing into history.

Dee noted that not all urban areas have sheriffs. If the militia there reported to the mayor, directly or through the police chief, they could become dangerously politicized. I agree. Does anyone know how many places lack sheriffs?

Thomas noted that in addition to the example of volunteer fire departments, we can point to three other militia-type organizations already in existence: the Civil Air Patrol, the Coast Guard Auxiliary and some state militias that remain separate from the National Guard. Karl pointed out that 10 U.S.C. 330 already provides legal authorization

for an “Unorganized Militia” and a “Select Militia.” He notes, “This Code is still in effect, just ignored....” Nathan adds that since 1988, many counties have had “Local Emergency Planning Committees.” He adds, “The LEPCs could, by working with the sheriff (most do, closely, anyway today) be the coordinating catalyst to transform or spin off the militia companies.”

These are all useful questions or ideas. The militia concept still needs a lot of work if it is to become viable. And the larger question still remains: is a militia the best answer to the question of what kind of state armed service America needs to defend against 4th Generation threats?

The difference between the people who wrote responses to my columns and Washington is that the former are thinking about that question.

*August 25, 2005*



## War and Rumors of War

Recently, I raised the question of why we are doing sweeps in Iraq when the history of counter-insurgency tells us sweeps don't work. I was motivated to write that column by the death of fourteen Marines in one Amtrack during a sweep conducted by 3/25, Cleveland's Marine Reserve unit.

The previous day, 3/25 had lost six men, two sniper teams, under circumstances that were unclear. I recently received information on that incident that raises a very important question, a question with strategic, not merely tactical significance. I was told (not by anyone in 3/25) that the six Marines were ambushed and killed by the Iraqi troops they were attached to.

Let me say up front that I cannot confirm this report. Because I cannot confirm it, I am using it not to make a point but to raise some questions. The questions are, did this happen? If it did, why were the American people not told? And – this is the question with strategic importance – how often is this happening in Iraq today?

The reason the question has strategic meaning is that the Bush administration's strategy, if it can be called that, for avoiding outright defeat in Iraq is to build up the Iraqi armed forces and police until the war can be turned over to them. If those same Iraqi forces are attacking American troops on a fairly frequent basis, that is a significant piece of evidence the strategy is not working.

History suggests that it was never very likely to work. Over and over, invaders have tried to raise proxy armies to do much of the fighting for them. Only a minority of the troops Napoleon used to invade Russia were French; most were coerced from reluctant "allies" the French had previously defeated, like Prussia. Not surprisingly, as

soon as it could get away with it, the Prussian corps went over to the Russians.

World War II offers a similar lesson. Hundreds of thousands of Russians taken prisoner by the Wehrmacht changed sides. Many were absorbed into regular German units as *Hiwis*, “willing helpers.” Others formed a whole separate pro-German Russian Army under a Russian general, Vlasov. As a friend in Washington recently said, compared to “our” Iraqi forces, the Vlasov Army looked pretty good. But like most such forces, when faced with real combat, it and the *Hilfswillige* melted away.

Of course, there is also our own experience in Vietnam. Remember “Vietnamization?” It reflected the same strategy the Bush administration is now following: build up the armed forces of a friendly local government and let them do the fighting. Some ARVN units did fight. But the Vietnamese on the other side had a whole lot more motivation. As Saigon is now Ho Chi Minh City, will Baghdad one day be Sadr City or, worse, Osama City? I seem to see Clio nodding yes.

If the American public is to assess whether or not we are succeeding in Iraq, it needs to be told when Americans are attacked by the “friendly” Iraqi government forces they are working with. Again, I cannot confirm that this happened to the six snipers from 3/25. But if it did happen and the public was not told, the Bush administration will have been caught in yet another lie. That, too, has strategic significance in a war we were lied into in the first place. If a strategy initially based on lies must rely on more lies for its continuation, it is probably not pointed toward success.

Other evidence already suggests that our attempt to create our own Iraqi armed forces is not working. The police do an excellent job of disappearing whenever the insurgents show up. Most of the latest Iraqi Army recruits are (Kurdish) Pesh Merga or Shi'ite militiamen who are putting on different uniforms while maintaining their old loyalties. The

insurgents have infiltrated everywhere: Recently, U.S. forces have begun disbanding – sometimes forcibly – the Iraqi National Guard we previously created because it has been so thoroughly penetrated.

If, on top of this, our troops in Iraq are being attacked frequently by Iraqi government troops, and this information is deliberately being withheld from the American people, the crystal ball has turned black. So, President Rove, just what did happen to those six snipers from 3/25?

*September 2, 2005*

## In Defense of His Majesty

As regular readers in this column know, my reporting senior and lawful sovereign is His Imperial Majesty Kaiser Wilhelm II. When I finally report in to that great *Oberste Heeresleitung* in the sky, I expect to do so as the Kaiser's last soldier.

Why? Well, beyond *Bestimmung*, the unhappy fact is that Western civilization's last chance of survival was probably a victory by the Central Powers in World War I. Their defeat let all the poisons of the French Revolution loose unchecked, which is the main reason that we now live in a moral and cultural cesspool.

History has not been kind to Kaiser Wilhelm, unfairly in my view (an assessment in which Martin van Creveld agrees with me). He may have been the brightest chief of state in early 20th century Europe. His chief fault was yielding too often to his advisors, when he in fact was right. Once he saw where events were headed in the summer of 1914, he desperately sought to avert war. I have seen the actual last telegram he sent to the Tsar (interestingly, it is in English). When war came, he wanted Germany to remain on the defensive in the west, abandoning the Schlieffen Plan, and take the offensive in the east, against Russia. Such a course would have kept England out of the war and almost certainly resulted in a German victory. His Chief of the General Staff, von Moltke the less, told him it could not be done (the plans were in the file). After the war, in exile in Holland, his response to the terms of the Versailles Treaty was prophetic; he said, "The war to end wars has given us a peace to end peace." He was an implacable opponent of Hitler and the Nazis. When the Second World War came, Churchill, who has always admired the Kaiser, offered him refuge in England.

As a loyal subject of His Majesty, I was somewhat hurt to receive

from a reader the impious question, “How can you think it is possible to esteem too little a dolt who ignited a naval arms race with the world’s predominant sea power merely because he wanted to dress up as an admiral?” Well. Such *lèse majesté*? from someone who signs himself, “*Fahnrich, Koniglich-Bayerische Befreiungsarmee?*” I suppose that’s what you get from a people who are drinking beer by ten o’clock in the morning.

Germany’s decision to build a great navy was a strategic error of the first rank. It put her in opposition to her historic ally, Britain, to the point where it drove the British into alliance with their traditional enemies, France and Russia. But the Kaiser was not solely responsible for this blunder. Navalism had become a vast force in German public opinion. Nor did he need a navy of his own to play admiral, since he was already an admiral in the British, Swedish and Norwegian navies. As in Washington today, there was no shortage of admirals’ uniforms, though real admirals were and are another matter.

The navalist idea which swept the world in the Kaiser’s time – that history turned on the outcome of great sea battles – came largely from one book: Alfred Thayer Mahan’s *The Influence of Sea Power Upon History* (America, too, now has a head of state who read a book). I first read Mahan in my teens, and to a teenager he speaks very convincingly. An adult reading gives a different impression. Despite the fact that Mahan is still worshipped by the United States Navy, which continues to build a fleet suitable for a great sea battle against Imperial Japan, his work is piffle when compared to Britain’s truly outstanding naval theorist, Sir Julian Corbett. While Corbett fully recognized the importance of seapower, he also understood that its most powerful influence was indirect.

Great sea battles were only a small part of a much more complex picture.

What does all this history say to our present time? It points out that simplistic ideas, like “democratic capitalism” and the “end of history,”

can become intellectual fads that sweep important national capitals, with incalculable and often unfortunate results. Domestic lobbies can ride such fads to wealth and power, as they did navalism. But the complex realities of policy and grand strategy cannot be fit to such Procrustean beds. Those realities eventually triumph over the fad, and at a price.

The Kaiser payed the price of navalism in 1918. What price will America's leaders pay for the fad of neoconservatism? They, and we, are fated to find out.

*September 8, 2005*

## Blunders and Opportunities

As the chorus saying “sweeps are useless” grows, inside as well as outside the military, the U.S. military in Iraq continues its sweeps. The latest Iraqi city to get swept is Tal Afar. Predictably, the Iraqi guerillas did what they should and got out, escaping through exactly the sort of tunnel system John Poole describes in his excellent books. We stand holding an empty bag, in a city whose population we have thoroughly alienated.

This time, though, there was a difference. The American Commando Supremo made sure the “Iraqi Army” took the lead. What that actually meant was that the invasion of Tal Afar, a city populated by Turkmen, was led by Kurdish pesh merga militiamen. The September 13 *Washington Post* reports,

*As in the past several days, Iraqi soldiers drawn primarily from the Kurdish pesh merga militia led the operation ...*

*Just after 7 a.m., they streamed into the adjoining neighborhoods of Hassan Koy and Uruba, taking every military age man into custody at a makeshift pen established by U.S. forces ...*

*U.S. commanders have praised the performance of the Kurdish forces during the operation, while privately expressing concern that their tactics sometimes verge on being heavy-handed. The pesh merga supports Kurdish rebels fighting the government of neighboring Turkey ...*

Hello? Did anyone in the higher ranks of the U.S. military ever hear the term “cultural intelligence?” Using Kurds against a Turkish city is

like turning Hutus loose on Tutsis or the IRA on Orangemen. We can now add a Kurd vs. Turkmen civil war to the one already underway between Iraq's Sunnis and Shi'ites.

Nor does the damage stop at the Iraqi border. I would bet dinars to dollars that the Kurdish assault on Tal Afar has been the front page story in every newspaper in Turkey for days. Worse, the whole Turkish population has seen the U.S. military hold the Kurds' coat for them while they kick the crap out of fellow Turks. The *Post* reported that, "Some of the American soldiers taunted the detainees by asking them, 'Can you say Abu Ghraib?'" So much for winning at the moral level.

Fortunately, war is often a contest in blunders, and the other side has made one too, also at the moral level. As Iraqi Sunnis register in droves to vote against the new draft constitution, al-Qa'ida in Iraq announced that it would target anyone who takes part in the voting.

Here once again is a golden opportunity for us to do the one thing that might allow us to avoid total defeat in Iraq, namely split the Ba'athist resistance from the Islamic resistance. The Ba'ath is still strong enough among the Sunnis that it could probably clean up al-Qa'ida in short order. At present, unfortunately, our policies push the two together, despite the fact that they hate each other's guts.

We need a deal with the Ba'ath, and the Ba'ath might be open to a deal with us. They need us to stop targeting them while they go after al-Qa'ida, and they need our help on the political level since the draft constitution renders them outlaws.

Can anyone in Washington or Baghdad's Emerald City see this opportunity? Are we talking with the Ba'athist resistance? Or is both our political and military leadership so locked in to a failed strategy that opportunities for political maneuver are meaningless?

Perhaps Clausewitz's most central point is that war and politics are always intermixed. We cannot win the war in Iraq. But just as war may come when politics fails, so politics must take the lead when a war is



being lost. It is time to open negotiations with some of our Sunni opponents, and al-Qa'ida's blunder gives us the opening we need.

Note: I spent yesterday in a series of meetings with the Marine Corps at Quantico, at both the school and headquarters level, and came away with a strong impression that Marines are moving to re-establish the intellectual ascendancy they enjoyed from the late 1970s through the early 1990s. The Corps lost the bubble in the mid-90s when it shifted its focus to programs and budgets. It now appears to grasp that 4th Generation war is dominated by ideas, not equipment. The talent is clearly there, if the Corps' senior leadership will act to turn it loose. I think that may soon happen. If it does, the results could make a real difference, not only for the Marine Corps but for the country.

*September 19, 2005*

## Important Distinctions

Georgie Ann Geyer, who may be America's most perceptive international affairs columnist, wrote in the Saturday, September 17 *Washington Times* about a recent Washington conference concerning the mess in the Middle East. That could, of course, have been a conference topic back as far as the First Triumvirate, when an earlier Crassus lost his head in the Land Between the Rivers. We can only hope we are not as close to the loss of the republic itself as Rome was by that time.

In her column, Miss Geyer quoted at length the remarks of former Ambassador Charles W. Freeman, Jr., who represented the United States in Riyadh during the First Gulf War.

*“The Anglo-American invasion of Iraq cost my country thousands of lives, eroded the American military and destroyed the Iraqi state ... It has generated at least three different insurgencies and, by some estimates, multiplied our enemies 10 times. Look at the resurgent Taliban in Afghanistan — Iraqis becoming the cause of the very problems it was supposed to control . . .”*

*Moreover, he said, we have gotten mired down in Iraq in “fourth-generation warfare,” simply warfare between wildly asymmetric forces, such as the formal and structured American military against the footloose insurgents or guerrillas. “What fourth-generation warfare has as its dominant character is its objective being to influence the mind of the leader, I.e. the U.S., and to convince the leader that his objectives are unattainable by at least reasonable amounts of force,” he continued. “This kind of warfare is one that we've never won.”*

Ambassador Freeman is correct in his description of the consequences of America's invasion of Iraq. It is America's Syracuse Expedition. Just as Sparta was happy to see Athens waste its strength against a meaningless opponent, Syracuse, so al-Qaeda regards our war in Iraq as a gift from Allah. Far from wanting to drive us out of Iraq (or Afghanistan), it prays we stay in both places indefinitely, our military bleeding from the death of one thousand cuts.

But in his remarks on 4th Generation war, the ambassador seems to have fallen into two common misconceptions. 4th Generation war is asymmetrical, but it is asymmetrical on a much broader scale than simply the pitting of a conventional army against guerillas. The larger asymmetry is political. 4th Generation war pits a state, or alliance of states, against a shifting mass of opponents of wildly varying motives and goals. Among the problems that presents is that the state has no one to talk to about making peace. Who does Mr. Kissinger sit down with in Paris this time?

Nor does 4th Generation war have as its objective the mind of the leader on the other side. Rather, what it does is pull its enemy apart on the moral level, fracturing his society. We see that clearly today in Israel, where the fractures may soon reach the point where the political process cannot bridge them.

That in turn is a warning for the U.S., and it is one both Ambassador Freeman and Georgie Anne Geyer pick up on:

*Then Ambassador Freeman ... came to the core of the problem. The "party adversary system" in America has broken down. "Patriotism" is confused with accepting whatever policy the government lays down. There is no national discussion on the war at all. More telling was the lack of debate even in Congress over the war: "This is not," he averred strongly, "just a political problem; it is a systemic breakdown in America."*

That is just what 4th Generation opponents strive for, a systemic

breakdown in their state adversary. The danger sign in America is not a hot national debate over the war in Iraq and its course, but precisely the absence of such a debate — which, as former Senator Gary Hart has pointed out, is largely due to a lack of courage on the part of the Democrats. Far from ensuring a united nation, what such a lack of debate and absence of alternatives makes probable is a bitter fracturing of the American body politic once the loss of the war becomes evident to the public. The public will feel itself betrayed, not merely by one political party, but by the whole political system.

The *primum mobile* of 4th Generation war is a crisis of legitimacy of the state. If the absence of a loyal opposition and alternative courses of action further delegitimizes the American state in the eye of the public, the forces of the 4th Generation will have won a victory of far greater proportions than anything that could happen on the ground in Iraq. The Soviet Union's defeat in Afghanistan played a central role in the collapse of the Soviet state. Could the American defeat in Iraq have similar consequences here? The chance is far greater than Washington elites can imagine.

*September 24, 2005*

# Sichelschnitt

Life occasionally offers a chance to make a boyhood dream come true, and I did just that a couple of weeks ago when I joined the Quarterhorse, 1st Squadron, 4th Cavalry Regiment, to follow General Heinz Guderian's XIX Panzer Corps' attack through the Ardennes to Sedan in 1940. Guderian's memoirs, *Panzer Leader*, were a big influence on me when I read them as a kid, and he was at his best in the 1940 campaign against France. To follow in his footsteps (and Hermann Balck's) was a rare honor.

This was also the best staff ride I have ever been on. Too many are junkets. What made the difference is that the Quarterhorse's outstanding commander, Lt. Col. Chris Kolenda, led his officers to do their homework. All participants had to read Bob Doughty's superb book, *The Breaking Point*, on the battle of Sedan in 1940 (it is one of the books in the canon). They could then see how the individual events we observed in the staff ride fit into the larger picture, and what that picture (from both the German and French perspectives) means for us today. The Quarterhorse shows how good a U.S. Army unit can be when it combines the usual American physical courage and technical proficiency with a (sadly) less common interest in ideas.

So what did we learn from the staff ride? For me, the biggest lesson was the relationship between operational results and tactical risk. The German attack through the Ardennes, called *Sichelschnitt* or sickle-cut, promised to be decisive operationally. But until I actually saw the terrain I did not realize how risky it was tactically. While parts of the Ardennes are rolling, relatively open country, some of the sections through which XIX Panzer Corps had to pass were extremely constrained. They gave the French and Belgians repeated opportunities to turn Guderian's Panzers into a world-class traffic jam. When one

Belgian company did not get orders to withdraw, its resistance caused the Germans serious problems. But such resistance occurred only by accident; French doctrine called for delay, not defense, so the French threw opportunity after opportunity away. The French were defeated as much by their own doctrine as by the Germans, a point of some relevance since U.S. Army doctrine today remains largely French, especially in its focus on synchronization.

One of the mysteries of the 1940 campaign, as I read about it, was the rapid fall of the new, powerful Belgian fort of EbenEmael. As we walked through its kilometers of tunnels, a Cav officer solved the mystery: "It's a blind giant," he said. The fort had only a handful of small vision cupolas, which the Germans quickly took out with shaped charges. Why was it so designed? Because it was a "system of systems," dependent on others to tell it what was going on. When that information did not come, its situation was hopeless.

The critical point in the campaign was the crossing of the Meuse river at Sedan. There, over and over, we saw the central difference between a Second and a 3rd Generation army. The Germans, focused outward, cooperated laterally and took initiative at every level to get the result the situation required, while the French, focused inward, could act only in response to orders from higher headquarters. The fact that the German senior commanders were all forward at the decisive points enabled them to see the real situation quickly and act on it.

In contrast, we visited the very comfortable, landscaped bunker that was the headquarters of the French 55th Division, well to the rear of the fighting. As we reflected on that headquarters' isolation, I asked one of the Cav officers if a modern U.S. Army division's command element could fit in the same bunker. The answer was no, by a large margin; in the size and complexity of our headquarters, we have out-Frenched the French.

Our staff ride ended at the heights of Stonne, south of Sedan. Again, until I saw terrain, I did not appreciate how commanding it was.

Here, what we learned dispelled one of the myths of the 1940 campaign, that the French did not fight. Stonne was captured and recaptured some seventeen times in one day, in actions where the French fought bitterly and the Germans, especially the Grossdeutschland Regiment, took heavy casualties. At one point, a single French Char B heavy tank entered the village, destroyed thirteen German tanks and then left, intact, despite taking 140 hits. That illustrated both the French superiority in equipment and the rarity of French initiative and cooperation. A bit more of both and the battle for the heights at Stonne could have gone the other way, which might have kept even Hurrying Heinz from turning west toward the English Channel and operational victory.

I am deeply grateful to the Quarterhorse for inviting me along a truly model staff ride. I also appreciate the opportunity to spend some time with officers of the caliber of Lt. Col. Kolenda and Captains Jay Pieri and Jim Egan. They illustrate the enormous potential inherent in the U.S. Army if we can ever shift the institution's practices from the 2nd Generation to the 3rd.

*October 25, 2005*

# True Confessions

On October 19, 2005, the American Secretary of State, aka the Tea Lady, did something extraordinary for the Bush administration. She told the truth. According to the October 20 *Washington Times*, in testimony to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Miss Rice said

*that it was always the Bush administration's intent to redesign the Middle East after the September 11 attacks, which exposed a "deep malignancy growing" in the region, and that Iraq was part of that plan.*

Well. There we have it. It's now official: Saddam's eternally elusive Weapons of Mass Destruction were just eyewash. The decision to invade Iraq came first, and the various contrived justifications came after. Those Iraqi WMDs were as real as Polish attacks on Germany in 1939, and as cynical. The cynicism is, if anything, even more brazen: Herr Ribbentrop never testified to the Reichstag that "Polish aggression" was just a set-up, even if everyone knew.

Does it matter? To the American press and people, apparently not. Miss Rice's official confirmation of everyone's suspicions got virtually no coverage. After all, the NFL season has started.

But in other respects, I think it does matter. It matters, first, because it reveals this administration's utter cynicism, a cynicism born of the neocons, who seldom met a lie they didn't like. In effect, Miss Rice testified, "Yea, we lied. So what?"

Well, beyond 2000 dead and 15,000 wounded, so cavalier an attitude toward the truth suggests the lies have probably continued. As they have: the administration routinely engages in (illegal) domestic propaganda, puffing anything it can call a "success" in Iraq while



classifying or otherwise burying the bad news. The latest example is the spin on the Iraqi constitutional referendum. The Bushies are hailing it an "another victory of democracy," when in fact the outcome could not have been worse. The Sunnis pulled out all their stops and still lost, telling them the system is stacked so heavily against them they have no political future. Where ballots fail, bullets still offer promise.

Another reason the WMD lie matters is that the real reason the administration invaded Iraq, "to redesign the Middle East," reveals (officially) a truly breathtaking hubris, coupled to a monumental ignorance of the region in question. Redesign the Middle East? What do the Bushies think it is, a Chevrolet?

At it happens, the war in Iraq is redesigning the Middle East, but not exactly in a planned fashion. Just as the calling of the Estates General in 1789 opened the door to the French Revolution, so the American destruction of the Iraqi state has opened the door to a broader collapse of the state system in that region, an outcome the administration is now pushing in Syria as well. Osama, sitting in his cave, no doubt continues to thank Allah for President George W. Bush.

Finally, the official revelation, in Congressional testimony no less, that the Bush administration's motto is "Lies R US" will matter politically, as the American people begin to come to grips with the fact of a lost war. That may happen by the elections of 2006; it will certainly happen by 2008. It is safe to say that the public will not be happy, and the realization that they were lied into the lost war won't make them any happier. As Republican Members of Congress are beginning to realize, the blowback may be of historic proportions. Anyone seen any Whigs lately? (The fact that the Democrats continue to offer a profile in cowardice on the war might even open the door to a serious third party, God willing. There have to be some real, small-r republicans out there still.)

And so Wilsonianism will come full circle. Wilson lied America into World War I, with fables of German soldiers bayonetting Belgian

babies. The result was Lenin, Hitler and World War II. But the experience did give America a lesson in minding her own business and, for a time, a foreign policy for Americans (first). This time, Wilsonianism will give us a vastly disordered Middle East, the greatest Islamic victory since the fall of Constantinople and oil prices that might make the Trabant America's best-selling car. Will it also give us, again, a foreign policy for Americans, as Senator Robert A. Taft put it? We can hope, we can hope.

*October 28, 2005*

# Exit Strategy

One day late in the Vietnam war, a Senator called his defense staffer into his office. Like too many Senators (though neither of the two I worked for), the distinguished legislator depended entirely upon his staff but treated them like peons. Although the end of the day had come and gone, the Senator snarled at his hapless staffer, "I want to give a speech on the Floor tomorrow morning on the Vietnam war. You can stay here tonight and write it."

The next morning, the Senator found the text of his speech on his desk, neatly typed and bound. Without bothering to look it over, he took it to the Floor of the Senate where, with the voice if not the mind of Cicero, he shared it with the world. About half way through, he read a page that concluded with the words, "I will now offer my five-point plan for ending the Vietnam war." Turning the page, he found an unexpected message from his despised staffer: "You're on your own now, you SOB. I quit."

Like the Senator, I think it is time I offered my own exit strategy for Iraq. Everyone in Washington except those in the Bushbunker knows we need an exit strategy; few have offered one. While I have had a bit more time to consider my proposal than did the Senator in the story (which was current during my early days on Senate staff), I am sure my proposal will have holes in it. Nonetheless, it may help move the discussion along, from whether to get out of Iraq to how to get out.

Please note that I am not talking about how to win the Iraq war. The war was lost from before the first bomb fell, because the strategic objectives were never attainable no matter what we did. Further blunders, from de-Ba'athification and sending the Iraqi Army home through mistreating the civilian population, have moved us from mere

failure to incipient disaster. The question, rather, is how we might get out without our defeat being so obvious as to be undeniable.

So here is my proposal:

First, announce that we will leave Iraq soon, and completely. Not one American base or soldier will remain on Iraqi soil. The spin should be, "We came only to remove Saddam from power, and we have accomplished that mission. Iraq now has a constitution and an elected government; we have no reason to remain."

Second, open negotiations to set a date by which we will be gone. The formal negotiations will be with the Iraqi government. Behind the scenes, we will have to set a deadline for achieving an agreement, failing which we will announce a withdrawal unilaterally. Governments established by foreign powers may be reluctant to see foreign troops leave.

The critical (and secret) negotiations, however, will not be with Iraq's puppet government, but with the Sunnis. Here, what we need is what is sometimes called a "diplomatic revolution." Instead of siding with the Kurds and Shi'ites against the Sunnis, we need to offer the Sunnis an alliance. The terms would be roughly these:

1. We will set and adhere to a date for complete withdrawal;
2. We will cease all attacks on the Sunni resistance, as part of a mutual cease-fire; and
3. We will use such political influence as we retain with Iraq's Shi'ite-Kurdish condominium to protect and advance the Sunnis' interests.

In return, the Sunnis will:

1. Enforce a cease-fire in the Sunni provinces, and
2. Clean up al-Qaeda in Iraq. If they need and want our help to do that, we will help. I doubt they will need any assistance from us, beyond stopping our attacks in Sunni areas, and I doubt even more

they will want it, since it would de-legitimize them.

Third, while we will cease our useless "sweeps" and other clearly offensive actions, we will also quietly institute the "ink-blot strategy" in some mixed Sunni-Shi'ite-Kurdish areas. While the ink-blot strategy (like the CAP program in Vietnam) represents a strategic offensive, which allows us to keep pressure on the Sunnis to make a deal, it requires de-escalation on the tactical level, so as not to alienate the local population. That should help reduce both Sunni and American casualties while negotiations proceed.

As I have noted in previous columns, a problem in 4th Generation conflicts is finding someone with whom to negotiate, someone who can deliver once a deal is made. Here, events in Iraq may have given us an opportunity. According to the October 27 *Christian Science Monitor*, Iraq's key Sunni political parties have formed a new coalition. That coalition is, to quote the *Monitor*, "Islamist, vehemently anti-American, opposed to foreign troops, and discreetly pro-insurgency." I think it is safe to add that it is closely tied to the Ba'athist elements of the insurgency, which are both a large part of the resistance and strongly opposed to al-Qaeda.

All those characteristics make it a credible negotiating partner. Negotiations with Sunni Quislings serve no purpose, because the Quislings can't deliver what we need, a quieting down of the fighting while we get out. There is good reason to think the new Sunni coalition could deliver that. In turn, we could deliver what they need, which is political support vis-à-vis the Shi'ites and Kurds.

Could it work? Maybe; in such business, there are no guarantees. Would the new Sunni coalition talk with us about a deal along these lines? It's worth a try. Would the Bush administration make such an attempt? Aye, there's the rub. The Bushbunker may be so detached from reality that it still thinks we can win this war militarily.

If that is the case, then it is time for America's senior military

leaders, the Chief and Members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, to have a little talk with the President. Another Vietnam war story, a true one, is how the JCS failed to give President Johnson the advice he needed though did not want, namely that the military had done all that it could and it was time to seek a political solution.

So that's my exit strategy. If someone else comes up with a better one, I will be happy to defer to it. But the time is past for arguing whether we need an exit strategy; the discussion should be about what that strategy might be. "Staying the course" in a lost war is not a strategy at all; it is merely a recipe for disaster.

*November 5, 2005*

# C'est la Guerre

War has broken out in France, 4th Generation war to be precise. It has been underway for some years, quietly, disguised by calling it crime. Now, with 3000 cars and dozens of buildings burned, rail and bus services disrupted and the police overwhelmed, even the French are calling it what it is. "There is a civil war underway in Clichy-sous-Bois at the moment," said Michel Thooris of the CFTC, a French police union. "We can no longer withstand this situation on our own. My colleagues have neither the equipment nor the... training for street fighting."

France has a long history of civil wars. But this civil war is unique. Showing how radically the 4th Generation changes things, it is a civil war against a foreign invader. Mark Steyn wrote in the November 6 *Chicago Sun-Times*,

*As Thursday's edition of the Guardian reported in London: "French youths fired at police and burned over 300 cars last night as towns around Paris experienced their worst night of violence in a week of urban unrest."*

*"French youths," huh? You mean Pierre and Jacques and Marcel and Alphonse? Granted that most of the "youths" are technically citizens of the French Republic, it doesn't take much time in les banlieus of Paris to discover that the rioters do not think of their primary identity as "French": They're young men from North Africa growing ever more estranged from the broader community with each passing year and wedded ever more intensely to an assertive Muslim identity...*

Here we find ourselves peering over the crater of the 4th

Generation volcano directly into its heart, the transfer of primary loyalties away from the state. In this case, the new loyalty is to Islam. And for Islam, thousands, perhaps millions, of "Frenchmen" are willing, even eager, to fight.

Despite the fact that France is one of the most wonderful places on earth to enjoy what Russell Kirk called "the unbought grace of life," it is tempting to snicker. The French Establishment, steeped in the pernicious doctrines of the French Revolution and richly sauced with the cultural Marxism of "Political Correctness," has for decades invited the war it now faces. It led the way in welcoming Islamic immigrants into Europe. Even now, its spokesmen pretend the problem is just "lack of opportunity" and, above all, "*le racism*," that most heinous of PC sins. As France burns, its pathetic Prime Minister, Dominique de Villepin, wrings his hands and spews culturally Marxist drivel. "Let's avoid stigmatizing areas," he said. "Let's fight all discrimination with firmness and avoid confusing a disruptive minority with the vast majority of youngsters who want to integrate into society and succeed."

Monsieur de Villepin's words and attitude represent a Maginot Line of the mind. And France's young Moslems are turning that line as boldly and successfully as did Guderian's Panzers in 1940. Cowering behind intellectual fortifications built by Sartre, Camus, Foucault and so many other French enemies of Western civilization, the French Establishment will be — has already been — beaten, crushed. Not only can it not defend France, it cannot even admit that France has been invaded.

We should not gloat. France, and the rest of Europe, still represent the heart and homeland of our culture. The fact that Islamic invasion by immigration has reversed the verdict of the Battle of Tours is a catastrophe for us all.

What is to be done? The answer is not to be sought in calling in the army to support the overwhelmed French police, though that is probably necessary. Rather, France (and Europe) needs a new politics.



It needs a politics purged of cultural Marxism, a politics that can recognize the difference between what and who is French or not French, Western or not Western, legal niceties of citizenship without allegiance aside. It needs a politics that can say to immigrant communities, "accept our Western culture or get out." In effect, France needs to arm the gendarmes who now confront Islamic jihadis in France's own cities and streets with a ham sandwich in one hand and a one-way plane ticket in the other.

A few of us, Americans and Frenchmen, know the new politics France needs is really an old, old politics. Its faith is in Christ the King, not cultural Marxism. Its banner is golden lilies on Bourbon white, not the hideous tricolor of revolution. Its song is "O Richard, O mon Roi," not the Marseillaise, that dirge of laundrywomen. If France is to be saved from the immigrant armies of Islam, it will be by Frenchmen who wear the white cockade. Somewhere in the Vendée, perhaps a rooster is crowing.

*November 9, 2005*

# Militant Tricks

*Militant Tricks: Battlefield Ruses of the Islamic Insurgent* is the title of John Poole's latest book. Poole, a former Marine NCO and officer, is America's best writer on small unit tactics and techniques. His first book, *The Last Hundred Yards*, should be in every fire team, squad and platoon leader's pack. More recently, he has written a series of books that attempt to explain the Eastern, indirect way of war to Western audiences. *Militant Tricks* is the most recent work in that series.

This is really three books in one, and all of them are good. The first book is a detailed description of how our opponents in Iraq and Afghanistan fight. Here Poole's subtitle, *Battlefield Ruses of the Islamic Insurgent*, sums up his offering. Unlike Western forces, which seek a head-on clash, Eastern warfare relies on tricks. Nothing is what it seems to be. Poole writes,

*The military heritage of Asia Minor is quite different from that of France, Britain, and America. In Asia Minor, loose encirclements and tiny probes are more common than mass assaults. There, one can often win by running away... Like the Chinese, southwest Asian insurgents practice the "False Face and Art of Delay." First, they show the Westerner what they want him to see. Then, they wait for him to make the first, incorrect move. Finally, they secretly launch a maneuver that he would not choose under similar circumstances.*

Poole lays this way of fighting out in detail in Part II of his book. Using the ancient Chinese book *36 Stratagems of Deception* as his framework (I do not share Poole's view that Chinese thought directly influenced our current opponents, but the framework is still useful), he

provides exactly the sort of material our soldiers and Marines need in Iraq and Afghanistan if they are to understand their enemies. Here is a sample from one stratagem, “Feign Lack of Military Ability:”

*Irrational behavior normally generates a sound or motion signature. But one can unobtrusively feign tactical ignorance. Literally this stratagem says, “Feign foolishness instead of madness.”*

*Most U.S. and British troops have come to see all Muslim insurgents as tactically inept. They don't yet realize that their foe intentionally places poorly trained martyrdom volunteers in their path. With little strategic value, those volunteers are considered expendable. It is their handlers — the enemy recruiters/trainers/advisors — who must be stopped. Many are Iranian special operators and as tactically proficient as their U.S. counterparts. Their “throwaway” personnel have accomplished two things: (1) fooling the Coalition as to the real source and sophistication of the insurgency, (2) facilitating the handler's escape.*

In addition to this useful discussion, *Militant Tricks* offers two other important themes. One is Poole's view (and mine) that we are losing both in Iraq and in Afghanistan. Until Washington and America's senior field commanders face up to this fact, no improvement is to be expected, because there will be no incentive to change.

Poole's third theme is how we can win in both places. Here, I think he is over-optimistic. Even if we do adopt his recommendations, I think we will do so too late. But what he writes is valuable for what may still be achieved, namely avoiding outright and obvious defeat.

Poole's diagnosis differs from the common one, because he does not see the Sunni insurgency as the core problem. Rather, he believes

the main actor is Shi'ite Hezbollah, working hand-in-hand with Iran. If he is correct, the door might be open to the deal with the Ba'athist insurgents I believe America needs in order to leave Iraq.

On the tactical level, Poole agrees with virtually every other expert on counter-insurgency that the key to success (however defined) is a variant of the Vietnam war CAP program, where our troops defended the local population instead of bombing it. Poole writes,

*While the Vietnam war may not have had a happy ending, it did produce some very effective ways to handle guerilla activity. One of the most farsighted – and strictly of U.S. Marine Corps design and implementation – was the Combined Action Platoon (CAP). Lone Marine squads were stationed in scores of villages to help local residents organize their own defenses. There is an urban equivalent to the CAP concept that would work in a neighborhood setting. If the Muslim militant has widely dispersed throughout Iraqi society, must not the occupying force do likewise to beat him?*

Regardless of the outcome in Iraq and Afghanistan, America will face other wars against Islamic militants, though a correct grand strategy would work to avoid such conflicts. If people at the top will give John Poole's work the attention it is rightly receiving from those at the battalion level and below, we would have a better chance of winning them.

*November 16, 2005*

## It Ain't Fair

The suicide bombings in Jordan recently carried out by al-Qaeda in Iraq seem to have blown back on the jihadis. According to Western press reports, almost all those killed were Moslems, including a Palestinian wedding party. Outrage among Jordanians has compelled al-Qaeda to issue a quasi-apology, saying the wedding party was not its target. Had al-Zarqawi been a tad more clever, he might have apologized for the “collateral damage.”

A column in the October 12 *International Herald Tribune* by professor of Islamic Studies Bernard Haykel suggests that a rift is opening up among jihadis over the tactic of suicide bombing. Haykel writes,

*In fact, growing splits among jihadis are beginning to undermine the theological and legal justifications for suicide bombing... There are strong indications from jihadi Web sites and online journals, confirmed by conversations I have had while doing research among Salafis, or scriptural literalists, that the suicide attacks are turning many Muslims against the jihadis altogether...*

If we look at this practice from a 4th Generation picture, what do we see? On the surface, it looks as if Islamic non-state elements are making a major blunder. 4th Generation war theory, drawing from John Boyd, argues that the moral level of war is the most powerful, the physical level is the weakest and the mental level lies somewhere in between. It would seem obvious that when Islamic elements set off bombs that kill other Islamics, they work against themselves at the moral level. To some degree, this is certainly the case. Bombings such as those in Jordan do turn some Moslems against al-Qaeda in other similar groups.

We might try here to reason by analogy. When the United States drops bombs from aircraft or otherwise dumps firepower on Iraqi cities, towns and farms, it alienates the population further. As the FMFM 1-A argues, success for an outside, occupying power requires de-escalation, not escalation of violence.

But here is where the picture grows murky. The fact is, both sides don't get to operate by the same rules in 4GW. While the very strength of the intervening power means it must be careful how it applies its strength, that is much less true of the weaker forces opposing it. This is an aspect of what Martin van Creveld calls the power of weakness. Viewed from the moral level, a weak force can get away with tactics that damn its vastly stronger enemy. Its weakness itself tends to justify whatever it does.

Suicide bombing is itself a tactic of the weak (which does not mean it is ineffective.). The United States bombs from aircraft, where the pilot operates in complete safety against 4GW opponents, with rare exceptions. At the moral level, that safety works against us, not for us. In contrast, the fact that 4GW fighters often have to give their lives to place their bombs works for them. Their combination of physical weakness and apparent heroism leads civilians from their own culture to excuse them much, including "collateral damage" they would never excuse if the bomb came from an American F-18.

Does this mean that al-Qaeda and its many clones can ignore the deaths and injuries they cause among fellow Islamics? No. They have to be careful not to go too far, as al-Qaeda clearly did in Jordan. But they can still get away with a great deal we could not get away with. The same rules do not apply to all, and much stricter, more disadvantageous rules apply to us than to them. Is that fair? Of course not. But who ever said there was anything fair about war?

*December 1, 2005*



# Operation IEDs

One of the most difficult challenges in 4th Generation military theory is the problem 4th Generation war poses for operational art. Put simply, 4GW is hard to operationalize. Operational art is not a thing, but a linkage: the connection between the tactical and strategic levels of war. In 2nd Generation, firepower/attrition warfare, operational art is reduced merely to accumulating tactical victories. The presumption, often unwarranted, is that at some point you hit the magic number where the enemy surrenders. In 3rd Generation, maneuver warfare, operational art is the art of breaking the enemy's strategic "hinges" with the fewest possible tactical engagements. It thus provides the basis for deciding where and when to fight, and equally important, where and when not to fight. The principal operational weapon is surprise combined with speed, i.e. unexpected maneuver, usually with mechanized forces, deep into the enemy's rear.

The question of what operational art means in 4th Generation war remains open. I don't know of any general answer. The problem is that the enemy's strategic hinges, or centers of gravity, tend to be intangible: how do you use tactical engagements or operational maneuver to strike targets such as family or clan honor, gang loyalties, ideological convictions or belief in a particular god? After World War II, the most operationally competent armies in the world were the Red Army and the IDF. Yet both lost 4th Generation wars, the Soviets in Afghanistan and the Israelis in Lebanon, because they could not figure out how to act operationally against 4GW enemies. Reduced to fighting an endless series of strategically meaningless tactical engagements, both were forced to withdraw. The U.S. military now finds itself in the same situation in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Unfortunately, it appears our 4th Generation opponents have



figured out a way to act operationally against us. I touched on this in an earlier column, but as I thought more about it, I decided that what is happening deserves fuller consideration. What our opponents are doing is brilliantly simple. By relying mostly on IEDs to attack us, they have created a situation where our troops have no one to shoot back at. That, in turn, ramps up the troops' frustration level to the point where two things happen: our morale collapses and our troops take their frustration out on the local population. Both results have strategic significance, and at least the potential of being strategically decisive, the first because it affects American home front morale and the second because it drives the local population to identify with the insurgents instead of the government we are trying to support.

An article in the November 23 *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, "Morale of GIs in the Iraq suffers as months drag on, casualties mount," well describes the first result of war by IED:

*"Morale is a roller coaster," said Lt. Rusten Currie, who has spent 10 months in Iraq. "We were all idealistic to begin with, wanting to find Osama bin Laden and (Abu Musab al-) Zarqawi and bring them to justice - - whatever that means. Now we just want to go home."*

*Maj. Gen. Rick Lynch, a spokesman for Multinational Force Iraq, says tensions are understandable when troops are attacked with remotely detonated explosives and there's no way to fight back.*

*"Soldiers can indeed get frustrated because they're not looking at an enemy who's looking back at them," Lynch said.*

The second operational effect, getting U.S. troops to take out their frustration on the local population, was illustrated in what an officer whose unit recently came back from Iraq said to me. "We were hit 3000 times and in only fifteen of those attacks did we have anyone to shoot

back at,” he told me. He quoted another officer in the battalion who had gone out on patrol many times as saying, “We are worse than the SS in the way we are treating these people,” meaning Iraqi civilians. This is a classic result of “the war of the flea:” as morale collapses, so does discipline, and poorly disciplined troops often treat local civilians badly.

Like the tank in 3rd Generation war, the IED is proving to be not merely a tactical but an operational weapon in the 4th Generation. In Iraq, British troops are reacting by employing IEDs of their own to try to push local factions into fighting each other. That too, if it works, might play at the operational level.

But the broader challenge 4th Generation war poses to state militaries at the operational level will remain. As I said, I don’t know what the answer is. But I do know the importance of the question. Until we have an answer, state armed forces will face great difficulty turning their tactical advantages into strategic success against 4GW enemies.

*December 2, 2005*

# Questionable Assumptions

At the end of November, the Bush administration issued a 35-page document titled, “National Strategy for Victory in Iraq.” The new white paper does not represent a change of strategy: it says at the outset, “The following document articulates the broad strategy the President set forth in 2003...” But it does offer an authoritative statement of the administration’s position and is thus worth careful consideration.

Like most official documents, it spreads a small amount of substance over a large number of pages. But if we want to analyze it from a military perspective, the key is to be found on page 18, under the subhead, “The Security Track in Detail.” There, it says, “The security track is based on *six core* assumptions (emphasis in original).” Why is this key? Because if core assumptions are wrong, everything that follows from them is likely to be wrong, too.

Let’s take a look at each:

- First, the terrorists, Saddamists, and rejectionists do not have the manpower or firepower to achieve a military victory over the Coalition and Iraqi Security Forces. They can win only if we surrender.

This reduces “military victory” to childish simplicity, effectively defining it as winning a game of King of the Hill. That is not how guerilla war works. Nor does it end in anyone’s formal surrender. In order to achieve eventual military victory, all the guerillas have to do is continue the fight, which means finding ways to hit us without exposing themselves to annihilation. So far, they have proven rather good at doing that.

- Second, our own political will is steadfast and will allow America to keep troops in Iraq - - to fight terrorists while training and mentoring Iraqi forces - - until the mission is done, increasing or decreasing troop levels only as conditions warrant.

Here, the reality gap could not be more evident. America's political will to support an apparently endless war in Iraq is in free-fall, both on Capitol Hill and among the public.

- Third, progress on the political front will improve the intelligence picture by helping distinguish those who can be won over to support the new Iraqi state from the terrorists and insurgents who must either be killed or captured, detained and prosecuted.

This fails on at least three counts. First, "progress on the political front" so far amounts to creating a Kurdish-Shi'ite government bitterly hostile to Iraq's Sunnis, which is hardly likely to lead Sunnis to provide U.S. forces with better intelligence. Second, our own intelligence operation remains marginal at best in grasping the complexities of Iraqi society. And third, such intelligence is only useful if we use it to try to split the Ba'athist insurgents from the jihadis, while the white paper suggests we will continue to lump them together as enemies we must fight.

- Fourth, the training, equipping, and mentoring of Iraqi Security Forces will produce an army and police force capable of independently providing security and maintaining public order in Iraq.

What the administration calls the Iraqi army and police force is largely Kurdish and Shi'ite militiamen who are taking government paychecks and wearing government uniforms. Their loyalty is not to the Iraqi government we have established but to the leaders of their militias, and their purpose is not to uphold a state but to wage a civil war against Iraqi Sunnis, in revenge for what the Sunnis did to them

under Saddam. Most of the Iraqi state security apparatus is a fiction, because it is not under the actual control of the state.

- Fifth, regional meddling and infiltrations can be contained and/or neutralized.

The information I am getting suggests that Iranian meddling and infiltration in Iraq is massive and growing, and is also encouraged and facilitated by many of the Shi'ite elements in the Iraqi government. The Persian camel has not just his nose but his hump already in the tent. Many of my sources suggest that a lot of the insurgency we attribute to Sunnis is actually Iranian-supported if not Iranian-controlled.

- Sixth, while we can help, assist, and train, Iraqis will ultimately be the ones to eliminate their security threats over the long term.

Not only does this ignore the fact that most of those security threats are made up of Iraqis, it misses the all-important fact that whatever we “help, assist, and train” automatically loses its legitimacy because of our involvement. Indeed, nowhere does the white paper come to grips with this central problem, namely that as an invader and occupier, we cannot confer legitimacy on anything. On the contrary, we have the reverse Midas touch; when it comes to legitimacy, that all-important factor in 4th Generation war, anything we touch turns to crap.

There is an old military saying that “assume” makes an ass of you and me. In this case, the Bush administration has explicitly based its “security track” in Iraq on six assumptions, not one of which is self-evident. If we accept those assumptions, what would that make us?

*December 8, 2005*

# The Fine Art of Withdrawal

The main question about the war in Iraq was never whether it would go well or go badly. The question was whether it would go bad fast or go bad slowly. So far, it has gone bad slowly, which was always the greater probability. But the possibility remains that it could go bad fast. The greatest likelihood may be during that most delicate of military arts, the withdrawal.

At least behind closed doors, a consensus is emerging in Washington that America will leave Iraq in 2006. Whether the White House will accept that consensus or resist it is yet to be seen, but the result will be the same either way. At this point, the Bush administration has about as much credibility on Capitol Hill as Napoleon had in Paris after Waterloo. On the House side particularly, where every seat is up next November, the watchword is *saue qui peut*. As Dr. Johnson said, being about to be hanged concentrates the mind wonderfully.

A Rumsfeld OSD that assumed the war would be easy may also assume a withdrawal will be easy. History offers a note of caution. In war, getting in is often simpler and safer than getting out. Martin van Creveld recently warned that America's withdrawal from Iraq could prove messy, for Americans as well as Iraqis. Xenophon's *Anabasis* might serve as a useful if not entirely encouraging preview. The 10,000 did make it back to Greece, most of them anyway, but few enjoyed the journey.

What scenarios should our planners and policy-makers consider? As the best case, logic suggests that Iraq's December elections might be seen by Iraq's "key man," Shi'ite Ayatollah Sistani, as the turning point. A new, Shi'ite-dominated government will probably be elected to

a four-year term. What better move for him than to issue a fatwa saying that it's time for the Americans to leave? His Shi'ites are getting restive at the American presence, he has to compete for his leadership role with firebrand Muqtada al-Sadr, and as the man who kicked the foreign occupiers out, he could reach across Iraq's central divide to offer a deal to the Sunnis, perhaps restoring a real Iraqi state. In the face of a Sistani fatwa, Iraq's government would almost certainly have to ask the American troops to leave.

Our response should be, "Hallelujah!" This would give us the golden bridge we need, a way out where we could claim with at least some credibility that we were not beaten. It would also probably mean a relatively safe and orderly exit. The Bush administration has said we would leave if the Iraqis asked us to, and the new U.N. resolution under which our presence in Iraq is authorized requires us to do so. If the White House resisted, it would get trampled into the dirt on Capitol Hill by elephants and donkeys alike.

As the worst case, we should envision what might happen if Israel or the U.S. or both attack Iran. Israel has recently indicated that unless international efforts to secure Iran's nuclear program succeed, an Israeli military action is likely sometime next year. Iran has said publicly that it will regard an Israeli attack as an attack by America also. If Iran's influence in Shi'ite southern Iraq is as great as reports suggest it is, the obvious Iranian response would be to blow up the magazine by attacking the American lines of supply – and withdrawal – that come up from Kuwait. Add a Shi'ite insurgency to that of the Sunnis, and an American withdrawal could start to look like Napoleon's retreat from Moscow, with sand substituting for snow.

There are of course a wide range of possibilities between these two extremes. An American withdrawal might lead to a truce with nationalist elements of the Iraqi resistance; they would have succeeded in their objective and would have no need to continue fighting us. Jihadi elements, however, might redouble their efforts, both to

humiliate the Americans and to prevent the emergence of a real Iraqi state. In Shi'ite country, a lot of young men might think it's now or never if they want a piece of the glory of having fought the world's greatest superpower. Muqtada al-Sadr might turn his Mahdi Army loose on us again, as part of his bid for power in a post-American Iraq.

As I wrote in an earlier column, the question of how we withdraw from Iraq should be at the top of the Grossgeneralstab's planning tasks. If the same kinds of optimistic assumptions that guided our invasion of Iraq also shape our plans for withdrawal, we could find ourselves in what one old Pentagon planner used to call "a fine kettle of fish."

*December 19, 2005*



## Two False Options

In his address to the American people last Sunday evening, President George W. Bush said, “Yet now there are only two options before our country: victory or defeat.” As usual, Mr. Bush is wrong.

Victory is not an option, and it never was. The strategic objectives the Bush administration set for this war – a peaceful, democratic Iraq that would be an American ally, a friend of Israel, a source of unlimited oil and of basing rights for large American forces – were never attainable, no matter what we did. Strategies invented in Fairyland cannot be implemented in the real world. Pity the military that is ordered to try.

Defeat is an option. In my last column I described one way that could occur, an Israeli and/or American attack on Iran that leads Iraqi Shi'ites to join the Sunni jihad and cut our lines of supply and retreat through southern Iraq. There are additional scenarios that could lead to a dramatic American defeat, a defeat we could not disguise to anyone, not even ourselves. Presumably, this is not an option we wish to select.

The most promising options, of which the President of the United States seems to be unaware, are those which end the war and bring American troops home without an outright American defeat. This is how most limited wars end, with some sort of compromise peace, official or unofficial.

I have discussed two such options in previous columns. One is a request from the Iraqi government that we leave, which would give us a golden bridge out. Another is to cut a deal with nationalist and Ba'athist elements of the Sunni insurgency, a deal where we would stop fighting them and provide them some political support while they clean up al-Qaeda.

Two recent stories in the *Washington Times* suggest the second option may now be within reach. On Sunday, December 18, the paper reported that precisely these Sunni resistance groups had enforced an election truce, allowing Sunnis to vote. More,

*The truce resulted from weeks of negotiations between U.S. officials and insurgents that have been recently labeled by President Bush as "rejectionists." . .*

*The willingness of U.S. officials to talk directly with many, if not most, insurgents marked a huge change from American thinking at the outset of the war.*

*Hurray for those "U.S. officials!" Here at last is some genuine good news from Iraq.*

The *Washington Times* story on Monday, December 19, was even more promising:

*Influential political and religious figures within the leadership of Iraq's minority Sunnis are displaying sharp divisions on how to end what they all agree is an unacceptable U.S. occupation of Iraq...*

*The increasingly prevalent view is that the United States is not only part of the problem, but that it can become part of the solution. That perspective was explained by an influential religious sheik (Abed al-Latif Hemaiym), who has in the past been close to dictator Saddam Hussein...*

*"The time has come to solve the problem between us and the Americans, and through the minimum cost," said the soft-spoken sheik...*

*"There is a historical opportunity to get out of this bloodshed and reach peace. We can reach peace [only] through dialogue," he said.*

*He pointed out that Sunnis had suffered severely in the two years of conflict since armed insurgency began, noting, "We are the main losers, then the Americans, while the main winners are the Iranians."*

That summary of the war's results is right on the money.

The question is whether Washington will grasp this opportunity before it fades away. It means halting our war against the Ba'athists and nationalists, in what would be an acceptance of local defeat. But it opens the door to a potential strategic victory against our real enemies, Islamic non-state forces such as al-Qaeda. If, subsequent to an American deal with the Ba'athists, they root al-Qaeda out of Iraq, it will be a greater win for us than if we defeated al-Qaeda ourselves, because it will have been beaten by fellow Arabs and Moslems. That strikes directly at al-Qaeda's legitimacy.

If the Bush administration means what Mr. Bush said, that the only choices are victory or defeat, then it will let this heaven-sent opportunity pass. We will continue to pursue unattainable victory until we are totally defeated. Let us hope the President's speech was just the usual eyewash for domestic consumption, and somewhere adults are working for the negotiated settlement we so desperately need and which now may be within reach.

*December 20, 2005*

## Conversation with der Allerhoechste

As usual, on New Year's Day I placed a call over my 1918 telephone to my reporting senior, Kaiser Wilhelm II. I needed his wise guidance for another year in this mortal thicket, and it was also a convenient time to offer my felicitations for his coming birthday on January 27. It took me a while to get patched through, as His Majesty was at the Berlin Schloss rather than his usual residence in Potsdam. He didn't used to care much for Berlin, and I was surprised to find him in so jovial a mood.

"Ach, you should have been here today, Herr Generalfeldmarschall. Count Zeppelin flew in in his latest airship, LS 10,000. What a sight she made circling over Berlin! She holds 16,000,000 cubic feet of hydrogen! I awarded him the Black Eagle."

"Please give the good Graf my heartiest congratulations," I replied. "He invented the only type of aircraft worth flying in. But I'm just slightly surprised to find you're still using hydrogen rather than helium."

"Once you're immortal, what's the difference?" His Majesty replied.

"Good point," I said. "Was it Graf Zeppelin's visit that drew you to Berlin?"

"Oh, I'm here quite a lot now. The heavenly Berlin is a far nicer place than the version you've got down there."

"Better weather, I take it?"

"That and the fact that there are no Socialists."

"Your Majesty, I would as always be grateful for your perspective.

How does our situation look from up there?”

“All too familiar,” the Kaiser said. “Your President Bush – we call him Woodrow II at our *tabagiecollegia* – has found what Nicky, Georgie, old Franz Josef and I also discovered, that it is easier to get into a war than get out of one. The difference is that none of us wanted war in 1914 and he did want a war with Iraq.”

“What advice would you give President Bush if you could meet with him?” I enquired.

“Now there’s a thought,” the Kaiser said, laughing. “I would be the Ghost of Wars Lost Past. Well, what I said to the Reichstag in 1888 comes to mind:

To foist on Germany the suffering of war, even a victorious one, when it was not necessary, I could not reconcile with the duties I have taken on as Emperor of the German people and my Christian beliefs.”

“Contrary to Allied propaganda, Your Majesty was often derided within Germany as the ‘Peace Emperor,’” I reminded him.

“Indeed,” responded His Majesty. “As one of my recent biographers, and one of the few fair ones, Giles MacDonough, wrote of the year 1909, ‘Every time Germany had drawn back from the brink of war in the previous twenty-one years, it had been under the influence of William.’ Your Colonel House, after a meeting with me, wrote to President Wilson in April, 1915, ‘It is clear to me that the Kaiser did not want war and did not actually expect it.’ That is accurate.”

“Unfortunately, *Hoheit*, America is already in a war. What should President Bush do now?” I asked.

“Here’s what I wrote to Tsar Nicholas after it was clear he was losing the war with Japan,” the Kaiser replied:

*Is it compatible with the responsibility of a Ruler to continue to force a whole nation against its declared will to send its sons to*

*be killed by hetacombs only for his sake? Only for his way of conception of national honour? After the people by their behavior have clearly shown their disapproval of a continuance of a war? Will not in time to come the life and blood of all uselessly sacrificed thousands be laid at the ruler's door?...*

“Would Your Majesty do me the favor of sharing his thoughts on the larger world situation?” I asked, knowing Kaiser Wilhelm was seldom shy of sharing his thoughts on anything.

“While your world looks very different on the surface from Europe before 1914, I think there is a larger similarity,” His Majesty said. “Your international order, like the one I faced, is inherently unstable. Unfortunately, like us, your statesmen understand this intellectually but act as if it were not the case. They, like us, do not understand the risks they are running when they make bold moves. America’s ill-considered commitment to Taiwan is one example. It is very much like Russia’s commitment to Serbia; the tail can easily wag the dog. America needs to handle its relationship with a rising China the way Britain handled hers with a rising United States instead of the idiotic way she dealt with a rising Germany. What I wrote just before World War I applies now to you: ‘The British should be clear about this: war with Germany will mean the loss of India! And their position in the world with it.’ That’s just what happened.”

“Indeed it did,” I replied. “The British Empire now consists of St. Helena and the Falkland Islands. So Your Majesty’s advice to our statesmen would be?”

“When you are walking on eggs, walk softly. And now I am afraid I must run. The court theater is putting on a performance of one of my favourite works, *The Merry Wives of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha*, and I don’t want to miss a bit of it. I think I’ll wear my uniform as a British Admiral of the Fleet, just in case Jackie Fisher’s there. Until next year, *Hoch der Mittelmaechte!*”

“*Hoch der Mittelmaechte!*” I replied as the Kaiser rang off. Someday, I thought, if I play my role well as the U.S. Marine Corp’s Liman von Sanders, perhaps I’ll walk the deck of a *Mackensen* with His Majesty. In the meantime, it’s a new year and the Turks are waiting at my door.

*January 6, 2005*

# Critics of the 4th Generation: the Good, the Bad and the Ugly

Not surprisingly, the spread of the intellectual framework I call the Four Generations of Modern War has brought forth a host of reinterpreters and critics. Some have added valuable insights, while others have just muddied the waters. In the next On War columns, I will take a look at the work of three commentators who represent three different categories: the good, the bad and the ugly.

The good are represented by Colonel Tom Hammes, USMC retired, author of *The Sling and the Stone*. I have known Tom Hammes for many years, and he was a major contributor to the Marine Corps' intellectual renaissance of the 1980s and early '90s. *The Sling and the Stone* offers some excellent descriptions of 4th Generation war, and it also contributes a very important insight to 4th Generation theory, namely that speed in the OODA Loop may be less important than accuracy of observation and orientation. Exactly how the OODA Loop works in 4th Generation conflicts remains an open question; it is possible that 4th Generation forces can out-cycle state armed forces not by being faster, but by moving so slowly that they are unobservable.

However, there are also some key points where *The Sling and the Stone* misunderstands 4th Generation war. One is found in the book's assertion that 4GW is just insurgency. This is much too narrow a definition, and it risks misleading us if we take it to mean that we need only re-discover old counter-insurgency techniques in order to prevail against 4th Generation opponents. At the core of 4GW is a crisis of legitimacy of the state, and counter-insurgency cannot address that crisis; indeed, when the counter-insurgency is led by foreign troops, it only makes the local state's crisis of legitimacy worse.



As Martin van Creveld has said, what changes in 4th Generation war is not merely how war is fought, but who fights and what they fight for. *The Sling and the Stone* does not seem to grasp that these are larger changes than the shift from conventional war to insurgency.

Another error in *The Sling and the Stone* is its assertion that 4th Generation war is aimed at breaking the will of an opposing state's decision-makers. In fact, what 4GW forces actually do is something much more powerful: they pull opposing states apart at the moral level.

The issue of "will" derives from a common myth concerning how states make decisions about war or peace. The myth supposes that at some point, a state's decision-makers in effect sit down around a big table and "go over the numbers," as if they were deciding on a hydro-electric project. If the numbers don't add up, they decide it is time to make peace.

Historians long ago recognized that official decisions, including for war or peace, are vastly more complex events in which non-rational factors play decisive roles. In fact, modern decision theory recognizes not only that decisions made by governments do not follow a "rational" business model, neither do most business decisions. Non-rational, often irrational, considerations dominate both.

What 4th Generation opponents actually do to a state is not play mind-games with the state's leaders, but use the power of weakness to bring the opposing state's whole population to regard the war as an abomination. Paradoxically, the more the state is successful in winning on the battlefield by turning its immense, hi-tech firepower on guys in bathrobes who are armed only with rusty World War II rifles, the more it becomes disgusted with itself. The weaker the 4th Generation enemy is physically, the stronger he is morally. And the moral level is decisive.

Despite these not insignificant misunderstandings, *The Sling and the Stone* still represents a good contribution to our developing

understanding of 4th Generation war. There is still a great deal about 4GW that no one yet comprehends, and I am sure Tom Hammes will continue to play a positive role in figuring the whole business out.

As we will see in my next two columns, there are others whose work would lead us down a blind alley.

*January 10, 2006*

# The Bad

Among the critics and reinterpreters of 4th Generation war, the bad is most powerfully represented by Thomas Barnett's two books *The Pentagon's New Map* and *Blueprint for Action*. What Barnett advocates is bad in two senses: first, that it won't work, and second, that if it did work the result would be evil.

In both books, Barnett divides the world into two parts, the Functioning Core and the Non-Integrating Gap. This is parallel to what I call centers of order and centers or sources of disorder, and I agree that this will be the fundamental fault line of the 21st Century. Barnett's error is that he assumes the Functioning Core will be the stronger party, able to restore order in places where it has broken down. In fact, the forces of disorder will be stronger, because they are driven by a factor Barnett dismisses, the spreading crisis of legitimacy of the state. By ignoring Martin van Creveld's work on the rise and decline of the state, Barnett's books end up anchoring their foundations on sand.

Barnett's second error, manifested almost comically in *Blueprint for Action*, is that he thinks restoring the state in places where it has failed will be easy. According to a *Washington Post* review of *Blueprint for Action* by Joseph S. Nye, Jr., Barnett has a six-step plan to accomplish this: First, the U.N. Security Council acts as a grand jury to indict countries; second, the Core's biggest economies issue "warrants" for the arrest of the offending party"; third, the United States leads a "warfighting coalition"; fourth, a Core-wide administrative force (with the United States providing 10 to 20 percent of its personnel) puts things back together with the help of the fifth element, a new International Reconstruction Fund; followed by a sixth step, criminal prosecution of the apprehended parties at the International Criminal Court in the Hague. "That's it, from A to Z," Barnett notes

cheerfully.

A cynic might suggest that the United States can't even do this in New Orleans much less in foreign countries. In fact, as the FMFM 1-A, *4th Generation War*, argues strongly, even if an outside force does everything right, the probability of success in such endeavors remains low. Why? As Russell Kirk wrote, there is no surer way of making someone your enemy than to announce you will remake him in your image for his own good. To many of the world's peoples, what Barnett argues for in such blithe simplicity represents Hell, and they will fight it literally to their dying breath.

This brings us to the third problem with Barnett: what his books advocate does represent Hell, or at least Hell's first cousin, Brave New World. He would create an inescapable new world order that bears a remarkable resemblance to the one Aldous Huxley described in his short novel *Brave New World*, published in the 1930s – a “soft totalitarianism” where the first rule is, “you must be happy.” Happiness, in turn, is a product of endless materialism, consumerism, sensual pleasure and psychological conditioning. If that sounds like a good description of American popular culture, it is exactly that culture Barnett proposes to force down the throat of every person on earth, with the U.S. military serving as the instrument of coercion.

What Barnett's books end up revealing is the combination of moral blindness and international political hubris that characterizes the whole quest for American world empire, a quest initiated by the neocons. Like the (other?) neocons, Barnett sees the world and its cultures in Jacobin terms, as a combination of Rousseau's natural goodness of man and Newtonian clockwork mechanism. Just twist a few dials here, throw a couple of levers there and presto!, Switzerlands spring up from Ouagadougou to the Hindu Kush.

It's piffle, pure and all too simple. Unfortunately, it is dangerous piffle, both in the evil that would result if it worked and the catastrophes that will come when it doesn't. Real 4th Generation theory

counsels caution, prudence and a clear grasp on the limits of American power in a world where the state itself is in decline.

Regrettably, in the uneducated and nostrum-hungry powerhouse that is Washington, Barnett's piffle is just the sort of patent medicine that sells. The more widely it sells, the more Iraqs America will have to endure. At present, it looks as if the next Iraq is spelled Iran. It's as good a place as any for Barnett's thesis to expire from sheer lightness of being.

*January 21, 2006*

# The Ugly

Dr. Antulio J. Echevarria, II is a Director at the Strategic Studies Institute, the U.S. Army War College's think tank, and the author of an excellent book, *After Clausewitz: German Military Thinkers before the Great War*. It was therefore both a surprise and a disappointment to find that his recent paper, *Fourth-Generation War and Other Myths*, is really, really ugly. Far from being a sober, scholarly appraisal, it is a rant, a screed, a red herring seemingly written to convince people not to think about 4GW at all. It is built from a series of straw men, so many that in the end it amounts to a straw giant.

The first straw man is its definition of 4th Generation war and of the other three generations, which is taken not from the 1989 *Marine Corps Gazette* article that first laid out the framework but from Tom Hammes's work. As I noted in [The Sling and the Stone](#), Hammes gets quite a bit wrong. In particular, he is wrong that 4th Generation war is merely insurgency. Yet it is on that straw man that Echevarria's paper bases its critique.

The straw men then follow one after another like Guardsmen changing the watch. To pick just one example, from pages 4-5,

*the architects of 4GW ... have asserted that U.S. military capabilities are "designed to operate within a nation-state framework and have great difficulties outside of it." As history shows, the U.S. military actually seems to have handled World War II and the Cold War, two relatively recent global conflicts, both of which required it to operate within transnational alliances, quite well."*

World War II and the Cold War were, of course, fought within the

nation-state framework; the alliances Echevarria refers to were alliances of states.

This example illustrates a common problem with Echevarria's straw men. Not only do they reflect misunderstandings of 4th Generation theory, the misunderstandings are so obvious that they appear deliberate. Not only does his paper muddy the water, it seems intended to do so.

Perhaps the worst case of this is the paper's attempt to twist Martin van Creveld's critique of Clausewitz's trinity of army, government and people into something else by talking about a different trinity within Clausewitz's work (there are a number of them).

Echevarria ends up saying the trinity of army, government and people "has, in fact, never existed except as a misunderstanding" of Clausewitz, when in fact it runs through his whole book. This is bait-and-switch on a grand scale.

Nor does Echevarria's paper ever discuss the heart of 4th Generation war, the crisis of legitimacy of the state. In this, he makes the same error Barnett falls into, but at least Barnett is not purporting to write a critique of what the 4th Generation theorists have said. How can you write a critique of something and ignore its central point, the cause of the state's loss of its monopoly on war?

Instead, Echevarria's paper attacks 4th Generation theory for not adopting the nonsense of "net-centric warfare" and the RMA, which he somehow sees as a logical extension of the first three generations, as he initially misdefined them. Of course, like all good theory, the theory of the Four Generations is based on observation, not Cartesian exegesis.

The fundamental question Echevarria's paper raises is, how could a respected academic who has authored a terrific book on military theory write something so misleading? Part of the answer may be that the SSI is associated with the Army War College, which is a temple to Clausewitz. Now, I happen to think a good deal of the old Prussian

myself. But as John Boyd used to say, we have learned a few things since his time. One of them is that the trinity of army, government and people does not hold true for all wars in all times and places.

But the sheer ugliness of Echevarria's paper raises another suspicion. Was he put to writing a rejection of 4th Generation war by the U.S. Army, and therefore forced to produce something, however incorrect? If so, it would not be the first time the Army has adopted this tactic: Harry Summer's book on the Vietnam war and Huba Wass de Czege's early public opposition to maneuver warfare are previous examples. Nor would it be the first occasion when the Army has rejected an idea on the "not invented here" principle.

I do not know whether Echevarria's paper is a put-up job. But if it does represent the U.S. Army's institutional position on 4th Generation war, then the Army's slogan for the 21st Century should be, not an Army of One, but an Army of Dumb.

*January 26, 2006*



## The Next Act

Wars, most wars at least, run not evenly but in fits and starts, settling down into sputtering Sitzkrieg for long intervals, then suddenly shooting out wildly in wholly unpredicted directions. The war in Iraq has fallen into a set pattern for long enough that we should be expecting something new. I can identify at least three factors which could lead to some dramatic changes, soon.

- Osama bin Laden's latest message. Most observers, including the White House, seem to have missed its significance. In it, bin Laden offered us a truce (an offer we should have accepted, if only to attempt to seize the moral high ground). The Koran requires Moslems to offer such a truce before they attack. The fact that bin Laden himself made the offer, after a long silence, suggests al-Qaeda attaches high importance to it. Why? My guess is because they plan a major new attack in the U.S. soon. I would be surprised if the plan were for something smaller than 9/11, because that could send the message that al-Qaeda's capabilities had diminished.
- In Iraq, Shi'ite country is turning nasty. The Brits are finding themselves up against Shi'ite militias around Basra. Muqtada al Sadr has made it clear he is spoiling for another go at the Americans, saying his militia would respond to any attack on Iran. In Baghdad, the Shi'ites who run things are finding American interference increasingly inconvenient. We are now talking to at least some Sunni insurgents, as we should be, but that means our utility to the Shi'ites as unpaid Hessians is diminishing. Put it all together and it suggests the improbable Yankee-Shi'ite honeymoon may soon end. When it does, our lines of supply and

communication through southern Iraq to Kuwait will be up for grabs.

- We are moving towards war with Iran. Our diplomatic efforts on the question of Iranian nuclear research and reprocessing are obviously designed to fail, in order to clear the boards for military action. It will probably come in the form of Israeli air strikes on Iran, which, as the Iranians well know, cannot be carried out without American approval and support.

In Israel, it was Sharon who repeatedly refused the Israeli generals' requests for air strikes; he is now out of the picture. His replacement, Olmert, is weak. The victory of Hamas in the Palestinian elections gave Olmert's main opponent, Likud's Netanyahu, a big boost. How could Olmert best show the Israeli electorate he is as tough as Netanyahu? Obviously, by hitting Iran before Israel's elections in late March.

In Washington, the same brilliant crowd who said invading Iraq would be a cakewalk is still in power. While a few prominent neocons have left the limelight, others remain highly influential behind the scenes. For them, the question is not whether to attack Iran (and Syria), but when. Their answer will be the same as Israel's.

Washington will assume Iran will respond with some air and missile strikes of its own. Those may occur, but Iran has far more effective ways of replying. It can shut down its own oil exports and, with mining and naval action, those of Kuwait and the Gulf States as well. It can ramp up the guerilla wars both in Iraq and in Afghanistan.

It could also do something that would come as a total surprise to Washington and cross the Iran-Iraq border with four to six divisions, simply rolling up the American army of occupation in Iraq. Syria might well join in, knowing that it is only a question of time before it is attacked anyway. We have no field army in Iraq at this point; our troops are dispersed fighting insurgents. A couple dozen Scuds on the

Green Zone would decapitate our leadership (possibly to our benefit). Yes, our air power would be a problem, but only until the Iranians got in close. Bad weather could provide enough cover for that. So could the Iranian and Syrian air forces, so long as they were willing to expend themselves. Our Air Force can be counted on to fight the air battle first.

As I said, when a war has been stuck in a rut for a long time, thoughtful observers should expect some dramatic change or changes. Any one of these possibilities would deliver that; together, they could give us a whole different situation, one in which our current slow defeat would accelerate sharply.

Beware the ides of March.

*February 2, 2006*

# The Long War

Every four years, the Pentagon releases its Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR), more accurately the Quadrennial Defense Rubberstamp. Usually, it offers the same, more of the same, or less of the same. That is true of this QDR as well, with one interesting exception. Perhaps uniquely in the annals of strategic planning, this QDR promises strategic failure *a priori*. It puts that promise right up front, in its first sentence, which reads, “The United States is a nation engaged in what will be a long war.”

Long wars are usually strategic disasters for winners as well as losers, because they leave all parties exhausted. If they work to anyone’s advantage, it tends to be the weaker party’s, because its alternative is rapid defeat. The Rumsfeld Pentagon certainly does not see the United States as the weaker party in its “Global War on Terrorism.” So why has it adopted a long war strategy, or more accurately lack of strategy, unless one sees national exhaustion as a plus?

The answer is a common strategic blunder, but again one that is seldom seen up front; it normally arises as a war continues longer and proves more difficult than expected. The blunder is maximalist objectives. In a speech announcing the QDR, Secretary Rumsfeld said, speaking of our 4th Generation opponents,

*Compelled by a militant ideology that celebrates murder and suicide, with no territory to defend, with little to lose, they will either succeed in changing our way of life or we will succeed in changing theirs.*

It would be difficult for war objectives to be stated in more

maximalist terms. Either they will succeed in turning us into Taliban-style Muslims or we will turn them into happy consumers in globalism's Brave New World. Since most Americans would rather be dead than Talibs and most pious Moslems would rather perish than lose their souls to Brave New World, Mr. Rumsfeld has proclaimed a war of mutual annihilation. That will indeed be another Thirty Years' War, with little chance of a renewed Westphalian order as the outcome.

It is easy enough to define alternate, less ambitious objectives that might avoid the strategic disaster of a long war. We might say that our objective is to be left alone in our part of the globe, to enjoy peace, prosperity and an ordered liberty at home, while we left Islamics alone in their traditional territories. Sadly, from the Pentagon's perspective, such a strategy would fail the pork test: it would not guarantee to keep the money flowing, which is what QDRs are ultimately about.

Here, the new QDR reverts to type. After a few ritual bows to non-state opponents, it calls for more of the same: more 2nd Generation weapons systems, of ever-increasing complexity and cost. According to a story in the February 4 *Washington Times*, we are even to be blessed with a new penetrating bomber, which is about as useful for 4th Generation war as a squadron of pre-dreadnoughts.

But it seems that in its blatant disconnect between programs and reality, the Rumsfeld Pentagon may this time have overplayed its hand. The same *Washington Times* story reports that the Chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, Congressman Duncan Hunter, called it like it is. "It appears that the QDR has become a budget-driven exercise, which limits its utility to Congress," he said. The HASC has been holding hearings on genuine alternatives, one of which I testified at last fall on 4th Generation War, in a process that "will provide us with a more complete picture of America's national security needs." In other words, the Congress, or at least the House, may refuse to rubber stamp the QDR.

To anyone familiar with the Hill, this is nothing short of a

revolution. The Pentagon stopped taking the authorizing committees seriously years ago, and with reason. They had become backwaters, seldom asking serious questions. The real action shifted to the appropriations committees, where the money gets doled out.

But the House and Senate Armed Services Committees have serious powers, if they once again choose to exercise them. Chairman Hunter's response to the QDR suggests that the HASC may do just that. If it happens, not only might the relevance of many weapons programs come into question, so might Mr. Rumsfeld's demand for maximalist objectives in a permanent war for permanent peace.

*February 10, 2006*

## Latin Beat

Time and again, I find it necessary to remind myself and readers of this column that 4th Generation war includes much more than the eternal conflict between what is left of Christendom and Islam. It is war on many fronts, and the southern front, Latin America, has recently witnessed several interesting developments.

In Venezuela, ex-paratrooper President Hugo Chavez recently ordered his military to make study of 4th Generation war its top priority. More details I do not know, but I suspect the intention here is probably defensive. Chavez says he fears American military intervention in Venezuela, which may or may not be a pose. It seems that in as in every army, the Airborne is a magnet for the worst and the dumbest. Chavez, and everyone else in the world, has learned from Iraq how to fight the American military. Making the Hammes mistake, Chavez may understand 4GW as just a new term for insurgency, and his directive to his commanders may amount to little more than preparing an insurgency-based defense against Uncle Sam. If others know more details about the Venezuelan situation, I would be happy to hear them.

More interesting from a 4GW standpoint are events in Bolivia, where *Indianismo* took over the government with the election of Evo Morales as President. Evo Morales also represents the coca farmers, and he has already begun to dismantle the American-financed and American-run program to discourage the growing of coca.

Both his Indian background and his connection with the coca farmers give Morales an interesting option, the option of waging offensive 4th Generation war. 4th Generation war is above all a contest for legitimacy. In much of Latin America, the state's legitimacy is already shaky. The collaboration of some Latin governments with the

American government in programs such as eradicating coca fields through aerial spraying reduces their legitimacy further. Helping a rich country destroy poor farmers' crops in your own country almost guarantees you the Order of Quisling, First Class, for which the medal shows two Norwegian lions rampant, holding an inverted chamber pot.

Morales can present himself, not only within Bolivia but well beyond its borders, as a champion of the Indians and the coca growers. Both are potentially a powerful base, and the coca growers are part of a larger system, the drug trade, that is already waging war against the hated gringos. What would be the effects, both on local states such as Peru and on American interests in the region, if Indians outside Bolivia started to look on Morales as their legitimate leader, without regard to state boundaries? Morales's first, unofficial, Indian inauguration as President, which was roughly modeled on the coronation of an Inca, suggests he may perceive this potential.

Similarly, how may coca farmers in countries such as Columbia regard the President of another country in the region who helps coca growers instead of cooperating in poisoning their crops? Might they too see him as their leader, without regard for national boundaries? Might they be willing to follow him rather than their own state's leaders, including in a confrontation with America?

4th Generation offensives seek not to violate state borders but to transcend them and render them irrelevant. Governments of other states are bypassed rather than confronted, much the way 3rd Generation infiltration tactics bypass enemy strong points. Both the dispossessed Indians and the besieged coca farmers of portions of Latin America offer Evo Morales fertile soil for a 4th Generation offensive. It just might happen that Bolivia's long-desired corridor to the sea runs not through northern Chile but from Cusco to Callao.

*February 20, 2006*



# Paking It In

The riots in Pakistan are hardly news anymore: if they appear in the paper at all, it is on page C17, between a story on starvation in the Sudan and a report that Mrs. McGillicuty fell down the stairs. The riots continue nonetheless, seemingly unconcerned that the rest of the world is no longer watching.

Perhaps it should. Periodic riots are normal in parts of the world; England was famous for them in the 18th century. But when rioting continues day after day, it can serve as a sort of thermometer, taking the temperature of a population. Pakistan, it would seem, is running a fever, one that shows little sign of breaking.

On the surface, the rioting is a protest against cartoons of Mohammed. Throughout the Islamic world, the anti-cartoon demonstrations are both an expression of rage at Islamic states' impotence and a demonstration of Islam's power outside the state framework. But in Pakistan, the immediate target of the riots is all too evident: Pakistani President Musharraf and his close working relationship with America's President Bush. In Pakistan, Musharraf is often called Busharraf, and this is not a compliment.

After 9/11, when Bush announced that anyone in the world who was not with us was with the terrorists, Musharraf had to make a strategic choice. He had to make it fast, since America wanted to attack Afghanistan, and it needed Pakistan's help to do so. Musharraf chose to ally with Bush. That choice has paid Pakistan dividends internationally, but at a price: Musharraf's legitimacy at home became dependent on the Pakistani people's view of America. In effect, Musharraf reincarnated himself as a political satellite of Bush.

Not surprisingly, America's popularity among Pakistanis was not

helped by our invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq. The Taliban was largely a Pakistani creation, and its fall was not welcomed in Pakistan, especially when Afghanistan's American-installed President, Mr. Karzai, quickly cozied up to India.

Then, the strong American response to Pakistan's disastrous earthquake turned Pakistani opinion around. Only America really came through for the tens of thousands of people de-housed by the catastrophe, and other people noticed; when mullahs in radical mosques denounced the Americans, their congregations told them they were wrong.

Of course, America blew it in classic American fashion, with the Predator strike on homes in a Pakistani border town. As always, the target wasn't there, because, as always, we depended on intelligence from systems when only human intelligence can do the job. The resulting Pakistani civilian deaths threw away all the good will we earned from the earthquake response and made America the Great Satan once more. Musharraf paid the political price.

If the riots continue and grow, the Pakistani security forces responsible for containing them will at some point go over and join the rioters. Musharraf will try to get the last plane out; perhaps he will find Texas a congenial place of exile. If he doesn't make that plane, his head will serve as a football, not just of the political variety.

A new Pakistani government, in quest of legitimacy, will understand that comes from opposing Bush's America, not getting in bed with it. Osama will be the new honorary President of Pakistan, de facto if not de jure. Our, and NATO's operation in Afghanistan will become strategically unsustainable overnight. That nice Mr. Karzai will, one hopes, find a seat on a C-17.

The fall of Pakistan to militant Islam will be a strategic disaster greater than anything possible in Iraq, even losing an army. It will be a greater disaster than a war with Iran that costs us our army in Iraq.

Osama and company will have nukes, missiles to deliver them, the best conventional armed forces in the Moslem world and an impregnable base for operations anywhere else. As North Korea's Dear Leader has shown the world, nobody messes with you if you have nukes. Uncle Sam takes off his battle rattle and asks Beijing, or somebody, if they can possibly sponsor some talks.

That ticking sound Mr. Bush hears is not Mr. Cheney's pacemaker. It's the crocodile, and he's getting rather close.

*February 25, 2006*

## Army Wins One

If the Army's record against Navy in football has not been too encouraging in recent years, West Point has nonetheless scored a big upset in a contest that counts for rather more. West Point's Combating Terrorism Center, a project of the Military Academy's Department of Social Sciences, has just published one of the most thoughtful and potentially most useful papers anyone has written on the so-called War on Terrorism. *Harmony and Disharmony: Exploiting al-Qa'ida's Organizational Vulnerabilities*—the title echoes John Boyd—offers a far more sophisticated approach to terrorism than the kill-or-capture method currently in vogue with the U.S. government.

The bulk of the paper is summaries of translations of some of al Qaida's own key documents, materials that allow other analysts to see al Qaida as it sees itself. As the study notes, "Any external assessment of al-Qa'ida's weaknesses will have inherent limitations. The Combating Terrorism Center at West Point believes an *internal* assessment—from actual members of the al-Qa'ida organization—is the best method to accurately assess their own true vulnerabilities." That is correct, and providing materials that offer such an internal assessment would alone make this a valuable paper.

But in fact *Harmony and Disharmony* does a great deal more. For the first time in any U.S. Army materials I have seen, it offers an approach to fighting al Qaida that might actually work. As the paper's authors state right up front, "Our analysis emphasizes that effective strategies to combat threats posed by al-Qa'ida will create and exacerbate schisms within its membership." In other words, instead of trying to win a jousting game al Qaida is too smart to play, we need to follow the old Roman rule, *divide et impera*.

The question, of course, is how to do this, and most of *Harmony and Disharmony* is devoted to answering this question. It does so in a variety of intelligent and imaginative ways. Working from the 4th Generation war framework first laid out in the 1989 *Marine Corps Gazette* article, it offers an intellectual model for identifying exploitable fissures within al Qaida and similar 4th Generation organizations. The paper accepts that al Qaida is a networked rather than a hierarchical organization, but instead of stopping where most such efforts do, with identifying the strengths of networked organizations, it goes on to probe their inherent weaknesses.

In doing so, *Harmony and Disharmony* notes:

*The key insight is that terrorist groups, and other covert organizations, face two fundamental trade-offs. The first is between operational security and financial efficiency... The second trade-off is between operational security and tactical control... Strategies to mitigate these problems through greater control entail security costs for groups as a whole... There are strong theoretical reasons to believe these problems are inescapable for all terrorist groups;...*

As to how these inherent tensions in networked 4th Generation organizations might be exploited, the paper goes on to say:

*The problems outlined above fall into the larger category of “agency problems.” Such problems arise when three conditions exist: (1) a principal needs to delegate certain actions or decisions to an agent; (2) the principal can neither perfectly monitor the agent’s actions, nor punish with certainty when a transgression is identified; and (3) the agent’s preferences are not aligned with those of the principal... Understanding why groups face preference divergence, and when preference divergence creates operational challenges, facilitates government actions*

*intended to exacerbate internal organizational problems of the terrorists.*

After looking at how agency problems led the Muslim Brotherhood in Syria to fail, *Harmony and Disharmony* compares Zarqawi's Al-Qa'ida in Mesopotamia with its Syrian counterpart. It then goes on to an extremely valuable discussion of "Organizational Vulnerabilities and Recommendations to Exploit Them." Of critical importance, this discussion grasps that kinetic solutions are often the worst. For example, at one point the paper recommends that counter-terrorism forces:

*Refrain from actions that encourage preference alignment. Al-Qa'ida members who appear less committed should not necessarily be removed from the network if they can be reliably observed, even if they present easy targets. By leaving them in place, the probability that the group will identify agency problems and hence adopt security-reducing measures increases.*

*Harmony and Disharmony* is too rich in substance for me to attempt to summarize it here. Let me instead just recommend that anyone and everyone who is seriously interested in 4GW get a copy and read it closely. The Combating Terrorism Center says the best way to obtain a copy is from their web site, [www.ctc.usma.edu](http://www.ctc.usma.edu).

My copy, of course, came from Zossen, in cipher, by telegraph, so there could be minor differences.

*March 3, 2006*

# Unholy Alliance

On the face of it, the port security issue now roiling Washington is simple enough. An Arabian company, Dubai World Ports, is about to take over management of several major U.S. ports, thanks to a corporate buy-out. While the Bush administration supports the deal, Congress is queasy. On March 6, the Chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, Congressman Duncan Hunter, introduced legislation to block the deal. His bill would also require that any “national defense critical infrastructure” be American-owned.

Congressman Hunter is obviously right. What would foreigners, in this case Arabs, get by owning ports or other critical American infrastructure? Detailed plans of both the infrastructure itself and how it is operated. That’s probably not the kind of information we want Abdul selling in the Kandahar bazaar.

The rejection of this deal should be automatic. So why isn’t it? Because an unholy alliance between the Politically Correct Left and the Golden Calf-worshipping Right has rallied in its defense. The nature of this Left-Right alliance is worth exploring, because one of its purposes is making sure America remains open to 4th Generation invaders.

To understand the Left’s insistence on leaving the drawbridge down, one has to know what “Political Correctness” and “multi-culturalism” really are. They are code words for the cultural Marxism of the Frankfurt School, the Marxist think tank that, beginning around 1930, undertook the intellectually difficult task of translating Marxism from economic into cultural terms. It even had to break with both Moscow and Marx on some important points to do so. Cultural Marxism’s purpose is the destruction of Western culture and the Christian religion. Any ally helpful in reaching those goals is to be

welcomed, including allies who would slit the cultural Marxists' own throats. So long as the West can be brought down, any price is worth paying.

The culturally Marxist Left has thus run to the defense of the Dubai ports deal, screaming "Islamophobia" at the top of its lungs. Like most words in the PC vocabulary, "Islamophobia" is itself a lie; in view of the way non-Islamics are treated in most majority-Moslem countries, fear of Islam is anything but irrational.

Joining the cultural Marxists on the barricades are the *Wall Street Journal* "conservatives," conservatives who define conservatism as "whatever makes me richer." To them, any impediment to free trade is anathema, as they get richer by selling off pieces of America. Note: these are not people who real conservatives, from Edmund Burke to Russell Kirk, would recognize as compatriots. They are, however, the kind of people who define "conservatism" for the imposter Bush regime.

What has been particularly interesting about the ports question is the way *WSJ* conservatives have grabbed and employed the rhetoric of the cultural Marxists, who are real conservatives' number one public enemy. One right-wing columnist after another has picked up the "Islamophobia" word, happily employing the vocabulary and frame of reference of the PC Left. How can they do that? As the street would say, "It's easy, hon. Pimps ain't got no principles."

At issue here is far more than the security of our ports, as important as that is. The same Left-Right unholy alliance is what keeps our borders open to millions of illegal immigrants, our stores filled with products made in Third World countries and our police unable to profile on the basis of real indicators. In other words, it leaves America a doormat on which the rest of the world is invited to wipe its feet.

In a 4th Generation world, we need legislation like Chairman Hunter's proposal, whose bill would also mandate inspection of all



cargo coming into the United States, which just might prevent that suitcase nuke for which Washington and New York are waiting. Let us hope Congress has the moral courage to tell both the PC/WSJ alliance and Woodrow II to stuff it.

*March 8, 2006*

## Reorganization or Reform?

A controversy appears to be brewing over the U.S. Army's plan to move away from the division as its basic unit and toward the brigade, or Brigade Combat Team (BCT) as the Army buzzwords it. On the surface, it appears there should be little to argue about. Most other armies abandoned the division or downsized it long ago, recognizing that it is simply too big to be commanded effectively on dispersed modern battlefields.

The controversy, it seems, is less over the move to brigades than over the question of how many maneuver battalions the Army will have left once the reorganization is complete. Here, the answer is the usual answer where numbers are concerned: it depends on what you count. An IDA study says maneuver battalions are cut by 20 percent, which if true, is certainly a bad move. The Army's leadership responds that IDA is not counting the recon battalion in each BCT, which is also a maneuver battalion. That may or may not be true, depending on the military situation. Like combat engineer battalions, reconnaissance battalions are sometimes used just like other maneuver battalions, because the situation demands that everyone be thrown into the fight. When the demand for cannon fodder is less intense, however, commanders usually want to avoid using units with special skills as infantry, because soldiers with special skills are harder to replace.

Far more serious than the question of whether recon battalions are or are not maneuver battalions is the matter of creeping headquarters' growth. The IDA study found that with the new BCT organization, brigade headquarters grew by about 11 percent. I met with the Army's "transformation task force" on force structure twice, and my strong impression from those meetings was that headquarters grow both in number and in size.

Why is this a problem? Because more headquarters and larger headquarters inevitably mean more centralization. Centralization is one of the key characteristics of 2nd Generation militaries, just as decentralization is a defining quality of the 3rd Generation. Decentralization permits outward focus and encourages initiative, which in turn together speed up Boyd's OODA Loop and improve accuracy of orientation. Centralization, in contrast, slows the OODA Loop down and blurs orientation because the picture that is the basis for decisions is many layers removed from the actual observation.

One of the reasons none of America's armed services has yet transitioned from the Second to the 3rd Generation is the vast number and size of their headquarters. All those headquarters' officers are continually looking for something to do, and for some scrap of information that will give them 30 seconds of face time in the endless PowerPoint briefings that are American headquarters' main business. The result is that they impose endless demands on the time and energy of subordinate units. One Army battalion last year told me they had to submit 64 reports to their division every day.

Here we come to the central question, not only about the Army's move from divisions to brigades, but about its whole "transformation" program: is it reform, or is it just reorganization? To count as real reform, it needs to move the Army out of the 2nd Generation and into the 3rd. If all it amounts to is reorganization within a 2nd Generation framework, then, frankly, it's not worth the umpteen-thousand PowerPoint slides on which it is printed.

If the Army's senior leadership wants reform and not mere reorganization, here's a suggestion to move the "transformation" process in that direction. Order that at the end of the day, when the new BCT structure is in place, the Army may have only half as many officers in headquarters, at all levels, as it did under the previous structure. And no, the officers cut may not be replaced by contractors. That would at least encourage decentralization, without which no

reform is possible. It might also give however many maneuver battalions the Army ends up with a little room to breathe.

*March 16, 2006*

# Through the Postern Gate

The Bush administration argues that by staying in Iraq, we keep the attention and the efforts of the terrorists focused there instead of on America's homeland. It could more plausibly be posited that by keeping America's eyes riveted on Iraq, the war allows a variety of 4th Generation elements to creep in through our postern gate.

On our southern border, the mestizo invasion is taking on more overtly military overtones. According to an article by Jerry Seper in the March 13 *Washington Times*:

*Law-enforcement officials along the Mexican border say they are outgunned and outmanned by drug smugglers armed with automatic weapons and grenades, and who use state-of-the-art communications and tracking systems.*

*"We recently received information that cartels immediately across our border are planning on killing as many police officers as possible on the United States side" ... said Zapata County Sheriff Sigifredo Gonzalez Jr., head of the 16-member Texas Border Sheriffs Coalition.*

*"They have the money, equipment and stamina to do it," the sheriff said...*

*Profits made by the drug cartels also have allowed them to hire and develop what Sheriff Gonzalez described as "experts" in explosives, wiretapping, countersurveillance, lock-picking and Global Positioning System technology.*

Most of the components of what Sheriff Gonzalez and his colleagues are facing are not new to those who follow the evolution of

4th Generation war. Several, however, are worth closer attention.

Why are the drug and immigration smugglers on our southern border escalating the conflict? Because when they probe, they find weakness. Here we see another carry-over from the 3rd to the 4th Generation, in the form of “soft spot tactics.” Our border defenses are weak at the physical level, and at the mental and moral levels as well. Those weaknesses are intended by the Washington Establishment and its unholy alliance of cultural Marxists and big business/cheap labor “conservatives.”

The cops understand the origin of the problem. *The Washington Times* piece notes that

*He (Sheriff Gonzalez) does not blame the law-enforcement agents; rather, “we criticize the policies that they have to adhere to.”*

Not only have Mexican drug gangs transferred their allegiance away from the state, so have America’s elites.

A normal phenomenon at a time of generational change in war is that the new generation gets far more bang for the buck. 9/11 cost al-Qaeda about \$500,000, while America is spending about \$5 billion a month to lose in Iraq and Afghanistan. On our southern border, we see 4th Generation opponents buying simple, effective equipment on the open market, while the U.S. national security establishment pours hundreds of billions of borrowed dollars into rococo systems and bureaucratic structures.

But in Sheriff Gonzalez’s testimony, we see something more: some of our 4th Generation enemies are acquiring a lot of money. Money has always been one of the sinews of war, and it always will be. As their financial resources increase, 4GW opponents will be able to leverage their vastly greater procurement efficiency to face us first with parity, then with superiority in technologies and systems that actually matter.

The all-pervasive American belief that wars are decided by technology is false to start with, but it remains the basis of American soldiers' and cops' faith in themselves. How will they fight when it becomes evident to them that they do not have technological superiority?

Patton said that one of the most basic tactics in war is to grab the enemy by the nose and then kick him in the ass. In Iraq and Afghanistan, we have willingly allowed one 4th Generation enemy to grab our nose. On our southern border, other 4GW entities are kicking our ass. What passes for the Bush administration's strategy is to maintain this posture. One has to search the historical record with some diligence to find parallels of sheer strategic imbecility.

*March 21, 2006*

# The Army's Truth in Advertising

The Army has made it official. What those who work in Washington have long known—that the Pentagon is about money, not war—is now Army policy. According to the March 10 draft of the Army Campaign Plan, “The Army’s center of gravity is the resource process.”

Yep, it sure is, as the cost of the Future Contract System readily attests. Still, the Army deserves some sort of award for its truth in advertising. How about a medal showing a hand with a West Point ring on it reaching for someone else’s wallet?

Of course, money has always been important in war. For centuries, a king who wanted to go to war had first to trot down to his Schatzkammer and see how many thaler he had piled up. If the cupboard was bare, he wasn’t going anywhere.

But saying, as the U.S. Army has, that its center of gravity is the resource process is going a great deal further. Clausewitz defines a center of gravity as “the hub of all power and movement, on which all depends.” If that were true of money, then the current wars in Iraq and Afghanistan would not be happening. The U.S. Army’s resources, not to mention those of the rest of the Defense Department, are so vastly greater than those of our 4th Generation opponents that they would not be able to stand against us for an hour.

The Military Reform Movement of the 1970s and 80s put it differently. It said that for winning in war, people are most important, ideas come second and hardware is only third. How does the Army affect its people, ideas and hardware by making resources its center of gravity? In each case, negatively.



Within the officer corps, the focus on acquiring and justifying resources corrupts, not in the sense of people taking money under the table but in the more profound sense of corruption of institutional purpose. Officers whose focus and expertise is combat are shunted aside while those who are most adept at the resources game are promoted. Worse, a swarm of vultures is drawn by the resources, in the form of a secondary army of contractors. Because their goal is not truth but the next contract, intellectual corruption is added to corruption of purpose. At its higher levels, the whole system becomes Soviet, Gosplan in or out of uniform. The outside world, the battlefield, is an irrelevant and unwelcome distraction.

Ideas are similarly corrupted. In general, poverty begets ideas, while an excess of resources brings intellectual laziness. The illusion that the organization can simply buy its way out of problems spreads. The ideas that are valued are those that justify still more resources, while ideas that promise battlefield results with small resources are dismissed or seen as threats. Again, the FCS is a wonderful example. From a military standpoint it is a joke, a semi-portable Maginot Line doomed to collapse of its own complexity. But in terms of justifying resources, it is a tremendous success because for the first time the Army has a program that costs even more than Navy or Air Force programs.

That leads to hardware, where complexity becomes the rule because simplicity does not cost enough. The more complex a system, the less it is able to deal with threats not envisioned by its designers. Thus we see what Iraq has illustrated time and again, expensive, complex systems nullified by imaginative, simple countermeasures based on people and ideas. Worse, because hardware best justifies more resources, hardware becomes the Army's top priority with both people and ideas left far behind. In the end, the Army loses to opponents who have kept their priorities straight.

The Army should not be blamed for coming out of the closet and

stating up front that resources are its center of gravity. The scandal is that for all the American armed services, the resource process is the center of gravity and has been for a long time. The final service to give in, the Marine Corps, did so in the mid-1990s. To return to Clausewitz's definition, one might say that when a military defines resources as its center of gravity, it creates a hub of all weakness and stasis, on which all fatally depends.

*March 29, 2006*

## The Self-Proclaimed Other

The ongoing demonstrations and riots against a change in French labor laws are as normal for France as snails for dinner. Most Frenchmen agree that France is, and should remain, a mercantilist rather than a capitalist country. Every so often, a French government unwisely ignores this consensus and attempts to fire Monsieur Colbert from his permanent post as Minister of Economics. French workers take to the streets in protest, and after huffing and puffing for a while, the government gives in and restores Colbert to his honored post. It is one of the rites of spring, and no cause for genuine alarm.

But this year is different. A new, 4th Generation presence has manifested itself. Roving gangs of young Islamics, many of them black, have joined the festivities. They have come not to march shoulder-to-shoulder with French students and workers, demonstrating the Left's *fraternité*, but to assault, beat, kick and rob them. The Left, it seems, has a problem.

The European cultural Left, which includes most of the nominal European Right, has for decades proclaimed the desirability of "multi-culturalism." Religion, culture, race, those basic ingredients of human history, were no longer to matter. Beneath such superstructures, all people were to be seen as the same, wanting material things, sharing warm feelings toward one another, united by class consciousness far more than they could ever be divided by mere accidents of birth. "Diversity" would unite the best from all cultures, while the worst would magically vanish.

In this culturally Marxist world view, the most heinous of sins was to suggest that someone else was "the Other." That was racism, classism, fascism, and every other ism under the sun. Anyone who

dared view another religion, culture or race as in any way unwelcome or even problematic was supposed to look in the mirror and see “another Hitler.”

In the case of the young Moslems who are attacking French demonstrators, however, it is not Le Pen and his followers who are labeling them “the Other.” They are proclaiming themselves “the Other,” and they are doing so forcefully. Their Other, in turn, is not the Right, but simply Frenchmen. Any man, woman or child of French ancestry is a target, an enemy, regardless of how impeccable their Leftist credentials. European distinctions of Left and Right mean nothing to this self-proclaimed Other. What matters to these products of multi-culturalist immigration policies is exactly the realities multi-culturalism was supposed to abolish, the ancient identities of religion, culture and race. The New sought to replace the Old, but the Old is reemerging to displace the New.

The root issue, as usual in the 4th Generation, is primary loyalty. Most French workers and students, however Leftist their politics, are Frenchmen first. The Moslem hooligans – or should we say warriors? – attacking them will never give their primary loyalty to France. They are the Other by choice and by pride, not by economic or any other circumstances. No schools, no housing projects, no jobs programs will take their loyalty away from the Other. As the Other, and as young men, they will look, not for economic opportunities, but for opportunities to fight.

The French Left is now painfully discovering that “diversity” is a synonym for taking a swim in the shark tank. For those of us who are cultural conservatives, the situation has its amusing aspects. We did tell them so, over and over again. They stopped their ears and yelled “ism! ism! ism!” back at us. Now, they are finding it is easier to block their ears than to keep their asses from being kicked in the streets of Paris, by the people they welcomed to France.

Regrettably, the colossal mess created by “multi-culturalism”

affects all Europeans and Americans, Right as well as Left. I will say again what I have said before: in a 4th Generation world, invasion by immigrants who do not acculturate is more dangerous than invasion by the army of a foreign state. In America, a similar invading army took to our streets last week, demonstrating against any attempt to stem the invasion. Few of the flags they carried were American.

What has to happen before the rest of us get the message?

*April 4, 2006*

# The Fourth Plague

In Exodus, the Fourth Plague sent upon the Egyptians was a plague of flies. A similar plague of flies has settled on the U.S. military, in the form of a swarm of retired senior officers working as contractors. Not satisfied with their generous pensions, they wheedle six-figure contracts out of senior officer “buddies” still on active duty. In return for steam shovel loads of the taxpayers’ money, they offer advice that is, overwhelmingly, flyspeck.

The problem is that these contractors are businessmen, and business is a whore. The goal of business is profit, not truth. Profit requires getting the next contract. Getting the next contract means telling whomever gave you the current contract what he wants to hear. If what he wants to hear isn’t true, so what? Just start the study by writing the desired conclusion, then bugger the evidence to fit. The result is endless intellectual corruption, billions of dollars wasted and military services that, as institutions, can no longer think.

The plague of senior officer contractors has effectively pushed those still in the military out of the thought process. Meeting after meeting on issues of doctrine or concepts are dominated by contractors. The officers in the room know that if they wave the BS flag at the contractors, they risk angering the serving senior officers who have given their “buddies” the contract. Junior officers, who have the most direct experience with the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, are completely excluded. They have no chance of being heard in meetings dominated by retired generals and colonels.

Not only does contracting out thinking bring intellectual corruption, it adds a whole new layer of dinosaurism to the thought process. Most retired senior officers’ minds froze in the Fulda Gap

many years ago, and that remains their vision of war. Further, any change is automatically an attack on their “legacies,” which they are quick to defend. Twenty years ago, once the dinosaur retired, you could push him into the tar pit and move on. Now he is back the next day in a suit, with a six-figure contract.

The plague of contractors reinforces one of the military’s worst habits, the formalization of its thinking. Concepts and doctrine are now developed through layer after layer of formal, structured meetings, invariably organized around PowerPoint briefings. Most attendees are there as representatives of one or another bureaucratic interest, and their objective is to defend their turf. PowerPoint briefings not only disguise a lack of intellectual substance with glitzy gimmicks, they inherently work against the concept of *Schwerpunkt*. Slides usually present umpteen bulletized points, all co-equal in their lack of importance. In the end, what is important is the briefing itself: the medium is the message.

One of the great intellectual successes of the American military, the Marine Corps’ development of maneuver warfare doctrine from the 1970s through the early 1990s, offers an interesting contrast. The process was almost all informal. The key people were mostly junior officers. Meetings were after-hours, in someone’s living room over beer and pizza. Many outsiders were involved, but none of them were paid. In the end, most of the new manuals were written by a Marine captain, who took them directly to the Commandant for approval. Tellingly, since that time, the Marine Corps has formalized the development process for its doctrine, and the quality of its manuals has observably declined.

Of course, contractors hate informal processes, because they have no role in them. There is no money to be had. In contrast, the current formal process gives them what they seek most, opportunities to kiss the backsides of bigwigs with bucks to obtain still more contracts.

As I told one senior Marine Corps general last fall, the present

system is terminally constipated by too many people and too much money. The money draws contractors the way an outhouse draws other kinds of flies. If the U.S. military wants to start thinking again, it needs to can the senior officer contractors, outlaw PowerPoint, and give younger officers time and encouragement to meet in informal seminars, write, and publish.

Scharnhorst's *Militaerische Gesellschaft*, from the time of Napoleon, remains the right model. The problem is that it doesn't cost very much.

*April 11, 2006*



# Sweeping Up

As recognition of the defeat in Iraq spreads, so also does the process of sweeping up the debris. Both civilian observers and a few voices inside the military have begun the “lessons learned” business, trying to figure out what led to our defeat so that we do not repeat the same mistakes. That is the homage we owe to this war’s dead and wounded. To the degree we learn important lessons, they will not have suffered in vain, even though we lost the war.

Most of the analyses to date are of the “if only” variety. If only we had not sent the Iraqi army home, or overdone de-Ba'athification, or installed an American satrap, or, or, or, we would have won. The best study I have seen to date does not agree. “Revisions in Need of Revising: What Went Wrong in the Iraq War,” by David C. Hendrickson and Robert W. Tucker, puts it plainly:

*Though the critics have made a number of telling points against the conduct of the war and the occupation, the basic problems faced by the United States flowed from the enterprise itself, and not primarily from mistakes in execution along the way. The most serious problems facing Iraq and its American occupiers – “endemic violence, a shattered state, a nonfunctioning economy, and a decimated society” – were virtually inevitable consequences that flowed from the breakage of the Iraqi state.*

It is of interest, and a hopeful sign, that this blunt assessment was published by the U.S. Army War College’s Strategic Studies Institute.

One target the study hits squarely is the American assumption, still regnant in the Pentagon, that superior technology guarantees our 2nd Generation forces victory over technologically primitive 4th

Generation enemies. Hendrickson and Tucker write,

*It is now clear that the insurgency enjoys advantages on its own terrain that are just as formidable as the precision-guided weaponry deployed with devastating effect by the United States. Because U.S. forces can destroy everything they can see, they had no difficulty in marching into Baghdad and forcing the resistance underground. Once underground, however, the resistance acquired a set of advantages that have proved just as effective as America's formidable firepower. Iraq's military forces had no answer to smart bombs, but the United States has no answer—at least no good answer—to car bombs.*

Recognition that war is not dominated by technology but by human factors is an important counter to what will inevitably be the Vietnam-style claims by the U.S. military that while it performed brilliantly, it was the politicians who lost the war. As the authors note, this reflects an overly narrow definition of war:

*Other lessons are that the military services must digest again that “war is an instrument of policy.” The profound neglect given to re-establishing order in the military's prewar planning and the facile assumption that operations critical to the overall success of the campaign were “somebody else's business” reflect a shallow view of warfare. Military planners should consider the evidence that occupation duties were carried out in a fashion – with the imperatives of “force protection” overriding concern for Iraqi civilian casualties – that risked sacrificing the broader strategic mission of U.S. forces.*

The Iraq war would not have been won if we had sent more troops. More troops would not have helped us deal with the problems of bad intelligence, lack of cultural awareness, and the insistence on using tactics that alienated the population. As the authors state, “The

assumption that the United States would have won the hearts and minds of the population had it maintained occupying forces of 300,000 instead of 140,000 must seem dubious in the extreme.”

The most important point in this excellent study is precisely the one that Washington will be most reluctant to learn: “Rather that ‘do it better next time,’ a better lesson is ‘don’t do it at all.’” What we require is a national security grand strategy in which there is no imperative to fight the kind of war that the United States has fought in Iraq.

For most of America’s history, we followed that kind of grand strategy, a defensive grand strategy. If the fallout from the defeat in Iraq includes our return to a defensive grand strategy, then we will indeed be able to say that we have learned this war’s most important lesson.

*April 19, 2006*

## Off With His Head!

On the surface, the question raised by, at last count, six retired generals, of whether Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld should resign has an obvious answer: of course he should. He was a key man in the cabal that lied us into the war in Iraq, and he may have been the key man in losing that war. What happens to the COO of a major corporation who swindles his company into a risky deal, then blows the deal so the company faces bankruptcy? In today's business world he probably pops his golden parachute and leaves with \$100 million. But at least he leaves. So should Rumsfeld. Off with his head!

At that point, the picture grows murkier. Who replaces him? Almost certainly, someone no different. He is, after all, the COO, and this company's problem is that it has a dunce for a CEO. Far from learning any lessons from the previous failed venture, he wants to repeat it, this time in Iran. A fish rots from the head, as the old Russian saying goes, and until this head falls the rot will spread. Where is the Queen of Hearts when we really need her?

Then there is the question of why so many generals, and not all of them retired, want Rumsfeld gone. That varies general to general, but when Rumsfeld's defenders argue that some of his critics are dinosaurs who resent "Transformation" because it disrupts business as usual, they have a point. As anyone who has dealt with the higher ranks of the U.S. military knows, they put the La Brea tar pits in the shade as a dinosaur graveyard. As wedded to old ways of doing things—2nd Generation war to be specific—as any other group of senior Gosplan apparatchiki, they hate any hint of change. Years ago, when an unconventional Air Force Chief of Staff asked me to give my 4th Generations of Modern War talk to the Air Force's "Corona" gathering of three- and four-stars, I felt like Milton Friedman speaking to the Brezhnev Politburo.

But here too the story is not so simple. While Rumsfeldian Transformation represents change, it represents change in the wrong direction. Instead of attempting to move from the 2nd Generation to the 3rd (much less the 4th), Transformation retains the 2nd Generation's conception of war as putting firepower on targets while trying to replace people with technology. Its *summa* is the Death Star, where men and women in spiffy uniforms sit in air-conditioned comfort zapping enemies like bugs. It is a vision of future war that appeals to technocrats and lines industry pockets, but has no connection to reality. The combination of this vision of war with an equally unrealistic vision of strategic objectives has given us the defeat in Iraq. Again, Rumsfeld lies at the heart of both. But, again, his removal and replacement contain no promise of improvement in either.

At least one of Rumsfeld's retired general critics, Greg Newbold, understands all this. I've known and respected Greg since he was a captain teaching at The Basic School, and many of us hoped he would be Commandant some day, the first Commandant since Al Gray who would try to move the Marine Corps beyond 2nd Generation war in more than just its doctrine manuals.

But the Imperial Court gets what it wants, and what it wants are not generals like Greg Newbold. It wants senior leaders who are, above all, compliant, and it finds no shortage of candidates. They may growl about Rumsfeld in private, but in public they bow and scrape, not only to the SecDef and the catastrophic policies of a failed Presidency, but even more to high tech and its magical ability to expand defense budgets. At some point they will make a break, because the military does not want to wear the albatross of two lost wars. But not until they have extracted the uttermost farthing.

The play is titled, "No Exit." Unless, unless... Rumsfeld's head should not be the only one to roll.

*April 27, 2006*

## **A Left-Right Anti-war Alliance?**

One of the more amusing aspects of the debacle in Iraq has been the performance of the anti-war Left. Far from mobilizing the masses for peace, it has had about as much impact as a slingshot on a Kaiser-class dreadnought. Seldom does it amount to more than a few aging hippies trying to relive their youth by resurrecting the Vietnam-era anti-war movement. Their attempts recall Marx's comment that history first occurs as tragedy, then repeats itself as farce.

In response to this failure, a few voices from both the Left and the Right are suggesting an anti-war alliance. Given its impotence to date—nowhere more evident than in Congress, where few Democrats dare call for a withdrawal from Iraq—it is not clear exactly what the Left would bring to the table. The strongest and most thoughtful voices against the Iraq War have come from conservatives, starting well before the war began. Moreover, because the Right is President Bush's base, conservative anti-war voices have more political meaning than do those on the Left, which will never vote Republican under any circumstances.

Let us say, nonetheless, that such an alliance is worth exploring. It is unlikely to get us out of Iraq before the roof there falls in, but it just might manage to obstruct the next act in the neocons' play, a war with Iran. If it could be kept out of the hands of the crazies, it might also give some encouragement to Members of Congress of both parties who, at least behind closed doors, realize that the whole "American Empire" madness is leading the country to destruction. Abandoning that strategy and returning to a policy of prudence should be the strategic goal of any serious "anti-war" effort, and it might also be a point on which Left and Right could agree.

But what about the many other matters on which conservatives and the Left cannot agree? In an article in *The American Conservative* advocating a Left-Right anti-war alliance, “Grand Coalition,” Neil Clark writes:

*This Peace Party would (be) a high-profile pressure group where all opponents of war would feel at home, regardless of their views on abortion, public ownership, smoking in public places, or capital punishment.*

That’s fine as far as it goes, especially since it means the Left will have to breathe my pipe-smoke. Unfortunately, it ignores the elephant in the parlor, namely Political Correctness. To the Left, anyone who dares contradict the dictates of the cultural Marxism of the Frankfurt School, which is what Political Correctness and “multi-culturalism” really are, is not just wrong. They are evil, “another Hitler.”

So let me put some questions to those on the Left who advocate a grand coalition against more wars in pursuit of American Empire. Are you prepared to work with people who:

- Believe that the culture of both America and Britain should remain Anglo-Saxon?
- Think men and women are inherently different, and that their traditional social roles reflect those inherent differences?
- Acknowledge distinctions between races, and among ethnic groups within races?
- Reject egalitarianism and think differences between classes both natural and beneficial?
- Believe all sexual relations outside marriage are sinful, and homosexual acts especially so?
- See Victorian America and Britain as models to be emulated rather than examples of “oppression?”



Will the Left work with people who not only insist on believing all these things, and more like them, but also on expressing their beliefs publicly, as representing what is right, true and good?

Frankly, I doubt the culturally Marxist Left can accept any of this. To do so, it would have to acknowledge that its ideology is an ideology and not objective reality. In other words, those who argue that truth is relative would have to accept that their truths are relative, too.

For my part, as a conservative, I am willing to participate in a Grand Coalition against imperial folly even with cultural Marxists; if they want to believe the Frankfurt School crap, more the fools they. But I will do so puffing my pipe and reading Mencken as a frolicsome Irish serving wench makes sure my glass stays full. The Politically Correct Left can put that in their pipes, but if they try to smoke it, I suspect they will turn a delightful shade of green.

*May 2, 2006*

# War on Afghan Time

As rising U.S. and NATO casualty counts attest, the war in Afghanistan is heating up. It is doing so on Afghan time, which is to say slowly. When you have all the time in the world, why hurry?

An April 7, 2006 study by the London-based Senlis Council, “Insurgency in the Provinces of Helmand, Kandahar and Nangahar,” paints a somewhat alarming picture. I do not know who or what the Senlis Council represents, or what axes it may grind. The style of the report suggests English is not the first language of those who wrote it. But facts are still facts, and its report tracks with what I’ve seen elsewhere. The study states:

*The Insurgency Assessment Report collates notes, evidence and facts gathered during a field visit of the three provinces... during the months of February/March 2006.*

*The visit was conducted by an independent field team, which met with civil, military and religious leaders in each of the provinces but also gained access to farming communities and other grassroots actors, with whom interviews and group meetings were conducted.*

Speaking of all three provinces, the study says in its Executive Summary:

*government control over the Pashto Belt, even at a limited level, is rapidly diminishing, with political volatility now reaching urban areas.*

*Volatility indicators – such as the free movement of insurgent groups in daylight and in the main cities – reveal that increasingly*

*large areas of the South are falling under the influence of non-state actors.*

At the core of this failure by the U.S., NATO and the Afghan government is a common and often fatal military phenomenon: conflicting objectives. On the one hand, the U.S. and its allies want to defeat the Taliban and other “terrorists.” But at the same time, they also want to stop opium production. If the Senlis Council’s analysis is accurate, attempts to pursue the second objective are pushing us away from attaining the first.

Looking at Helmand province, the report says:

*In eliminating the sole survival strategy of many of the farming families, eradication in Helmand is fueling the insurgency. Anti government forces are winning over the dilapidated farmers by offering economic assistance including the cancellation of debts and providing military protection from eradication.*

*The Coalition forces mandate covers counter insurgency and support to counter narcotics activities. It is being widely reported that eradication activities are being supervised by the US and British military...*

*Eradication is blunting counter insurgency efforts by pushing the local population toward the extremists...*

*The local population has now come to identify international troops with eradication activities rather than with reconstruction efforts.*

The situation in the other two provinces is similar. Speaking of Kandahar province, the report states:

*The majority of the Kandahar population are farmers living in*

*rural areas. The farming communities of Kandahar are very actively involved in the cultivation and production of opium. The soil, weather patterns and limited water supply make opium one of the few viable crops in the region, and Kandahar farmers admitted that (they) would rather die than forgo their families' only means of survival...*

*According to many farmers, the US and Canadian alternative livelihoods plans are farcical...*

Determining strategic objectives, and ensuring that those objectives are not contradictory, is the job of the most senior level of command, in this case the White House. By demanding that U.S. and allied troops pursue two conflicting objectives simultaneously, the Bush administration has created a no-win situation. Efforts to defeat the Taliban only work if they can gain the support of the rural population, but poppy eradication pushes the rural population toward the Taliban and its allies. One could add a third incompatible objective, promoting women's rights in a conservative Islamic culture.

President George W. Bush likes to say, "I'm the decider; I decide." The role of being the decider includes making sure that decisions are logically consistent. Mr. Bush is, from that perspective, a failed decider in Afghanistan. He failed similarly in deciding to invade Iraq as part of a global war against "terrorism," when the destruction of the Iraqi state proved, predictably, to work in favor of the terrorists. He is failing yet again in picking quarrels with Russia and China when we need an all-states alliance against anti-state forces.

President Harry S. Truman said, "The buck stops here," in the Oval Office. When it comes to deciding on strategic objectives, President George W. Bush has torn the buck into confetti and tossed it to the winds of chance.

*May 9, 2006*

## More Contradictions

I recently wrote about a contradiction in our strategy in Afghanistan, where we are simultaneously attempting to draw the rural population away from the Taliban and eradicating opium poppy crops, which drives farmers toward the Taliban. An article in the May 14 *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, “U.S. shift in fighting insurgency stirs debate,” points to a different kind of contradiction in Iraq, a contradiction between the requirements of the strategic and tactical levels of war.

The article, by reporters Solomon Moore and Peter Spiegel, notes that in Anbar Province, the Marines are adopting the “ink blot” approach to counter-insurgency, which is the only tactic that has a chance of working:

*In the region surrounding Al Qaim, a northwestern Iraqi town near the Syrian border, Marines are fanning out from their main base and moving into villages...*

*The deployment follows a strategy favored by a new generation of counterinsurgency experts: disperse, mingle with the population and stay put. The idea is to break out of an endless cycle that allows insurgents to move back into the key areas as soon as U.S. forces move on.*

The ink blot approach is a tactic, not a strategy, and it has been recommended by anyone who has studied insurgency, not just a “new generation” of experts. But the U.S. military threw away every lesson from Vietnam as soon as that war ended, so the old has become new again.

However, the article goes on to note that at the strategic level, what

we are doing in Iraq directly contradicts the requirements of the ink blot tactic.

*But the shift comes as the Pentagon appears to be moving the overall U.S. military effort in the opposite direction across much of the country. Army units are being concentrated in “super bases” that line the spine of central Iraq, away from the urban centers where counterinsurgency operations take place.*

*The two approaches underscore an increasingly high-profile divergence – some say contradiction – in how best to use U.S. forces in Iraq.*

U.S. forces are being pulled back into fortresses not because fortresses are effective against insurgents, but because at the strategic level, the Bush administration is desperate to reduce casualties and get the American people thinking about something other than the war in Iraq. A short piece in the May 16 *Plain Dealer* stated that

*Presidential advisor Karl Rove said Monday that the Iraq war is responsible for the “sour” mood of American voters, but he predicted that the Republican Party would do “just fine” in the congressional elections in the fall.*

Rove may be proven right, but at the moment Republicans in Congress are in a state of near-panic at the prospect of a political bloodbath in November, and Iraq lies at the heart of their fears.

If such a bloodbath occurs and Democrats take the House, much less the House and Senate, even the gutless Dems will get the message, and we will retreat from Iraq in short order. Which we should do anyway. Pulling our troops back into fortresses is a half-step along that road. Unfortunately, like most half-steps taken too late, and in this case, in the wrong direction in terms of fighting an insurgency, it will fail. American casualties will not drop, because we still have to run lots

of convoys, and public dismay over the Iraq debacle will continue to grow. Political processes by their nature attempt to bridge contradictions with half measures, but in war, half measures usually make things worse.

The history of war brims with contradictions between the tactical and strategic levels, with unhappy outcomes. Two classic examples are the French and German war plans in 1914, Plan XVII and the Schlieffen Plan. Both required fast-moving strategic offensives at a time when the defensive had become tactically dominant. Both failed, with enormous casualties.

Had U.S. forces in Iraq adopted the ink blot approach at the outset, we would still face insurgency today, and we would still find ourselves unable to attain our stated strategic objectives. Not even Merlin could turn Iraq into a secular, liberal parliamentary democracy. But the situation would probably not have been as bad as it is, we might have managed a half-graceful exit from Iraq, and strategic requirements might not have demanded we withdraw our troops into fortresses. As it is, what the Marines are doing is right, but too late. The strategic level trumps the tactical, and the pullback of U.S. troops into “super bases” is just a prelude to a super skedaddle.

*May 17, 2006*



# The Boys From Brazil

A point I have made repeatedly in these columns is that 4th Generation war includes far more than America's current battle with Islamic "terrorists." Last week, events in Brazil offered us a timely reminder of that fact. There, a gang, the PCC or First Command of the Capital, launched a full-scale military attack on the Brazilian state.

The PCC's actions illustrated a number of ways in which non-state forces deal with opposing states. The first is penetration. When a top-level meeting of Brazilian officials decided to act against the gang by transferring some of its leaders to a high-security prison, the gang immediately knew of the decision. How? It had a mole in the meeting, a contractor employed as a court reporter.

Then the gang showed that flat, networked organizations can move far faster than a state, with its bureaucratic hierarchy. As a story in the May 21 *Washington Post* reported, "Within hours of that meeting, news of the transfer plan had spread through the gang's prison-based network..." How? The *Post* story says, "After word of the planned transfer was passed to the gang's leaders, coordinating the uprisings was easy. They simply called each other on their cellphones." Their cellphone security is simple but effective: "According to police, the gang often clones legitimate cellphone numbers for illegal use."

While prison riots are common in Brazil, the PCC demonstrated an ability to reach far beyond the prisons. In the city of Sao Paulo, they launched military-style attacks on police and civilian infrastructure targets. The *Post* reports:

*Riots broke out in more than 70 state penitentiaries. Gang members outside prisons attacked police stations, burned more*

*than 60 public buses and whipped up a general state of terror that paralyzed Brazil's Sao Paulo...*

*As of Saturday, the death count totaled 41 police officers, 18 inmates, 107 suspected PCC members outside prisons and four civilians.*

Demonstrating the often-excellent intelligence capabilities of non-state organizations, “The gang members also know where the police live...Some of the officers who died during the outbreaks were killed near their homes while off duty.”

The PCC does what gangs do, namely use violence and make money off crime, especially the drug trade. But its origins illustrate the role non-state entities have in providing services states fail to offer. *The Washington Post* story notes:

[The PCC's] strength had been feeding on the weakness of government for years. The PCC was founded in 1993 as a response to the abysmal conditions in Sao Paulo's prisons, where inmates lived in fear of each other, sleeping in overcrowded cells with no beds, no blankets, no soap, no toothbrushes.

*By offering protection and basic necessities to new inmates, the gang won the loyalty of most prisoners in a population that now numbers 124,400...the PCC has repeatedly won minor improvements in conditions in some facilities. That has earned them favor not only with the inmates, but with the family members who provide the basic goods that PCC members distribute inside the prison blocs.*

*Nor does the PCC work only in ways that are illegal. The Post writes that “the gang also employs a network of attorneys...”*

The PCC emerges from the *Post* account, and from its uprising in Sao Paulo, as almost a model 4th Generation organization, operating a

network of structures parallel to those of the state that work more effectively than the state's institutions. As the state retreats into ever-greater corruption and incapacity, the PCC has advanced by filling in the widening gaps. It has now reached the point where it can confront the state directly, while I think it is safe to say that the state cannot defeat much less destroy the PCC.

The PCC offers us a 4th Generation model very different from what we confront in al-Qaeda. It is more like Hamas and Hezbollah, and it may also present a picture of what America will face coming out of its own prisons. Most American prisons are run not by the state but by racially-defined gangs. A prisoner's well-being, even his survival, depends on his gang, not on the prison authorities. How long will it be before those gangs, like the PCC, will be able to reach outside the prisons and confront the American state? Police in cities such as Los Angeles might say that is happening now.

*May 25, 2006*

## The Perils of Threat Inflation

In the 1980s, when I was on the staff of Senator Gary Hart of Colorado, I traveled regularly to Maxwell Air Force Base, whose claim to fame is not one, but two golf courses. I was there to give the slide-show briefing of the Congressional Military Reform Caucus to Squadron Officers' School. After one such session, an Air Force captain, an intelligence officer, came up to me and asked, "Does military reform mean we can stop inflating the threat?"

The Defense Department's annual report to Congress, *Military Power of the People's Republic of China*, 2006, released last week, shows that threat inflation remains a growth industry in Washington. Though the report is written in a careful tone, its message is that China is a growing military threat to the United States. Subheads in Chapter Five, "Force Modernization Goals and Trends," point to "Emerging Area Denial Capability," "Building Capacity for Precision Strike," and "Improving Expeditionary Operations." One can almost hear the threat inflation engines pumping away, puffing the dragon up to a fearsome size.

China is, to coin a Rumsfeldism, the threat we want, not the threat we face. By dint of much puffery, China can be made into the devoutly prayed for "peer competitor," an opponent against whom our "transformed," hi-tech, video-game future military can employ its toys, or more importantly, justify their acquisition. Our real enemy, the thousand faces of the 4th Generation, fails to meet that all-important test and is therefore deflated into "rejectionists" and "bad guys."

In fact, China's conventional forces are a long way from being able to take the United States on, especially at sea or in the air. The issue is less equipment—not that China has much of it—but personnel. Chinese

ships spend little time at sea, its fighter pilots get few flight hours, and one can hardly speak of a proper Chinese Navy, which is really just a collection of ships. In an air-and-sea war with the United States, China would have little choice but to go nuclear from the outset, which is what I suspect it would do.

A close read of DOD's China report reveals an interesting twist, one all too typical of the "American Empire" advocates who dominate the Washington Establishment. The main Chinese threat the report identifies is defensive, not offensive; an improving capability to repel outside intervention in a crisis between China and Taiwan. The report states:

*Since the early- to mid-1990s, China's military modernization has focused on expanding its options for Taiwan contingencies, including deterring or countering third-party intervention....*

*Simultaneously, the Department of Defense, through the transformation of the U.S. Armed Forces and global force posture realignments, is maintaining the capacity to resist any effort by Beijing to resort to force or coercion to dictate the terms of Taiwan's future status.*

Under its "one China" policy, the U.S. recognizes that Taiwan is part of China. So the "Chinese threat" is that China may be able to deter or counter American intervention in a Chinese civil war. Who is the attacker here? If Britain or France had intervened on behalf of the Confederacy after the American South declared its independence, would the Union have seen such action as defensive?

This points to the grand folly DOD's China report represents, namely America allowing Taiwan, a small island of no strategic importance to the United States, to push it into a strategic rivalry with China. Taiwan is vastly important to China, because the great threat to China throughout its history has been internal division. If one province,

Taiwan, can secure its independence, why cannot other provinces do the same? It is the spectre of internal break-up that forces China to prevent Taiwanese independence at any cost, including war with America.

But America has no corresponding interest. A war with China over Taiwan would be, for the U.S., another war of choice, not of strategic necessity. We are currently fighting two other wars of choice, and neither is going particularly well.

A strategic rivalry between the U.S. and China points to an obvious parallel, the strategic rivalry between England and Germany before World War I. That parallel should give Washington pause. If the rivalry—completely unnecessary in both cases—leads to war, as it then did, the war will have no victor. Germany and Britain destroyed each other. While Britain finally won, the British Empire died in the mud of Flanders.

A war between China and the United States could easily result in a similarly fatal weakening of the U.S., perhaps after a strategic nuclear exchange, while a defeated Chinese state might dissolve, leaving China becoming a vast region of stateless, 4th Generation instability. Is Taiwan worth risking such an outcome? Was Belgian neutrality worth the Somme, Bolshevism and Hitler?

In a 21st century where the most important division will be between centers of order and centers or sources of disorder, it is vital to American interests that China remain a center of order. America needs to handle a rising China the way Britain handled a rising America, not a rising Germany. From that perspective, the proper place for DOD's China report, the threat inflation it represents and the strategic rivalry it stokes is in the trash can marked "bad ideas."

*June 3, 2006*

# The Power of Weakness, Again

The investigations of Marines for possible murders of Iraqi civilians in Haditha last November and, more recently, in Hamdaniyah, seem set to follow the usual course. If anyone is found guilty, it will be privates and sergeants. The press will reassure us that the problem was just a few “bad apples,” that higher-ups had no knowledge of what was going on, and that “99.9 percent” of our troops in Iraq are doing a splendid job of upholding, indeed enforcing, human rights. It’s called the “Abu Ghraib precedent.”

The fact that senior Marine and Army leaders don’t seem to know what is going on in cases like this is a sad comment on them. Far from being exceptional incidents caused by a few bad soldiers or Marines, mistreatment of civilians by the forces of an occupying power are a central element of 4th Generation war. They are one of the main reasons why occupiers tend to lose. Haditha, Hamdaniyah and the uncountable number of incidents where U.S. troops abused Iraqi civilians less severely than by killing them are a direct product of war waged by the strong against the weak.

There are, of course, lesser causes as well, and it is on the lesser causes that we tend to focus. Poor leadership in a unit easily opens the door to misconduct. Overstretched, overtired units snap more easily. Every military service in history has included a certain percentage of criminals, and a larger percentage of bullies. The fact that in both Iraq and Afghanistan, the insurgencies are getting stronger, not weaker, generates increasing frustration among our troops: nothing they do seems to yield any real progress. The enemy’s highly effective use of IEDs leads units that have been hit often and hard to take their frustrations out on the civilian populations, since they cannot find, identify or shoot back at the people who are hitting them.

But all of these factors are secondary to the power of weakness itself. We may find it easier to grasp what the power of weakness is and how it works on us by first imagining its opposite. Imagine that instead of facing rag-tag bands of poorly equipped and trained insurgents, our Marines and soldiers in Iraq were in a very difficult fight with an opponent similar to themselves, but somewhat stronger.

What would fighting the strong do for them? Being David rather than Goliath, they would see themselves as noble. Every victory would be a cause for genuine pride. Defeats would not mean disgrace, but instead would demand greater effort and higher performance. Even after a failure, they could still look at themselves in the mirror with pride. Knowing they faced a stronger enemy, their own cohesion would grow and their demand for self-discipline would increase.

If the enemy overmatched our units too greatly, it could lead them to hopelessness and disintegration. But a fight with an enemy who was stronger but still beatable would buck us up more than tear us down on the all-important moral level.

Now, to see the situation as it is, turn that telescope around. Every firefight we win in Iraq or Afghanistan does little for our pride, because we are so much stronger than the people we are defeating. Every time we get hit successfully by a weaker enemy, we feel like chumps, and cannot look ourselves in the mirror. This is a common consequence, for example, of IED attacks. Whenever we use our superior strength against Iraqi civilians, which is to say every time we drive down an Iraqi street, we diminish ourselves in our own eyes. Eventually, we come to look at ourselves with contempt and see ourselves as monsters. One way to justify being a monster is to behave like one, which makes the problem even worse. The resulting downward spiral, which has captured every army in caught up in this kind of war, leads to indiscipline, demoralization, and disintegration of larger units as the fire teams and squads that comprise them eventually go feral.



Again, this process is fundamental to 4th Generation war. Martin van Creveld has stressed the power of weakness as one key, if not the key, to 4GW, and he is correct. It shows just how far America's military leadership is from grasping 4th Generation war that its response in Iraq has been to order all troops to undergo a two to four-hour "refresher course in core values."

They are caught in a hurricane, and all they can do is spit in the wind. The rest of us should get ready for the house to blow down.

*June 7, 2006*

## ***Blood Stripes***

David Danelo's new book, *Blood Stripes*, comes on the market at exactly the right time. Just as Americans are trying to understand what might have happened at Haditha, where Marines may have killed as many as fifteen Iraqi civilians, Danelo offers a thoughtful and insightful look into the Iraq war through the eyes of enlisted Marines. Until recently a Marine Corps infantry captain, Danelo fought in Fallujah and he obviously thought a great deal about what he saw there.

Unusually for a first-hand live reporter-style author, Danelo picks up quickly on one of the most important issues in military theory, the contradiction between the military culture of order and the disorderliness of war. In the first chapter of *Blood Stripes*, he writes about the Spartan Way:

*Non-commissioned officers...assume responsibility for imbuing the Way's sacred tenets of Order and Disorder into every young boot that crosses their path. Finding the balance within this dichotomy is tricky; both cultures exert a strong pull on Marines. The twins call like sirens from opposite banks of a river, singing for the Marine to listen to their virtues and ignore their vices.*

*The culture of Order is the Marine in dress blues, spotless and pristine, medals perfectly measured, hair perfectly trimmed...these types of things comprise the culture that is Orderly, functional, prepared and disciplined*

*However...combat is filled with uncertainties, half-truths, bad information, changing directives from seemingly incompetent higher headquarters, and unexplained explosions. War is chaos, the ultimate form of Disorder.*

*Blood Stripes* quickly immerses its reader in the chaos of infantry combat in Iraq, which, too often, is combat against an unseen enemy.

*Barely three weeks into their deployment, 3rd Platoon had already discovered several IEDs throughout Husaybah. Thus far, they had managed to find a couple of them using an unconventional, dangerous, and effective technique: kick them....*

*Soudan approached the plywood. He was standing about eight feet away.*

*BOOM!!!*

*Everything went black...*

*Because the explosion was close to the base, the medical evacuation happened quickly....*

*The patrol stepped off. They were heading east, farther away from base camp.*

*Three minutes passed.*

*BOOM!!!*

*From the sound of the explosion, Soudan knew this latest IED had hit south, on the street 3rd Squad was patrolling....*

*Link called Soudan. "We're on our way."*

*Ten seconds passed.*

*BOOM!!!*

*Link's squad.*

Experiences like these at the small unit level—by the end of the patrol, these Marines had been hit by five IEDs—provide some context in which those of us stateside can put events like the supposed massacre in Haditha. So does a story later in the book, where Marines engaged mujahideen in a prolonged and vicious firefight:

*Sergeant Soudan, Corporal Link, and Lieutenant Carroll were standing in the back of a humvee. After triaging the wounded from the dead, they had placed the bodies of Gibson, Valdez, and Smith in the humvee with VanLeuven. The Recon Marines ran up, muscling the body of the other dead Marine into the vehicle.*

*Soudan, Link, and Carroll looked at their fallen comrade.*

*Their faces went white.*

*Captain Gannon.*

*Lima Six was dead.*

*They killed our company commander. Pain switched to fury and an immediate demand for vengeance. These ----- killed Captain Gannon.*

*Blood Stripes* does not paint a picture of an easy war. As a Marine officer said to me many years ago, "If your unit is the one getting ambushed, it's not low intensity war." The Marines whose stories Danelo ably chronicles, and the thousands of others like them, have gone through hell in Iraq, a 4th Generation hell where enemies are nowhere and everywhere. No military, not even the Marine Corps, can endure that kind of hell endlessly without beginning to crack, at least around the edges. It should not surprise us that cracks are now appearing, three years into the war.

One personal note: Danelo rightly reports that Marines, inspired by Steven Pressfield's brilliant novel *Gates of Fire*, like to see themselves as Spartans, which in some ways they are. As an Athenian, I have to point out that the battle of Themopylae, however deathless a tale of valor, was nonetheless a Persian victory in the end. In contrast, at Salamis, Persia was decisively defeated by Athenian deception and maneuver. Sometimes, it helps to think as well as fight.

*June 13, 2006*

# Incapable of Learning

This Sunday's sacred ritual of Mass, bagels and tea with the Grumpy Old Men's Club was rudely disrupted by the headline of the day's *Washington Post*: "U.S. Airstrikes Rise In Afghanistan as Fighting Intensifies." Great, I thought; it's probably cheaper than funding a recruiting campaign for the Taliban and lots more effective at creating new guerrillas.

Getting into the story just made the picture worse:

*As fighting in Afghanistan has intensified over the past three months, the U.S. military has conducted 340 airstrikes there, more than twice the 160 carried out in the much higher-profile war in Iraq, according to data from the Central Command...*

*The airstrikes appear to have increased in recent days as the United States and its allies have launched counteroffensives against the Taliban in the south and southeast, strafing and bombing a stronghold in Uruzgan province and pounding an area near Khost with 500-pound bombs.*

One might as well add, "The Taliban has expressed its thanks to the U.S. Air Force for greatly increasing its popular support in the bombed areas."

At present, the bombing is largely tied to the latest Somme-like big push, Operation Mountain Thrust, in which more than 10,000 U.S.-led troops are trying another failed approach to guerrilla war, the sweep. I have no doubt it would break the Mullah Omar Line, if it existed, which it doesn't. Even the Brits seem to have drunk the Kool-Aid this time, with the June 19 *Washington Times* reporting that "British commanders

declared for the first time yesterday that their troops were enjoying success in the restive south of Afghanistan after pushing faster than expected into rebel territory.”

Should be in Berlin by September, old chap.

Of course, all this is accompanied by claims of many dead Taliban, who are conveniently interchangeable with dead locals who weren't Taliban. Bombing from the air is the best way to drive up the body count, because you don't even have to count bodies; you just make estimates based on the claimed effectiveness of your weapons, and feed them to ever-gullible reporters. By the time Operation Mountain Thrust is done thrusting into mountains, we should have killed the Taliban several times over.

Icing this particular cake is a strategic misconception of the nature of the Afghan war that only American generals could swallow. According to the same *Post* story:

*U.S. officials say the activity is a response to an increasingly aggressive Taliban, whose leaders realize that long-term trends are against them as the power of the Afghan central government grows.*

*“I think the Taliban realize they have a window to act,” Army Maj. Gen. Benjamin Freakley, commander of the 22,000 U.S. troops in the country, said in a recent interview. “The enemy is working against a window that he knows is closing.”*

Except that the power of the U.S.-created Afghan government is receding, not growing, and the Taliban's window only closes when Christ comes again.

The last time a nation's civilian and military leadership was this incapable of learning from experience was under the Ching Dynasty.

Perhaps it's time to offer a short refresher course in Guerrilla War

101:

- Air power works against you, not for you. It kills lots of people who weren't your enemy, recruiting their relatives, friends and fellow tribesmen to become your enemies. In this kind of war, bombers are as useful as 420mm siege mortars.
- Big, noisy, offensives, launched with lots of warning, achieve nothing. The enemy just goes to ground while you pass on through, and he's still there when you leave. Big Pushes are the opposite of the "ink blot" strategy, which is the only thing that works, when anything can.
- Putting the Big Push together with lots of bombing in Afghanistan's Pashtun country means we end up fighting most, if not all, of the Pashtun. In Afghan wars, the Pashtun always win in the end.
- Quisling governments fail because they cannot achieve legitimacy.
- You need closure, but your guerilla enemy doesn't. He not only can fight until Doomsday, he intends to do just that—if not you, then someone else.
- The bigger the operations you have to undertake, the more surely your enemy is winning.

The June 19 *Washington Times* also reported that:

*The ambassador from Afghanistan traveled to America's heartland to promote his war-torn country as the "heart of Asia" and a good place to do business...*

*In his region, "all roads lead to Afghanistan," he said.*

Asia doesn't have any heart, and Afghanistan doesn't have any roads, not even one we can follow to get out.



*June 19, 2006*

## *Neither Shall the Sword*

Chet Richards is the spider of the d-n-i.net web site, which is the best source for material on 4th Generation war. He is also the only person authorized to give Col. John Boyd's famous "Patterns of Conflict" briefing. Given that background, it is not surprising that he has produced a useful and important discussion of 4th Generation strategy, in the form of a short book titled *Neither Shall the Sword*. If Washington were interested in strategy instead of court politics, it would give this small volume large attention. Unfortunately, it is not.

The book begins by asking whether 3rd Generation maneuver warfare is passé. As an *Urvater* of maneuver warfare theory in this country, I must agree with Richards that it is. As glorious as the *Blitzkrieg* was, it now belongs to history; wars between state armed forces, while they may still occur now and then, will be jousting contests more than real wars. The institutional culture of 3rd Generation armed services, with its outward focus, decentralization, initiative and self-discipline, remains vital to any fighting organization. But unless they are relieving an inside-out Islamic siege of Brussels, Panzer divisions will no longer be streaming through the Ardennes.

Rightly, Richards recognizes that the challenge of the present and the foreseeable future is 4th Generation war. America's most pressing need is for a grand strategy suitable to a 4th Generation world. In *Neither Shall the Sword*, Richards examines and compares the suggestions of five strategists: myself, in my cover story "Strategic Defense Initiative" in the November 22, 2004 issue of *The American Conservative*; Martin van Creveld and his book *The Transformation of War*; Tom Hammes, *The Sling and the Stone*; Michael Scheuer, *Imperial Hubris*; and Thomas Barnett in *The Pentagon's New Map and Blueprint for Action*.

Richards groups these five positions in two major camps, containment and rollback, terms which go back to the early days of the Cold War. Van Creveld and I represent containment, which I can accept; Barnett represents rollback on steroids; and Hammes and Scheuer are somewhere in the middle. Richards's comparison and analysis of all these positions is thorough and insightful. For those who suspect I may be tooting my own horn here, let me note that he does not end up where I do.

Beyond this comparison, Richards makes additional valuable points. One is that the Bush administration has fundamentally miscast the nature of the conflict we now face. He argues:

*war is terrorism, so a "war on terrorism" is a war on war. We are not in a war on "terrorism" or engaged in a "struggle against violent extremism." Instead, we are faced with an evolutionary development in armed conflict, a "4th Generation" of warfare that is different from and much more serious than "terrorism"...*

*To see the difference between 4GW and "terrorism," run this simple thought experiment: suppose bin Laden and al-Qaida were able to enforce their program on the Middle East, but they succeeded without the deliberate killing of one more American civilian. The entire Middle East turns hostile, Israel is destroyed, and gas goes up to \$15 per gallon when it is available. Bin Laden's 4GW campaign succeeds, but without terrorism. Do you feel better?*

This applies to situations like Iraq and Afghanistan:

*It's not a war followed by a blown peace. That is conventional war thinking, even if the war is waged and quickly won by 3GW. Instead, it will be an occupation against some degree of resistance, followed by the real, 4th Generation war.*

Much of *Neither Shall the Sword* is devoted to considering what kinds of armed forces the U.S. would require for 4GW, which varies depending on the grand strategy we adopt. He recognizes that the current Department of Defense, and the bulk of our forces, are untransformable.

*Practitioners of real transformation agree that in such circumstances it is better not to transform but to start over...The sooner these fossils are put to rest, the sooner new enterprises can rise to create innovative business models for satisfying customer desires.*

Here is where Richards and I part company. DOD is, as he recognizes, Gosplan. But his alternative, at least for a rollback force, includes privatizing the fighting function. The problem with this is that as the state privatizes security functions, for foreign wars or here at home, it strikes at its own reason for being and thus accelerates its crisis of legitimacy, which lies at the heart of 4GW. Once security is privatized, why have a state at all?

However, private armies have a long history of overthrowing states. There is good reason why the rising state of the 17th century abolished private armies and forcefully asserted a monopoly on violence.

Even here, *Neither Shall the Sword* promotes creative thinking on the most important military question of our time: how can states come to grips with 4th Generation war? Copies are available from the Center for Defense Information. You might want to send one to your Senator or Congressman. If you enclose a check for at least \$1,000.00, they might even pay some attention to it.

*June 28, 2006*

## **To Be or Not to Be a State**

When Hamas won the Palestinian elections, a highly successful 4th Generation entity became a state. No doubt that was one of Hamas's highest aspirations. But by becoming a state, it became far more vulnerable to other states than it was as a non-state entity. How Hamas deals with this problem may say a great deal about the future of 4th Generation war.

Hamas may have presumed that once it won a free election, other states, including the United States and Israel, would have to recognize its legitimacy. Great expectations are seldom fulfilled in the amoral world of international politics. When the Washington Establishment calls for "free elections," what it means is elections that elect the people with whom it wants to deal. Hamas does not fall in that category. Washington therefore greeted Hamas's electoral victory with a full-court press to destroy the new leadership of the Palestinian Authority, a "state" that bears a state's burdens with none of a state's assets. Both Machiavelli and Metternich were no doubt delighted by this act of Wilsonian hypocrisy, a variety that often exceeds their own and does so with a straight face, an act they could never quite master, being gentlemen.

In cooperation with Israel, the U.S. imposed a starvation blockade on the Palestinian territories. Instead of British armored cruisers, the blockaders this time are U.S. banking laws, plus Israeli withholding of Palestinian tax receipts. As the government of a quasi-state, Hamas found itself with no money. PA employees went unpaid and PA services, such as they were, largely collapsed. The burden, as always, fell on average Palestinians.

In the past week, Israel has upped the ante by threatening a full-

scale military attack on Gaza. The Israelis had already been escalating quietly, a raid here, a missile there, artillery shells somewhere else. With Palestinian civilians dying, Hamas had to respond. It did so with a raid on an Israeli army post, a legitimate military target, which meant the attack cannot be reasonably described as “terrorism.” The well-planned and brilliantly conducted raid, so well done as to suggest Hezbollah assistance, killed two Israeli soldiers and captured one.

Normally, that captured Israeli would be a Hamas asset. But now that Hamas is a state, it has discovered Cpl. Gilad Shalit is a major liability. Israel is refusing all deals for his return. If Hamas returns him without a deal, it will be humiliated. If it continues to hold him, Israel will up the military pressure; it is already destroying PA targets such as government offices and arresting PA cabinet members. If it kills him, the Israeli public will back whatever revenge strikes the Israeli military wants. Hamas is now far more targetable than it was as a non-state entity, but is no better able to defend itself or Palestine than it was as a 4th Generation force. 4GW forces are generally unable to defend territory or fixed targets against state armed forces, but they have no reason to do so. Now, as a quasi-state, Hamas must do so or appear to be defeated.

Does the sign really say “No Exit” for Hamas? It may—so long as Hamas remains a state, or has aspirations to be one. Washington’s and Tel Aviv’s obvious goal is to push the Hamas government to the point where it must choose between a humanitarian catastrophe for the Palestinians and resignation from office, knowing that this will lead to the return of a corrupt and compliant Fatah to power. Either way, Hamas will have suffered an enormous defeat, to the point where it is unlikely to be a serious alternative ever again.

There is, however, another way out for Hamas. It can call and raise Washington’s and Tel Aviv bets. How? By voting to dissolve the Palestinian Authority. Ending the PA would dump the Palestinian territories and their inhabitants’ right back in Israel’s lap. Under

international law, as the occupying power, Israel would be responsible for everything in the territories: security, human services, utilities and infrastructure, the economy, the whole megillah. Israel could try to restore the PA in cooperation with Fatah, but if Fatah joined Israel in doing so, it would destroy what legitimacy it has left. Hamas could meanwhile return to a 4GW war against Israel, unencumbered with the dubious assets of a state, and with lots more targets as Israel attempted to run the Palestinian Territories itself.

Hamas faces what may be a defining moment, not only for itself but for 4th Generation entities elsewhere. Does it desire the trappings of a state so much that it will render itself as targetable as a state, or can it see through the glitter of being cabinet ministers and holding office and instead choose to retain its non-state status? To be or not to be a state, that is the question, for Hamas and soon enough for other 4GW entities as well.

*July 5, 2006*

## Two Signposts

The Bush administration delights in finding “turning points” in Iraq so often that by now we must have turned our way all the way through the maze, although we are not out of it. The events to which it points are nothing more than new acts in the kabuki offered by Iraq’s government and security forces. Real turning points would be evidence that a state is coming into being in Iraq. Two recent signposts suggest the contrary – namely, that any possibility of recreating an Iraqi state is receding.

The first report is from the June 28 *Washington Times* in a piece by Rowan Scarborough titled, “Shi’ite Iraqi militia regroups into ‘gang of thugs.’”

*Prominent Shi’ite cleric Muqtada al-Sadr, a foe of the U.S. military presence in Iraq, has lost control of his Mahdi Army, which has embarked on a wide range of criminal activity, defense officials said.*

*The officials said the Mahdi Army...has become a criminal organization that commits homicides, kidnappings and robberies in the Baghdad area.*

As usual, our defense officials show their lack of understanding of 4th Generation situations, where “both/and” is more common than “either/or.” As to whether the Desert Fox, Mr. al-Sadr, has lost control of his Mahdi Army, time will tell, as control is generally loose in 4GW. But like every other militia in Iraq, the Mahdi Army is also a criminal gang, doing what criminal gangs do. The same individual can be and often is a Mahdi Army militiaman, a criminal and a member of the Iraqi police or army. Maybe Americans would understand the concept



better if they thought of 4GW as the world's biggest all-you-can-eat buffet.

If American military intelligence is accurate in this instance (the blind pig finding the occasional acorn?) the news that "Sadr has lost control" is not good. The more frequently Iraqi entities, of whatever sort, fraction and fragment, the further Iraq moves away from becoming a state. Because Mr. al-Sadr opposes the American occupation, Washington sees him as an enemy. But if he controls his militia, then he is someone who may be able to deliver if we make a deal with him. If he has lost control of the Mahdi Army, with whom can we make a deal that would incorporate that militia into a state?

The second signpost is a story in the July 5 *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, "Port city of Basra now a haven for rival oil-smuggling gangs."

*This once-placid port city is looking a lot like the mob-ruled Chicago of the 1920's, an arena for settling scores between rival gangs, many with ties to the highest echelons of local and national political power.*

*Basra's sudden political troubles and violence are rooted in a bloody competition for control of millions of dollars in smuggled oil, residents and officials say...*

*"The amount of actual terrorism in Basra is very limited," said the Iraqi defense minister, Gen. Abdul-Qader Mohammed Jassim Mifarji.*

*"The dominating struggle is between armed gangs and political groups."*

Here again, we see fractioning where restoring an Iraqi state requires unifying. Basra is Shi'ite-controlled, and the fact that the fighting there is almost all among Shi'ite factions points to fractioning of the Shi'ite community. Money garnered from criminal activity is a powerful divisive force, and also a common one in 4GW situations,

because the absence of a state makes legitimate economic activity difficult. The more the real economy comes to depend on illegal, gang-controlled enterprise the further away any restoration of the state moves.

It is difficult to find anything in Iraq that points to a successful restoration of an Iraqi state. The Iraqi Government's ongoing attempt at national reconciliation seems to hold little promise because that government is a creature of a foreign occupier and remains under its control. Nothing illustrated that fact better than the immediate American veto of the Iraqi government's desire to offer amnesty to resistance fighters who have killed American troops. Obviously, such amnesty would have to be part of any deal with the resistance. That would be true even if the resistance were losing; it is all the more so when the resistance is winning. Winners seldom surrender and allow themselves to be put on trial.

In the end, the Iraqi resistance, in all its many dimensions, represents reality, flip-flops on the ground. Iraq's government and state security forces, in contrast, are kabuki theater. And no kabuki performance can go on forever.

*July 13, 2006*

# The Summer of 1914

With Hezbollah's entry into the war between Israel and Hamas, 4th Generation war has taken another developmental step forward. For the first time, a non-state entity has gone to war with a state, not by waging an insurgency against a state invader, but across an international boundary. Again we see how those whose definition of 4GW is limited to insurgency are only looking at a small part of the picture.

I think the stakes in the Israel-Hezbollah-Hamas war are significantly higher than most observers understand. If Hezbollah and Hamas win—and winning means just surviving, given that Israel's objective is to destroy both entities—a powerful state will have suffered a new kind of defeat, again, a defeat across at least one international boundary and possibly two, depending upon how one defines Gaza's border. The balance between states and 4GW forces will be altered world-wide, and not to a trivial degree.

So far, Hezbollah is winning. As Arab states stood silent and helpless before Israel's assault on Hamas, another non-state entity, Hezbollah, intervened to relieve the siege of Gaza by opening a second front. Its initial move, a brilliantly conducted raid that killed eight Israeli soldiers and captured two for the loss of one Hezbollah fighter, showed once again that Hezbollah, like the Chechens, can take on state armed forces on even terms. In both respects, the contrast with Arab states will be clear on the street, pushing the Arab and larger Islamic worlds further away from the state.

Hezbollah then pulled off two more firsts. It responded effectively to terror bombing from the air, which the states believe is their monopoly, with rocket barrages that reached deep into Israel. Once can only imagine how this resonated worldwide with people who are often

bombed but can never bomb back. And, it attacked another state monopoly, navies, by hitting and disabling a blockading Israeli warship with something that Israel claims was a C-801 anti-ship missile. However, I doubt it since a C-801 should have sunk the small missile corvette. Whatever it was, Hezbollah's leadership has promised more such surprises.

In response, Israel has had to hit not Hezbollah but the state of Lebanon. Israel's Prime Minister, Ehud Olmert, referring to the initial Hezbollah raid, said, "I want to make clear that the event this morning is not a terror act but the act of a sovereign state that attacked Israel without reason." This is an obvious fiction, as the state of Lebanon had nothing to do with the raid and cannot control Hezbollah. But it is a necessary fiction for Israel, because otherwise who can it respond against? Again we see the power 4GW entities obtain by hiding within states but not being a state.

What comes next? In the short run, the question may be which runs out first, Hezbollah's supply of rockets or the world's patience with Israel bombing the helpless state of Lebanon. If the latter continues much longer, the Lebanese government may collapse, undoing one of America's few recent successes in the Islamic world.

The critical question is whether the current fighting spreads region-wide. It is possible that Hezbollah attacked Israel not only to relieve the siege of Hamas in Gaza but also to pre-empt an Israeli strike on Iran. The current Iranian government is not disposed to sit passively like Saddam and await an Israeli or American attack. It may have given Hezbollah a green light in order to bog Israel down locally to the point where it would not also want war with Iran.

However, Israel's response may be exactly the opposite. Olmert also said, "Nothing will deter us, whatever far-reaching ramifications regarding our relations on the northern border and in the region there may be." The phrase "in the region" could refer to Syria, Iran or both.

If Israel does attack Iran, the summer of 1914 analogy may play itself out in a catastrophic manner for the United States. As I have warned many times, war with Iran could easily cost America the army it now has deployed in Iraq and Iran has warned that it would regard an attack by Israel as an attack by the United States. A war with Iran would almost certainly send shock waves through an already fragile world economy, potentially bringing that house of cards down. A Bush administration that has sneered at stability could find out just how high the price of instability can be.

It is clear what Washington needs to do to try to prevent such an outcome: publicly distance the U.S. from Israel while privately informing Mr. Olmert that it will not tolerate an Israeli strike on Iran. Unfortunately, Israel is to America what Serbia was to Russia in 1914. That may be the most disturbing aspect of the summer of 1914 analogy.

*July 18, 2006*

## Welcome to My Parlor

Welcome to my parlor, says the Hezbollah spider to the Israeli fly. The Israeli high command continues to express its faith in the foxfire of air power to destroy Hezbollah, but, as always, it's not working. Lebanon is taking a pounding, to be sure, but Lebanon is not Hezbollah. Slowly, reluctantly, Israel is edging toward a ground invasion of Lebanon, for which Hezbollah devoutly prays. When air power fails, what other choice will Israel have?

A story in the July 24 *Cleveland Plain Dealer* gives a good idea of what awaits the IDF once it crosses the border in earnest. Israeli ground forces have been fighting for days to take Maroun al-Ras, a small village less than 500 yards into Lebanon. The battle has not gone well. Israel has lost five or six troops dead, with undoubtedly more wounded. It still does not control the whole village. According to the *Plain Dealer* piece by Benjamin Harvey of AP, Officers at the scene confirmed there was still fighting to do.

*“They’re not fighting like we thought they would,” one soldier said. “They’re fighting harder. They’re good on their own ground....”*

*“It will take the summer to beat them,” said (Israeli soldier) Michael Sidorenko....*

*“They’re guerrillas. They’re very smart.”*

“Guerrillas” may not be exactly the right term here. As best I can determine from the wilds of Cleveland, Ohio, Hezbollah thus far seems to be waging a conventional light infantry fight for Maroun al-Ras. The line between guerrilla and light infantry tactics is thin, but Hezbollah

seems to be putting up a determined fight for a piece of terrain, which guerrillas usually don't do, because they can't. The fact that Hezbollah can points to how far this 4GW entity has evolved.

Operationally, Hezbollah's rocket attacks on Israel are the matador's cape. That too is working. What of the strategic level? The Arab street is cheering for Hezbollah, often across the Sunni-Shi'ite divide, while the governments of states such as Egypt hide under the bed. The goal of Islamic 4th Generation forces is the destruction of most, if not all, Arab state governments, so Hezbollah is winning strategically as well. One can almost watch the legitimacy drain away from the region's decrepit states, with incalculable consequences for American interests.

Not that Washington is doing anything to protect those interests. On the contrary, it has rushed more bombs and aviation fuel to Israel, lest there be any unwelcome let-up in the destruction of Lebanon. In no previous Israeli-Arab war has the United States revealed itself so nakedly as a de facto political satellite of Israel. Perhaps the neocons have convinced President Bush that Israeli olive oil can substitute for Arab petroleum as fuel for America's SUVs.

An interesting theoretical speculation is whether, if Hezbollah's 4GW success continues, some Middle Eastern governments might try adopting 4th Generation techniques themselves. Lebanon's fictional government has suggested the Lebanese Army may join Hezbollah in defending southern Lebanon from an Israeli invasion. Militarily, such an action would be meaningless, and it probably reflects a desperate desire to keep the Lebanese Army, which is 40 percent Shi'ite, from fractioning along with Lebanon itself. But what if instead the government called for a million marchers, mostly women and children, to head toward the Lebanese-Israeli frontier, waving palm branches and singing songs? That's how Morocco took the Spanish Sahara, and it would present Israel with a sticky wicket indeed.

Similarly, the Iraqi puppet government, whose impotence is now

almost total, may call for a complete domestic cease-fire so it could order the New Iraqi Army to Lebanon. Even al-Qaeda would have trouble saying no. The U.S. would howl bloody murder, but such an open breach with the Americans is exactly what the Green Zone regime needs if it is to gain even a shred of legitimacy. The possibility is far-fetched, but an emerging Hezbollah victory over Israel will make many far-fetched possibilities real.

A Hezbollah success against the hated Israelis will give governments throughout the Islamic world a stark choice. They can either snuggle up as close to Hezbollah and other Islamic 4GW entities as they can get, hoping to catch some reflected legitimacy, or they can become Vichy to their own peoples. Since the first rule of politics is to survive, I think we can look forward to a great deal of the former.

From that perspective, the Tea Lady, aka U.S. Secretary of State Condi Rice, may just have uttered the most significant words of her remarkably empty career. Departing on her meaningless shuttle diplomacy, which is meaningless because we will only talk to one side, she said current events mark “the birth pangs of a new Middle East, and whatever we do, we have to be certain that we are pushing forward to the new Middle East, not going back to the old one.” Don’t worry, Ms Rice, we are, we are.

*July 28, 2006*



# The Prussian Monarchy Stuff

A bright young man who sat on a panel with me at an intelligence conference earlier this year said to me during a break, “A lot of us read your *On War* columns, but there are two things we don’t get. We don’t get your dislike of technology and we don’t get the Prussian monarchy stuff.” Readers interested in the former may turn to my piece in an early issue of *The American Conservative*. But with the shadow of 1914 looming ever larger over us, I thought this might be a good time to explain “the Prussian monarchy stuff.”

Like all true conservatives, I am a monarchist. The universe is not a republic. My specific attachment to the House of Hohenzollern grew as I began to comprehend the Prussian/German way of war and its vast difference from the Franco/American approach. Maneuver warfare, aka *3rd Generation* war, was created and developed under the Prussian monarchy; it was conceptually complete by 1918. That is not a mere accident of history. The Prussian monarchy was willing to trust its officer corps—and allow officers who were difficult subordinates to rise—to a far greater degree than most other governments. It understood that Prussia, a poor country, needed to be rich intellectually, including in ideas about war. There was an intimate connection between the Prussian virtues, which have vanished from the Brave New Federal Republic, and the evolution of maneuver warfare. Old Kaiser Wilhelm I represented those virtues well: though Emperor of Germany, when he wanted to go somewhere, he went down to the railway station and bought a ticket.

Given the centrality of maneuver warfare to my work, this might be explanation enough. But there is more. As both a cultural conservative and an historian, I realize that the last chance of survival our Western Christian civilization may have had was a victory by the Central

## Powers in World War I.

To most non-historians, World War I is a vague and distant memory, faded photographs of guys in tin hats standing around in mud-filled trenches. In fact, along with the French Revolution, it was one of two cataclysmic disasters of Western civilization in the modern period. In 1914, the West put a gun to its collective head and blew its brains out. No, it wasn't the fault of Kaiser Wilhelm II, whom history has treated most unfairly. As Colonel House wrote to President Woodrow Wilson after meeting with the Kaiser in 1915, it is clear he neither expected nor wanted war. A World War became inevitable when Tsar Nicholas II, not Kaiser Wilhelm, very reluctantly yielded to the demands of his War and Foreign Ministers and declared a general mobilization instead of mobilizing against Austria alone.

Once war occurred, and the failure of the Schlieffen Plan guaranteed it would be a long war, a disaster for Western civilization was inevitable. Still, had the Central Powers won in the end, the destruction of civilization might not have been so complete. There would have been no Communism, nor a republic in Russia; a victorious Germany would have never tolerated it, and unlike the Western Allies, Germany was positioned geographically to do something about it. Hitler would have remained a non-entity. Prior to World War I, the best major European countries in which to be Jewish were Germany and Austria; Kaiser Wilhelm would never have allowed a Dreyfus Affair in Germany. The vast Jewish communities of Central and Eastern Europe would have held retained traditional places in multi-nation-empires, instead of becoming aliens in new nation-states. It should not surprise us to learn that in World War I, American Jews attempted to raise a regiment to fight on Germany's behalf.

Even more importantly, the Christian conservatism—more accurately, traditionalism—represented by the Central Powers would have been greatly strengthened by their victory. Instead, the fall of the German, Austro-Hungarian and Russian monarchies let the poisons of

the French Revolution loose unchecked upon the West and upon the world. The Marxist historian Arno Mayer is correct in arguing that in 1914, as a Republic, the United States represented, with France, the international left. By 1919 it represented the international right. However, America had not changed, the ideological spectrum had shifted around it.

Thus, when Americans and Europeans wonder today how and why the West lost its historic culture, morals and religion, the ultimate answer is the Allied victory in 1918. Again, the fact that World War I occurred is the greatest disaster. But once that had happened, the last chance the West had of retaining its traditional culture was a victory by the Central Powers. The question should not be why I, as a cultural conservative, remain loyal to the two Kaisers, Wilhelm II and Franz Josef, but how a real conservative could do anything else.

Nor is this all quite history. Just as the defeat of the Central Powers in 1918 marked the tipping point downward of Western civilization and the real beginning of the murderous Twentieth Century, so events in the Middle East today may mark the beginnings of the 21st Century and, not so much the death of the West, which has already occurred, but its burial. The shadows of 1914, and of 1918, are long indeed, and they end in Old Night.

A reader once asked for some recommendations of books on the *fin de siecle* and Kaiser Wilhelm II. From the military perspective, the two best works on the former are Barbara Tuchman's *The Guns of August* and Alexander Solzhenitsyn's *August 1914*. The most balanced biography in English of Kaiser Wilhelm II is *The Last Kaiser: The Life of Wilhelm II* by Giles MacDonogh.

*July 31, 2006*

## Collapse of the Flanks

In Iraq and Afghanistan, the Coalition defeats continue to slowly unfold. In Lebanon, it appears Hezbollah may win not only at the moral and mental, strategic and operational levels, but, astonishingly, at the physical and tactical levels as well. That outcome remains uncertain, but the fact that it is possible portends a revolutionary reassessment of what 4th Generation forces can accomplish. If it actually happens, the walls of the temple that is the state system will be shaken worldwide.

One pointer to a shift in the tactical balance is the comparative casualty counts. According to the Associated Press, as of this writing Lebanese dead total at least 642, of whom 558 are civilians, 29 Lebanese soldiers (who are officially not in the fight) and only 55 Hezbollah fighters. So Israel, with its American-style hi-tech precision weaponry, has killed ten times as many innocents as enemies. In contrast, of 97 Israeli dead, 61 are soldiers and only 36 civilians, despite the fact that Hezbollah's rockets are anything but precise. Israel can hit anything it can target, but against a 4th Generation enemy, it can target very little. The result not only points to a battlefield change of some significance, it also raises the question of who is the real terrorist. Terror bombing by aircraft is still terror.

Understandably, these events keep Americans focused on the places where the fighting is taking place. But more important developments may be occurring on the flanks, largely unnoticed. An analysis piece in the Sunday *Cleveland Plain Dealer* by Sally Buzbee of AP notes:

*Anger toward America is high, extremists are on the upswing, and hopes for democracy in the Middle East lie dashed...*

*"America, we hate you more than ever," Ammar Ali Hassan*

wrote in the independent Egyptian daily *Al-Masry Al-Youm*, in the kind of visceral, slap-in-the-face rhetoric boiling across the region...

Even many Arab reformers now believe the United States cares more about supporting Israel than anything else, including democracy.

Egypt is one of the three centers of gravity of America's position in the Middle East, the others being Saudi Arabia and Pakistan. An article by Michael Slackman in the Sunday *New York Times* suggests that Egyptians' anger is turning on their own government:

*For decades, the Arab-Israeli conflict provided presidents, kings, emirs and dictators of the region with a safety valve for public frustration ...*

*That valve no longer appears to be working in Egypt...*

*"The regular man on the street is beginning to connect everything together," said Mr. Khalil, the director of the Center for Socialist Studies in Cairo. "The regime impairing his livelihood is the same regime that is oppressing his freedom and the same regime that is colluding with Zionism and American hegemony."*

Today, in an interview with the BBC, Jordan's King Abdullah warned that the map of the Middle East is becoming unrecognizable and its future appears "dim."

Washington, which in its hubris ignores both its friends and its enemies, refusing to talk to the latter or listen to the former, does not grasp that if the flanks collapse, it is the end of our adventures in both Iraq and Afghanistan. It is also, in a slightly longer time frame, the end of Israel. No Crusader state survives forever, and in the long term Israel's existence depends on arriving at some sort of *modus vivendi*

with the region. The replacement of Mubarak, King Abdullah and the House of Saud with the Moslem Brotherhood would make that possibility fade.

To the region, America's apparently unconditional and unbounded support for Israel and its occupation of Iraq are part of the same picture. For a military historian, the question arises: will history see Iraq as America's Stalingrad? If we kick the analogy up a couple of levels, to the strategic and grand strategic, there are parallels. Both the German and the American armies were able largely to take, but not hold, the objective. Both had too few troops. Both Berlin and Washington underestimated their enemy's ability to counter-attack. Both committed resources they needed elsewhere and could not replace to a strategically unimportant objective. Finally, both entrusted their flanks to weak allies—and to luck.

Let us hope that, unlike von Paulus, our commanders know when to get out, regardless of orders from a leader who will not recognize reality.

*August 10, 2006*

# Beat!

With today's cease-fire in Lebanon, the second Hezbollah-Israeli War is temporarily in remission. So far, Israel has been beaten.

The magnitude of the defeat is considerable. Israel appears to have lost at every level—strategic, operational and tactical. Nothing she tried worked. Air power failed, as it always does against an enemy who doesn't have to maneuver operationally, or even move tactically for the most part. The attempts to blockade Lebanon and thereby cut off Hezbollah's ability to resupply itself failed; her caches proved ample. Most seriously, the ground assault into Lebanon failed. Israel took little ground and paid heavily in casualties for that. More, she cannot hold what she has taken; if she is not forced to withdraw by diplomacy, Hezbollah will push her out, as it did once before. The alternative is a bleeding ulcer that never heals.

But these failures only begin to measure the magnitude of Israel's defeat. While Hezbollah's leader, Sheik Hassan Nasrallah, is now an Islamic hero, Olmert has become a boiled brisket in the piranha pool that is Israeli politics. The cease-fire in Lebanon will allow camera crews to broadcast the extent of the destruction to the world, with further damage to Israel's image. Israel's "wall" strategy for dealing with the Palestinians has been undone; Hamas rockets can fly over a wall as easily as Hezbollah rockets have flown over Israel's northern border.

Most importantly, an Islamic 4th Generation entity, Hezbollah, will now point the way throughout the Arab and larger Islamic world to a future in which Israel can be defeated. That will have vast ramifications, and not for Israel alone. Hundreds of millions of Moslems will believe that the same 4th Generation war that defeated

hated Israel can beat equally-hated America, its coalitions, and its allied Arab and Moslem regimes. Future events seem more likely to confirm that belief than to undermine it.

The cease-fire in Lebanon will last only briefly, its life probably measured in days if not in hours. Neither Israel nor Hezbollah has genuinely accepted it. The notion that the Lebanese Army and a rag-tag U.N. force will disarm Hezbollah is absurd even by the usual low standard of diplomatic fictions. The bombing and the rocketing may stop briefly, but Israel has already announced a campaign of assassination against Hezbollah leaders, while every Israeli soldier in Lebanon will remain a target of Hezbollah.

In what must be seen as bad fortune from the state perspective, Israel appears to have no good options remaining when hostilities recommence. It can continue to grind forward on the ground in southern Lebanon, paying bitterly for each foot of ground, and perhaps eventually denying Hezbollah some of its rocket-launching sites. But it cannot hold what it takes. It may strive for a more robust U.N. force, but what country wants to fight Hezbollah? Any occupier of southern Lebanon that is not there with Hezbollah's permission will face the same guerrilla war Israel already fought and lost. Most probably, Israel will escalate by taking the war to Syria or Iran in what would be a strategy of desperation. That option, too, would fail, after it plunges the whole region into war, the outcome of which would be catastrophic for the United States as well as for Israel.

Before that disastrous denouement, my 4th Generation crystal ball suggests the following events are likely:

- Again, a near-term resumption of hostilities between Israel and Hezbollah, with Israel succeeding no better than it has to date. In the past, the IDF has been brilliant at pulling rabbits out of hats, but this time someone else seems to occupy all the rabbit holes.
- A fracturing of Lebanon, with a collapse of the weak Lebanese



state and very possibly a return to civil war there (which was always the probable result of Syria's departure).

- A rise of Syrian and Iranian influence generally, matched by a fall of American influence. If Israel and America were clever, Syria's comeback could offer a diplomatic opportunity of a deal in which Syria changed sides in return for a peace treaty with Israel that included the return of all lands. The crystal ball says that opportunity will be spurned.
- A vast strengthening of Islamic 4GW elements everywhere.
- Last, and perhaps most discouragingly, a continued inability of state militaries everywhere, including those of Israel and the United States, to come to grips with 4th Generation War. Inability may be too kind of a word; refusal is perhaps more accurate.

Are there any brighter prospects? Not unless Israel changes its fundamental policy. Even in the unlikely event that the cease-fire in Lebanon holds and Lebanese Army and U.N. forces do wander into southern Lebanon, that would buy but a bit of time. Israel only has a long-term future if it can reach a mutually acceptable accommodation with its neighbors. So long as those neighbors are states, a policy of pursuing such an accommodation may have some chance of success. But as the rise of 4th Generation elements such as Hezbollah and Hamas weaken and in time replace those states, the possibility will disappear. Unfortunately, Israeli politics appear to be moving away from such a course rather than toward it.

For America, the question is whether Washington will continue to demand that we go down with the Israeli ship.

*August 17, 2006*

## Beginning to Learn

Of all the many disappointments of America's wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, perhaps the saddest has been the American military's seeming inability to learn, at least as institutions. Partly, this stems from the Bush administration's proud refusal to learn and adapt; as the old Russian saying goes, a fish rots from the head. Partly, it has been the inward focus that characterizes 2nd Generation armed services. That inward focus, and the not-invented-here attitude it legitimizes, seems to lie behind the American services' rejection of the Four Generations framework. The U.S. Army labeled it a "Marine Corps concept," while the Marines reject it in part because it is not.

Perhaps that is beginning to change. The Okhrana recently supplied me with a copy of a draft field manual, FM 3-24/FMFM 3-24, *Counterinsurgency*, which is being written jointly by the Army and the Marine Corps, which is no small achievement in itself. The draft is thoughtful, useful, and frank about the difficulties armed forces designed for conventional wars have when facing insurgencies.

The bulk of its contents is material drawn from the long history of counterinsurgency, which is more often than not a history of failure. Nothing wrong with that; history must always be the starting point in attempts to understand war, and most other things as well. The manual's authors have done their homework, and if one may lament how much of the manual represents a recovery of lessons learned at a painful price in Vietnam and then thrown away, at least they are being restored here. More than one chapter ends by stressing the need to learn and adapt, with a hint that we have not done too well at doing so.

The authors understand the imperative of a 3rd Generation culture for any armed service that hopes to fight insurgents with success. The

manual stresses decentralization and initiative, as it should. One particularly good passage comes early in Appendix A:

*A-8. Work the problem collectively with subordinate leaders. Discuss ideas and explore possible solutions. Once all understand the situation, seek a consensus on how to address it. If this sounds un-military, get over it. Such discussions help subordinates understand the commander's intent.... Corporals and privates will have to make quick decisions that may result in actions with strategic implications. Such circumstances require a shared situational understanding and a leadership climate that encourages subordinates to assess the situation, act on it, and accept responsibility for their actions. Employing mission command is essential in this environment.*

General Hans von Seeckt could not have put it better himself.

While *Counterinsurgency*, does talk at times about an environment with multiple opponents, it still falls into the common error of thinking that counterinsurgency and 4GW are the same thing. They are not. This error is no surprise, being all too common.

But the draft does hold two surprises. The first is a remarkable discussion, in the first chapter, of the “Paradoxes of Counterinsurgency.” This is a clear break with 2nd Generation thinking, which acknowledges only problems and kinetic solutions. The paradoxes include: “The More You Protect Your Force, The Less Secure You Are;” “The More Force Used, The Less Effective It Is;” “Sometimes Doing Nothing Is The Best Reaction;” “The Best Weapons For COIN Do Not Shoot;” and “Tactical Success Guarantees Nothing.” The parallels here to the *FMFM 1-A, 4th Generation War*, are clear and suggest someone has read it, although it is not listed in the bibliography. By the Pleistocene standards of American doctrine development, this is breathtaking progress.

The second surprise is less happy. As is to be expected, the manual draws heavily on the ongoing American experience in Iraq. While occasionally suggesting that mistakes have been made—“Programs should be developed to prevent the formation of a class of impoverished and disgruntled former officers and soldiers who have lost their livelihood”—it often prescribes more of what we are now doing. Excuse me, guys, but most of what we are doing already is not working. Perhaps we will not be able to confront that fact until the Iraq war is over, but a field manual that does not confront it cannot be more than a way station along the road we must eventually travel to its bitter end.

A remarkable historical vignette on page 4-1 of the draft does recognize, between the lines, what that end will be. Titled “Napoleon in Spain,” it reads in part:

*Napoleon’s campaign included a rapid conventional victory over Spanish armies but ignored the immediate requirement to provide a stable and secure environment for the people and the countryside.*

*The French should have expected ferocious resistance. The Spanish people were accustomed to hardship, suspicious of foreigners, and constantly involved in skirmishes with security forces. The French failed to analyze the history, culture, and motivations of the Spanish people, or to seriously consider their potential to support or hinder the achievement of French political objectives. Napoleon’s cultural miscalculation resulted in a protracted struggle.... The Spanish resistance drained the Empire’s resources and was the beginning of the end of Napoleon’s reign.*

Sound familiar?

*August 24, 2006*

# Regression

Earlier this week, Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert announced that the planned inquiry into Israel's defeat in Lebanon would be indefinitely delayed. His hope, obviously, is also to delay his own departure from office, since the findings of any half-honest probe are not likely to redound to his glory. The fact that his likely eventual successor, Benjamin Netanyahu, is Israel's most outspoken conservative will not save Olmert's seat after the fiasco he ordered and led. Israel seems to be unavoidably heading down the road from bad to worse, as far as its political leadership goes.

When the inquiry finally does move forward, what is it likely to conclude? Undoubtedly, it will point out failings in logistics, planning, and the training of reservists. Possibly, it will note the unwisdom of choosing an aviator as chief-of-staff, unless he is one of the few who understands the limits of air power. One of the many signs that heavier-than-air flight was spawned in Hell is the number of military disasters traceable to faith in air power. (In contrast, the Zeppelin was obviously a Divine inspiration, intended to offer safe and serene travel at speeds suitable to the human condition). At the very outside, a thorough Israeli critique should conclude that fighting 4th Generation enemies is different from fighting state military forces.

It is, however, a virtual certainty that the Israeli inquiry will not address the most interesting question of all: how did the world's premier post-World War II 3rd Generation military regress to the 2nd Generation?

When I was in Israel several years ago, I said to my host, a retired Israeli general with several interesting books to his credit, that I thought the IDF had begun to regress to the 2nd Generation after the

1973 war. He told me I was wrong; the regression had begun after the war in 1967.

The question of how it happened, and why maintaining the culture of a 3rd Generation military is so difficult even for armed services that have attained it—the Royal Navy lost it after the Napoleonic Wars, for reasons brilliantly set forth in Andrew Gordon's *The Rules of the Game*, and the German Army lost it when the Bundeswehr was created, for political reasons—is of interest far beyond Israel. A number of Israelis have traced it in their case to the development of a large weapons R&D and procurement establishment, and I think there is a lot to that argument.

The virtues required in military officers involved in weapons development and procurement are the virtues of the bureaucrat: careful, even obsessive attention to process; avoiding risky decisions, and whenever possible making decisions by committee; avoiding responsibility; careerism, because success is measured by career progression; and generally shining up the handle on the big front door. Time is not very important, while dotting every i and crossing every t is vital, since at some point the auditors will be coming, and the politicians and the press will be waiting eagerly for their reports. Remunerative careers in the defense industry await those officers who know how to go along to get along. While the Israeli defense industry has produced some remarkably good products, such as the Merkava tank, getting the program funded still tends to be more important than making sure the weapon will work in combat. As time goes on, efficiency tends to become more important than effectiveness; not surprisingly, the simpler and more effective Israeli weapon systems came earlier, and more recent ones tend to reflect the American tendency toward complex and expensive ineffectiveness.

The Israeli inquiry into the Lebanon fiasco is unlikely to address this issue for the same reason it is not addressed in the United States: too much money is at stake. The R&D and procurement tail now wags

the combat arms dog. Nor is the question of how to reverse the process and restore the virtues a 3rd Generation military requires in its officers an easy one. Those virtues—eagerness to make decisions and take responsibility, boldness, broad-mindedness and a spirit of intellectual inquiry, contempt for careerism and careerists—are not wanted in 2nd Generation militaries, and officers who demonstrate them are usually weeded out early. A 3rd Generation culture is difficult to maintain, and may be impossible to restore once lost.

Yet, as I have said many times in these columns, a 2nd Generation military, no matter how lavishly resourced, has no chance against 4th Generation opponents. In this conundrum lies the fate of the state of Israel, and the fate of states everywhere.

*August 31, 2006*



## Down Mexico Way

While Washington plays at 4th Generation cabinet wars in far-off places, a genuine 4th Generation threat is brewing up on America's southern border. After 70 years of stability under PRI dictatorship, Mexico drank deeply of the neocons' patent medicine, democracy, in the 1990s. At first, all hailed the seemingly happy results.

But Mexico's recent presidential vote resulted in a razor-thin victory for the conservative candidate, Felipe Calderón Hinojosa, over a far-left challenger, Andrés Manuel López Obrador. Obrador and his supporters now refuse to recognize Calderón's win. They have set up blockades in the streets of Mexico City, prevented the current President, Vicente Fox, from delivering his state of the union speech, and threatened worse, specifically that if Mexico's electoral commission certifies Calderón's victory this week, Lopez Obrador will declare himself the real President of Mexico and set up a parallel government. Isn't democracy wonderful?

In itself, this crisis is not a 4th Generation phenomenon. It is an old story in Mexican history. Calderón and Obrador are battling within the framework of the state, for the prize control of the state brings, namely, endless riches squeezed from a poor country. If either wins, and wins quickly, American interests are probably safe.

The problem takes on a 4th Generation nature if neither wins and Mexico descends into civil war and anarchy. This, too, is an old Mexican story: in Mexico as in most of the world, the only real alternatives are tyranny or anarchy. Democracy is merely a way-station between the former and the latter. The neocons' patent medicine, it seems, has arsenic as a principal ingredient. One suspects their successors will once again give stability the high rank it merits among

political virtues.

One certain result of chaos in Mexico will be a vast increase in the rate of illegal Mexican immigration into the United States—the big push of all the big pushes 4GW has so far served up to the world. Such an invasion will offer dire consequences to the U.S., in the form of disorder, crime, the expense of taking care of the “refugees,” and perhaps most challenging of all, the necessity of sending them all back at some point. Any such repatriation would have to be, for the most part, forced.

Here we come face-to-face with one of 4GW’s basic ingredients, the West’s moral incapacity to defend itself. No one can doubt that the rapid arrival of tens of millions more Mexicans will be catastrophic. But no one can also doubt that the usual games will be played by the Politically Correct Establishment, with the usual results. We will get endless images of crying women and children, demands that we accept any and all “refugees,” blather about human rights and humanitarian principles, and in response we will cave and open the gates to the barbarians. The Establishment is morally incapable of manning the walls and repelling the invaders. Nor will it be able to send any of them back if they don’t want to go, which means they will all stay. Perhaps Maine and New Hampshire will end up still speaking English.

Worse, if anything can be worse, the neocon-drugged Bush administration will bring Wilsonianism full circle and intervene in Mexico. One can almost hear President Bush solemnly informing the American people that we must teach the Mexicans to elect good men. The result will be the same kind of fiasco we are engulfed by in Iraq and Afghanistan, just a streetcar ride away from San Diego. And it is reminiscent of the 1945 incident in which a witty junior SS officer told Adolf Hitler that Berlin was the best place for his headquarters, since it would soon be possible to take a streetcar between the Eastern and Western Fronts.

By this point, Wilsonianism will have gone from tragedy to farce

and back to tragedy again. 4th Generation war will have arrived at our doorstep and crossed it in great strength. This will be not another cabinet war, but a war for national survival. Perhaps, just perhaps, the vast defeat we will suffer at the beginning of this war will bring the PC Establishment's eviction from Washington and its replacement with genuine national leaders, though where such are to be found is hard to imagine—President Pat Buchanan, perhaps?

More is riding on a quick solution to Mexico's political crisis than anyone who does not understand 4GW can possibly imagine.

*September 7, 2006*

# General Puff

During World War II, one of the Führer's favorite sayings was, "All generals lie." Today, Washington prefers the word "spin" to "lie", although the difference is often difficult to parse. As an eighteenth-century man, I prefer an eighteenth century word: *puffery*. If we consider some of the statements coming from our military leaders regarding the war in Iraq, we might think they are all clones of General Puff.

In recent days, a classified report on the situation in Anbar province, written by a senior Marine intelligence official in Iraq, has been widely reported on in the press. The report, which I have not seen, apparently paints a bleak picture of the situation there. According to a story by Tom Ricks of *The Washington Post*, the Marine commander in Anbar, Major General Richard Zilmer, said "I have seen that report and I do concur with that assessment." Score one for the Marine Corps in the honesty department.

But then, General Puff seems to have stolen General Zilmer's identity. According to Ricks' story, Zilmer:

*Also insisted that "tremendous progress" is being made in that part of the country...*

*"I think we are winning this war," he told reporters. "We are certainly accomplishing our mission..."*

*The 30,000 U.S. and allied troops are "stifling" the enemy in the province, Zilmer told reporters.*

But he wouldn't say the insurgents are being defeated. Puffery, you see, tries to avoid statements that might later be checked against facts.

By puffing out nice-sounding words such as “stifling,” it seeks to create an impression that is favorable but too nebulous to hold to account.

The *The Cleveland Plain Dealer* reported a wonderful piece of military puffery on September 7. Speaking of a supposed turnover of command of the Iraqi armed forces to Iraq’s government, U.S. Major General William Cladwell, said:

*“This is such a huge, significant event that’s about to occur tomorrow. If you go back and map out significant events that have occurred in this government’s formation in taking control of the country, tomorrow is gigantic.”*

In reality, the Iraqi government took control of just a single division; most troops in the Iraqi Army take their orders from militia leaders, not the government; and the Iraqi government itself takes its orders from the United States. This “huge, significant event” changed nothing.

According to a story in the September 13 *Oregonian*:

*The U.S. military did not count people killed by bombs, mortars, rockets or other mass attacks—including suicide bombings—when it reported a dramatic drop in the number of killings in the Baghdad area last month, the U.S. Central Command said Monday...*

*That led to confusion after Iraqi Health Ministry figures showed that 1,536 people died violently in and around Baghdad in August, nearly the same number as in July.*

*The figures raise serious questions about the success of the security operation launched by the U.S.-led coalition. When they released the murder rate figures, U.S. officials and their Iraqi counterparts were eager to show progress in restoring security in Baghdad.*

Sufficiently eager, it seems, to puff the numbers.

We expect puffery from politicians. But when General Puff represents the military to the American people, the military puts itself in a dangerous situation. The loss of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan will, at some point, have domestic political repercussions, perhaps of some magnitude. The U.S. military will rightly bear some of the blame for both failures. It cannot credibly claim that it was forced to fight two 4th Generation wars with 2nd Generation tactics and doctrine, when it has rebuffed every effort to move beyond the 2nd Generation, with the Marine Corps being the partial exception.

But the American people, I think, will be more forgiving of mistakes than of puffery, which in the end is a deliberate attempt to deceive. If the public comes to think that all generals lie, the American armed services may find it difficult to re-establish their good reputations.

*September 14, 2006*

## Will the Trumpet Sound Uncertain

The endless and largely cynical blather about a “Global War on Terrorism,” “Islamic extremism,” and “Islamofascism,” has served more to obscure than to reveal the strategic situation the West now faces. Islam is, and always has been, a religion of war. What has changed in recent times is that after about 300 years on the strategic defensive, following the failure of the second Turkish siege of Vienna in 1683, Islam has resumed the strategic offensive. It is expanding outward in every direction, and much of its expansion is violent, if not initially then once new Islamic bridgeheads are strong enough to sustain violence.

The most critical question, and it remains an open question, is whether what remains of Christendom will defend itself or simply roll over and die. Most Western elites, and almost all Western political leaders, including those who call themselves conservatives, accept and live according to the dictates of cultural Marxism, the Marxism of the Frankfurt School known commonly as “multiculturalism” or “Political Correctness.” Because cultural Marxism’s primary objective is the destruction of Western culture and the Christian religion, its adherents see Islam as a useful if somewhat troublesome ally. They will even go to war on behalf of Moslems against Christians, as the Clinton administration did twice in the Balkans. It is improbable, to say the least, that any Western political leader will rally Christendom to defend itself.

Last week, Pope Benedict XVI seemed to do exactly that. In a speech at Regensburg, Germany, the Pope told the truth about Islam. Moreover, he did so by quoting a Byzantine Emperor, Manuel II Paleologos. According to a story in the September 13 *Cleveland Plain Dealer*:

*“The emperor comes to speak about the issue of jihad, holy war,” the Pope said.*

*“He said, I quote, ‘Show me just what Mohammed brought that was new, and there you will find things only evil and inhuman, such as his command to spread by the sword the faith he preached.’”*

What the Emperor, and the Pope, said is precisely correct. If you read the Qur’an, as I have, you will find it is mostly a pastiche, some elements taken from Judaism, some from Christianity, some from the pagan polytheism common in Arabia before Mohammed. The main ingredient Mohammed added to this stew was endless condemnations of “unbelievers,” including repeated calls for violence against them, e.g., “slay them in every kind of ambush.” It is not surprising that from its birth Islam has been at war with every other religion. The Qur’an mandates exactly that.

By telling the truth about Islam, the Pope appeared to offer Christendom the leader in its own defense that it must find if it is to survive Islam’s latest onslaught. More, quoting a Byzantine Emperor, he suggested that defending Christendom was his intention. The Byzantine Empire was the Christian world’s first line of defense against Islam for centuries. Its fall to the Turks in 1453 was a catastrophe, but by then the modern age was beginning in the West. Modernity soon gave Christendom a decisive advantage over Islam and all other cultures that endured until the 20th century, when the West fought three civil wars that largely destroyed it. Another Pope bought the West the time it needed by assembling the Christian galleys at Lepanto.

The elevation of Cardinal Ratzinger to the Papacy brought joy to traditional Christians everywhere, Roman Catholic or not. With his Regensburg address, Pope Benedict XVI signaled he might do more



than defend traditional Christianity against the heresies that beset it sorely. He might give the West a fighting leader, and a fighting chance, in a 4th Generation world where wars between cultures will mean far more than wars between states.

The Islamic world responded predictably to the Pope's speech, proving the truth of the Emperor's words. In Somalia, a Moslem shot a Catholic nun in the back four times, killing her. In the West Bank, Christian churches were burned. Crowds rioted, and Islamic clerics and governments demanded the Pope retract his words.

Sadly, it appears that on Sunday the Pope crumbled. According to the AP, he said, "This in fact was a quotation from a medieval text, which does not in any way express my personal thought." Yet what the Emperor Manuel II Paleologus said is plain fact, fact as clear as day to anyone who reads the Qur'an or knows the history of Islam.

The Holy Spirit is Truth. As men of the West, we can only pray that the Holy Spirit will strengthen the Pope to continue to speak the truth about Islam. If the trumpet sounds uncertain, who will follow?

*September 18, 2006*

# The Sanctuary Delusion

At America's behest, Pakistan sent its army into the tribal territories along its northwest frontier. Predictably, the army was defeated. The Pakistani government has now signed a truce with the tribes in North Waziristan, a wise move given that government's fragility. Its perceived weakness is such that on Sunday, when the power went out all over Pakistan, everyone assumed there had been a coup.

Washington and its gentlemanly Afghan puppet, Mr. Karzai, are howling that this will give the Taliban a sanctuary, which is true. Every military force, including those of the 4th Generation, needs some sort of secure rear area where its fighters can relax, its wounded can receive treatment, and its new recruits can be trained. Such sanctuaries are vital for the Taliban, al-Qaeda, Hamas, Hezbollah and all the rest.

Unfortunately, this need for sanctuaries is leading the silver bullet crowd, those who seek some magical single answer to the 4th Generation threat, off on another detour to nowhere. They say that if we only put enough pressure on states such as Pakistan not to permit sanctuaries, and overthrow state governments that openly provide sanctuary such as Syria's, then the 4th Generation will disappear. Sorry, but it won't.

The error is that, as usual, the silver bulleters are thinking in terms of states. They argue not only that 4th Generation entities need sanctuaries, which is true, but that those sanctuaries have to be in states, which is not true. On the contrary, stateless regions provide the best sanctuary 4th Generation forces can hope to find.

The best example is the stateless region of Mesopotamia, formerly the state of Iraq less Kurdistan. Despite the presence of 140,000

American troops, 20,000 mercenaries and the dwindling remains of the coalition of the shilling, Mesopotamia is now a happy hunting ground for more 4GW entities than Osama can count. In that stateless void, they have rich recruiting grounds, the best training available anywhere, ample funds, plenty of weapons and enough quiet places where tired or wounded mujaheddin can get their R&R. The former Iraq has become a 4th Generation theme park. Six Hundred Flags, perhaps? Or maybe Bushworld.

Much of Afghanistan is rapidly going the same route. Far from needing friendly states for sanctuary, most 4GW forces can find it locally, often right under the occupiers' noses. While Pakistan's northwest territories do give the Taliban welcome sanctuary, I'd bet at least one goat that most Afghan Taliban find their sanctuary in Afghanistan, among their families, friends and fellow tribesmen. If some hapless NATO troops stumble into their village while they're on R&R, they can just smile and wave. Why travel for what you have at home?

The sanctuary delusion has two unfortunate consequences. First, like all silver-bullet answers to 4GW, it leads us astray from the slow, painful and difficult task of understanding the 4th Generation in all its evolving complexity. Second, as with Pakistan, it leads the American government to push friendly governments in weak states over the edge. By demanding they deny sanctuary on their territory to terrorists who have strong popular support, Washington exacerbates their crises of legitimacy. Washington then acts surprised and dumbfounded when those governments fall, as it discreetly folds away the pocket knife that cut their high wire. If their fall creates another stateless region, the 4th Generation gets another ideal sanctuary.

As is so often the case in 4GW, the fact that 4th Generation forces need sanctuaries means neither that they must obtain them from states nor that they can be targeted. Our troops in Afghanistan don't call their Taliban opponents "ghosts" for nothing.

*September 28, 2006*

## Dear Jim

The *Washington Post* is currently serializing excerpts from Bob Woodward's new book, *State of Denial*, which reads distressingly like Count Ciano's diaries. Yesterday's excerpt quotes Marine Corps General James L. Jones, the current NATO commander, saying to another Marine, General Peter Pace, on the eve of his accession to the Chairmanship of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, "You're going to face a debacle and be part of the debacle in Iraq."

I've known General Jones since he was a major. He is an acute observer of the political scene, and his warning to General Pace was right on the mark. Unfortunately, General Jones is now caught up in another war, the war in Afghanistan, which is not going altogether well. Perhaps it is time to share some bad news with him, as he did with General Pace.

Dear Jim:

I hope this autumn finds you well and enjoying the rigours of chateau campaigning. No wonder the Europeans fought so many wars; they had such lovely places to fight them in.

In another part of the world, less lovely, the snows will soon bring campaigning to an end. As winter will offer some time for adjustment there, I thought I should say to you what you said to General Pace: if NATO continues on its present course, you're going to face a debacle and be part of the debacle in Afghanistan.

It is not news to you that the Taliban has the initiative. What your staff may not be telling you is that NATO is helping the Taliban stage its comeback. NATO is botching the war in Afghanistan in ways

remarkably similar to those the U.S. has employed in Iraq. It is conducting massive sweeps, bombing villages, and alienating locals. It may not be too late to turn it around; no one is better positioned to do so than yourself. But if you are to avoid presiding over one defeat while Pete Pace presides over another, you need to act along the following lines:

1. Stop fighting the Pashtun. The war in Afghanistan is in part a civil war, and the Pashtun always win Afghan civil wars. NATO's presence won't change that outcome, although it may delay it. If NATO doesn't want to end up on the losing side, it needs to make peace with the Pashtun, then, if possible, ally with them. As NATO's supreme commander, that ought to be your main strategic objective.
2. Stop attacking the Taliban. Of course NATO forces must respond when attacked, but don't look for fights. Every engagement with the Taliban, won or lost, moves you further away from peace with the Pashtun. Drop the sweeps, the big pushes and so forth. Stop talking about body counts; those bodies are almost all Pashtun.

A story in today's *Washington Post* shows the right way to do it. It reports a deal between British troops and local elders:

*Under the agreement reached in the small town of Musa Qala, in Helmand province, British troops will not launch offensives. In return, the elders will press the Taliban to stop attacks, a NATO spokesman said Monday.*

*"If we are not attacked, we have no reason to initiate offensive operations. The tribal elders are using their influence on the Taliban," NATO spokesman Mark Laity said.*

U.S. forces in Afghanistan will hate this, but those forces are now under NATO command, which is to say your command, Jim. Make them stop doing things we know don't work, like sweeps.

3. Remember one of John Boyd's favorite admonitions: we don't want to be attacking the village, we want to be in the village. NATO's operational focus should be a variant of the Vietnam CAP program. The units in the village should be backed by mobile reserves that can fight battles of encirclement U.S. forces can't, but maybe someone else in your coalition can. When the Taliban hit a village, the object should be to encircle them and take prisoners, not kill them. One turned prisoner is better than many bodies.
4. Eliminate airstrikes. Not only will they continue to hit civilians, they make NATO into a monster. Every airstrike, no matter how "successful," is a blow against NATO at the moral level of war.
5. Finally, accept that Afghanistan will remain Afghanistan. It will not become Switzerland. Stop promoting things like "womens' rights," i.e. Feminism, that tell the locals we want to force Hell down their throats. At best, NATO may be able to leave Afghanistan what it once was, a state with a weak central government, powerful local war lords, a narco economy and chronic, low-level civil war. It would probably help if the monarchy were restored. Anything more as a strategic objective is unattainable.

To accomplish any of this, you will need to tell the U.S. military and Washington to pound sand. Remember, you don't work for them any more. What are they going to do to you, shave your head and send you to Parris Island?

Best Regards:

Bill

*October 3, 2006*

# Why We Still Fight

At least 32 American troops have been killed in Iraq this month. Approximately 300 have been wounded. The “battle for Baghdad” is going nowhere. A Marine friend just back from Ramadi said to me, “It didn’t get any better while I was there, and it’s not going to get better.” Virtually everyone in Washington, except the people in the White House, knows that is true for all of Iraq.

Actually, I think the White House knows it too. Why then does it insist on “staying the course” at a casualty rate of more than one thousand Americans per month? The answer is breathtaking in its cynicism: so the retreat from Iraq happens on the next President’s watch. That is why we still fight.

Yep, it’s now all about George. Anyone who thinks that is too low, too mean, too despicable even for this bunch does not understand the meaning of the adjective “Rovian.” Would they let thousands more young Americans get killed or wounded just so George W. does not have to face the consequences of his own folly? In a heartbeat.

Not that it’s going to help. When history finally lifts its leg on the Bush administration, it will wash all such tricks away, leaving only the hubris and the incompetence. Jeffrey Hart, who with Russell Kirk gone is probably the top intellectual in the conservative movement, has already written that George W. Bush is the worst President America ever had. I think the honor still belongs to the sainted Woodrow, but if Bush attacks Iran, he may yet earn the prize. That third and final act in the Bush tragicomedy is waiting in the wings.

A post-election Democratic House, a Democratic Senate or a combination of the two might, in theory, say no to another war. But if the Bush administration’s cynicism is boundless, the Democrats’



intellectual vacuity and moral cowardice are equally so. You can't beat something with nothing, but Democrats have put forward nothing in the way of an alternative to Bush's defense and foreign policies. On Iran, the question is whether they will be more scared of the Republicans or of the Israeli lobby. Either way, they will hide under the bed, just as they have hidden under the bed on the war in Iraq. It appears at the moment that a Congressional demand for withdrawal from Iraq is more likely if the Republicans keep the Senate and Senator John Warner of Virginia remains Chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee than if the Democrats take over.

There is a great deal of material available to the Democrats to offer an alternative, much of it the product of the Military Reform Movement of the 1970s and 80s. Gary Hart can tell them all about it. There is even a somewhat graceful way out of Iraq, if the Dems will ask themselves my favorite foreign policy question, WWBD – What Would Bismarck Do? He would transfer sufficient Swiss francs to interested parties so that the current government of Iraq asks us to leave. They, not we, would then hold the world's ugliest baby, even though it was America's indiscretion that gave the bastard birth.

But donkeys will think when pigs fly. A Democratic Congress will be as stupid, cowardly and corrupt as its Republican predecessor; in reality, both parties are one party, the party of successful career politicians. The White House will continue a lost war in Iraq, solely to dump the mess in the next President's lap. America or Israel will attack Iran, pulling what's left of the temple down on our heads. Congress will do nothing to stop either war.

By 2008, I may not be the only monarchist in America.

*October 11, 2006*

## Barbarians at the Gate

At this low point in our country's history, no phrase in the English language has less meaning than "political leader." The bottom-feeders who nominally lead both political parties suck up money and votes while burying themselves in the sand at any sign of a national issue. Yet one shark still circles among all the flatfish: Pat Buchanan.

Buchanan's new book, *State of Emergency: The Third World Invasion and Conquest of America*, is of central importance to anyone who wants to understand the 4th Generation threat this country faces. From the outset, *State of Emergency* recognizes that the problem is not just immigration:

*This is not immigration as America knew it, when men and women made a conscious choice to turn their backs on their native lands and cross the ocean to become Americans. This is an invasion, the greatest invasion in history. Nothing of this magnitude has ever happened in so short a span of time. There are 36 million immigrants and their children in the United States today, almost as many as came to America between Jamestown in 1607 and the Kennedy election of 1960. Nearly 90 percent of all immigrants now come from continents and countries whose peoples have never assimilated fully into any Western country.*

In looking at America, Buchanan focuses on the invasion from Mexico, which is the main danger. Rightly, he stresses that the central issue is assimilation – more precisely, acculturation – or the present lack of it. In part, the failure to acculturate is due to the ideology of "multiculturalism;" I wish Buchanan had traced that ideology to its roots in the cultural Marxism of the Frankfurt School, as he does in his

earlier book *The Death of the West*. Here he focuses on the other side of the coin, the campaign by *La Raza*, the Mexican government and advocates of Aztlán to convince Mexican immigrants not to acculturate, to refuse to transfer their primary loyalty from Mexico to the United States. The result?

*“The one absolutely certain way of bringing this nation to ruin, of preventing all possibility of it continuing to be a nation at all, would be to permit it to become a tangle of squabbling nationalities,” said Theodore Roosevelt. We are becoming what T.R. warned against: a multi-lingual, multiethnic, multicultural tower of Babel. To the delight of anti-Americans everywhere and the indifference of our elites, we are risking the Balkanization and breakup of the nation.*

Buchanan breaks new ground in his discussion of the Republican Party’s disgusting defense of open borders, a position justified by the argument that the resulting cheap labor is good for the economy.

*Scholar Jon Attarian gave a name to the cult that has captured the party of Goldwater and Reagan: “economism.” This neo-Marxist ideology is rooted in a belief that economics rules the world, that economic activity is mankind’s most important activity and the most conducive to human happiness, and that economics is what politics is or should be all about.*

*Economism does not just believe in markets, it worships them...The commands of the market overrule the claims of citizenship, culture, country. Economic efficiency becomes the highest virtue.*

So far has the cult of economism spread that many conservatives now believe it defines conservatism. It does not. On the contrary, conservatives have never regarded efficiency as an important virtue. Buchanan does not fall into this vulgar error. He devotes an entire

chapter of *State of Emergency* to the question, “What Is a Nation?,” and his answer would please Edmund Burke much more than it would Jeremy Bentham.

Buchanan leads as an intellectual, but he also leads in a more profound, moral sense. Here as elsewhere, he does not shrink from telling the truth in the face of a hostile *Zeitgeist*.

It is not true that all creeds and cultures are equally assimilable in a First World nation born of England, Christianity, and Western civilization. Race, faith, ethnicity and history leave genetic fingerprints no “proposition nation” can erase...

Race matters. Ethnicity matters. History matters. Faith matters. Nationality matters. Multiculturalist ideology be damned, this is what history teaches...

To the father of the Constitution, James Madison, one consideration was paramount in deciding who should come and who should not: “I do not wish that any man should acquire the privilege of citizenship, but such as would be a real addition to the wealth or strength of the United States.”

If we follow his guidance, preferences should go to individuals who speak our English language, can contribute significantly to our society, have an education, come from countries with a history of assimilation in America, will not become public charges, and do wish to become Americans. And as we remain a predominantly Christian country, why should not a preference go to Christians?

Why not, indeed? Perhaps those who wish to spare the United States the agonies of imported 4th Generation war should take as their slogan, “Buchanan in 08!”

*October 16, 2006*

# Strategic Counteroffensive

A point often missed about the Soviet misadventure in Afghanistan is that the victory won by the Afghan mujaheddin was not defensive in nature, but an offensive one. Not only did they drive the Red Army out of Afghanistan, the defeat they inflicted on it contributed significantly to the fall of the Communist regime in Russia and the disintegration of the Soviet Union.

Now it appears that Iraq may be going for a similar offensive victory against the West. Iraqis are already launching a counter-invasion of the West in response to the American-led invasion of Iraq. Specifically, they are invading Sweden. A story in the October 25 *Washington Post Express* reports that Sweden, a country of only 9 million people, has already taken in more than 70,000 Iraqis who are fleeing the war in their own country, with more on the way.

The culturally Marxist Swedish governing elite presents these invaders as poor, harmless refugees who only want peace. Daily life in the Swedish city of Malmo paints a different picture. A recent Swedish sociological study of the situation in Malmo is titled, “Vi krigar mot svenskarna,” or “We’re waging war against the Swedes.” Based on interviews with young, overwhelmingly Moslem immigrants in Malmo, the study found:

*The wave of robberies the city of Malmo has witnessed during this past year is part of a “war against Swedes.” This is the explanation given by young robbers with immigrant backgrounds on why they are only robbing native Swedes....*

*“When we are in the city and robbing, we are waging a war, waging a war against the Swedes.” This argument was repeated*

*several times.*

If, as seems likely, Iraq splits into three separate entities, Kurdish, Shi'ite, and Sunni, the Sunnis will be left with no oil, which is to say with no future other than utter poverty. What will they do? Swell the ranks of invaders of Europe. Already, more than 500,000 Moslems invade Europe every year across the Mediterranean. Millions of Iraqi Sunnis will attempt to join that migration. Many of them will have had excellent training in urban guerilla warfare.

A story in the October 18 *Washington Times* says Canada is facing exactly this threat:

*Concern is growing among U.S. and Canadian counter-terrorism specialists that Somali-Canadians are joining Islamist militias in their homeland linked to al-Qaeda.*

*Former senior Canadian intelligence official David Harris said there was concern that returning militia veterans with “the kind of skills that...could make them very dangerous” might try to stage terror attacks.*

*“We’re seeing the possibility of a tragic future unfold,” he said.*

Indeed we are. These Somalis, like the Iraqis now pouring into Sweden, came to Canada as refugees from the fighting there. They received Canadian citizenship, but they never became real Canadians. The Canadian Somalis now return to Somalia to fight jihad on behalf of the Islamic Courts Union, then come back to Canada, bringing jihad with them. Of the 18 Islamic radicals arrested in Canada in June for a bomb plot, two were Somalis.

Here we see how 4th Generation war and its practitioners outmaneuver states with almost laughable ease. The states not only provide legal armament to the 4th Generation fighters, by offering

citizenship without allegiance, they virtually beg for more invaders to come. Business wants the cheap labor, and the cultural Marxists welcome the assault on traditional Western culture.

The neocons are now going both one better by proposing America recruit hordes of Third World foreigners into her armies, so those armies will have the manpower to carry out the neocons' imperial dreams. The last empire that invited barbarians into the legions didn't fare too well.

To turn a favorite piece of Bushbull around, we're fighting them there while inviting them in to fight us here. Soon enough, unless we change course, we won't be able to fight them there or here. If George W. Bush's invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan are America's Operation Barbarossa, Islamic immigration into the West is the 4th Generation's Operation Bagration.

*October 27, 2006*

## **Third and Final Act**

The third and final act in the national tragedy that is the Bush administration may soon play itself out. The Okhrana reports increasing indications of something big happening between the election and Christmas. That could be the long-planned attack on Iran.

An attack on Iran will not be an invasion with ground troops. We don't have enough of those left to invade Ruritania. It will be a package of air and missile strikes, either by U.S. forces or by Israel. If Israel does it, there is a possibility of nuclear weapons being employed. But Israel would prefer the U.S. to do the dirty work, and what Israel wants, Israel usually gets, at least in Washington.

That this would constitute folly piled on top of folly is no deterrent to the Bush administration. Like the French Bourbons, it forgets nothing and it learns nothing. It takes pride in not adapting. Or did you somehow miss George W. Bush's declaration of the doctrine of presidential infallibility? It followed shortly after the visit to the aircraft carrier with the "Mission Accomplished" sign.

The Democrats taking either or both Houses of Congress, if it happens, will not make any difference. They would rather have the Republicans start and lose another war than prevent a national disaster. Politics comes first and the country second. Nor would they dare cross Israel.

Many of the consequences of a war with Iran are easy to imagine. Oil would soar to at least \$200 per barrel if we could get it. Gas shortages would bring back the gas lines of 1973 and 1979. Our European alliances would be stretched to the breaking point if not beyond it. Most people outside the Bushbubble can see all this coming.



What I fear no one foresees is a substantial danger that we could lose the army now deployed in Iraq. I have mentioned this in previous columns, but I want to go into it here in more detail because the scenario may soon go live.

Well before the second Iraq war started, I warned in a piece in *The American Conservative* that the structure of our position in Iraq could lead to that greatest of military disasters, encirclement. That is precisely the danger if we go to war with Iran.

The danger arises because almost all of the vast quantities of supplies American armies need come into Iraq from one direction, up from Kuwait and other Gulf ports in the south. If that supply line is cut, our forces may not have enough stuff, especially fuel, to get out of Iraq. American armies are incredibly fuel-thirsty, and though Iraq has vast oil reserves, it is short of refined oil products. Unlike Guderian's Panzer army on its way to the Channel coast in 1940, we could not just fuel up at local gas stations.

There are two ways our supply lines from the south could be cut if we attack Iran. The first is by Shi'ite militias, including the Mahdi Army and the Badr Brigades, possibly supported by a general Shi'ite uprising and Iran's Revolutionary Guards, who are responsible for training Hezbollah so well.

The second danger is that regular Iranian Army divisions will roll into Iraq, cut our supply lines and attempt to pocket us in and around Baghdad. Washington relies on American air power to prevent this, but bad weather can shut most of that air power down.

Unfortunately, no one in Washington and few people in the U.S. military will even consider this possibility. Why? Because we have fallen victim to our own propaganda. Over and over the U.S. military tells itself, "We're the greatest! We're number one! No one can defeat us. No one can even fight us. We're the greatest military in all of history!"

It's bull. The U.S. armed forces are technically well-trained, lavishly resourced 2nd Generation militaries. They are being fought and defeated by 4th Generation opponents in both Iraq and Afghanistan. They can also be defeated by 3rd Generation enemies who can observe, orient, decide, and act more quickly than can America's vast, process-ridden, Powerpoint-enslaved military headquarters. They can be defeated by strategy, by stratagem, by surprise, and by preemption. Unbeatable militaries are like unsinkable ships. They are unsinkable until someone or something sinks them.

If the U.S. were to lose the army it has in Iraq to Iraqi militias, Iranian regular forces, or, the most likely event, a combination of both, the world would change. It would be our Adrianople, our Rocroi, our Stalingrad. American power and prestige would never recover.

One of the few people who does see this danger is the doyenne of American foreign policy columnists, Georgie Anne Geyer. In her column of October 28 in *The Washington Times*, she wrote:

*The worst has not, by any means, yet happened. When I think of abandoning a battleground, I think of the 1850s, when thousands of Brits were trying to leave Afghanistan through the Khyber Pass and all were killed by tribesmen except one man, left to tell the story.*

*Our men and women are in isolated compounds, not easy even to retreat from, were that decision made. Time is truly running out.*

October 31, 2006

## He's Tanned, Rested and Ready

Yesterday, an Iraqi court found Saddam Hussein guilty and sentenced him to death. The fact that the court was the creature of a foreign power and that the proceedings reeked of a Stalinist show trial do not affect the justice of the verdict. Saddam is guilty as sin.

Of what is he guilty? Saddam Hussein is guilty of governing Iraq. The specific charges against him—murders, massacres, wholesale slaughters, etc.—are subsets of the main charge. All these vicious crimes, and more, are what it takes to govern Iraq.

Like most of the world, Iraq has two possible states: tyranny and anarchy. You can have the one, or the other, but nothing in between. Of the two, for both Iraqis and the world, tyranny is vastly preferable. Today's *Washington Post* quotes an Iraqi Sunni as saying, "Saddam was accused of killing 148 people. Now, more than 148 innocent people are getting killed in Iraq every day." Saddam's Iraq was a bitter enemy of al-Qaeda. Thanks to George W. Bush's discovery of Woodrow Wilson's stash of democracy absinthe, Iraq is now al-Qaeda's biggest success story, not to mention recruiting ground.

With even the Bush White House giving up on staying the course in Iraq, the question becomes, how might we walk this dog back? The first course correction must be in our objective. Instead of trying to bring democracy to Iraq, our directing strategic question should be, how can we restore tyranny in place of the current anarchy?

An obvious first step is to replace the current democratic government in Baghdad—the government of a non-existent state—with a new dictator. Some voices in Washington are quietly suggesting we will soon do this. An occupying power should be able to stage a *coup d'état*, even if it cannot maintain order in the streets.

Then comes a hard question: should the new Iraqi dictator be Sunni or Shi'ite? In answer, we need to realize that in Iraq, as in Afghanistan, we have chosen the wrong side in a civil war. That is true locally in Afghanistan—we are allied with the Tajiks and the Uzbeks against the Pashtun in a place where the Pashtun always win—and it is also true regionally in Iraq. While Shi'ites are a majority in Iraq, they are a minority in the Islamic world. The countries that are key to American interests in the region, Pakistan, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia, are majority Sunni and governed by Sunni regimes. The leading Shi'ite power in the region, Iran, is our principal local opponent, and thus far a great beneficiary of our invasion of Iraq. Strategically, the new dictator we install should be a Sunni.

One can add a few more credentials. The new dictator, if he is to have legitimacy, must be an opponent of the American occupation. Ideally, he should be someone who has suffered personally at the hands of the Americans. He should be able to turn off the Sunni insurgency to facilitate an American exit. He should be able to call an effective army to the colors quickly, to prevail in the Sunni-Shi'ite civil war that is already underway and will intensify rapidly once a Sunni is put back in power. He should be someone who knows how to make Iraq work, as well as Arab states do work. Of course, he should have no qualms at inflicting the utmost brutality on his own people, since that is what governing Iraq requires.

Fortunately, we have just such a man at hand. He's tanned, rested and ready. A quick extraction by Delta Force and Saddam Hussein will be president of Iraq once more. It should take about 48 hours for the Ba'athists to slit the throat of every al-Qaeda operative in the country. Saddam will, I'm sure, be gracious in victory, allowing us to withdraw our beaten army gracefully. Unlike the current Iraqi government, I doubt he will ally with the Iranians, who will have tasted their victory turn to ashes in their mouths.

Yes, I know, it's a winter night's dream. Monarchies can pull off

such dramatic reversals, while republics must wallow endlessly in their blunders, their puny leaders too terrified of uncomprehending publics to escape the mire.

One understands why, according to the *Washington Times*, as the President of Iraq was led from the courtroom, sentenced to death, “There was a hint of a smile on Saddam’s face.”

*November 6, 2006*

## **Lose a War, Lose an Election**

Lose a war, lose an election. What else should anyone expect, especially when the war is one we never had to fight? Had Spain defeated us in 1898, does anyone think Teddy Roosevelt would have been elected in 1900? A logical corollary is, lose two wars, lose two elections. With the war in Afghanistan following that in Iraq down the tube, 2008 may not be a Republican year.

Even better, by 2008 the American people may have figured out that the two parties are really one party, neither wing of which knows or much cares what it is doing. The vehicle for this realization may once again be the war in Iraq. The next two years, rather than seeing us extricate ourselves from the Iraqi swamp, are likely to witness us floundering ever deeper into it.

The lesson of last week's election, in which the Republicans lost both Houses of Congress, will not be lost on either party. Both Republican and Democratic Senators and Congressmen will now agree that the war is a disaster from which we need to extricate ourselves. The White House won't admit it, but it has to see the situation the same way. George Bush and Dick Cheney may not, but Bush's brain, Karl Rove, certainly does. The puppet must, in the end, obey the puppeteer.

What, then, will keep us in Iraq? While both parties want to get out, neither will be able to create a consensus on *how* to get out. Not only will they be unable to generate a consensus between the parties, or between the executive branch and the Congress, they will not be able to find consensus within either party on how the withdrawal is to be managed. The result will be paralysis and a continuation of the war.

Part of the reason Washington will not be able to agree on a plan for coming home from Iraq is political. Neither party wants to enable

the other to blame it in 2008 for losing Iraq. The Democrats are especially fearful of anything that would seem to make them look weak on defense.

But a greater part of the reason for fateful indecision will be the very real fact that there are no good options. If we stay in Iraq, the civil war there will intensify, with American troops caught in the middle. Already, all those troops are doing is serving in Operation Provide Targets, with casualty rates that continue to rise.

But if we withdraw, the civil war will intensify all the more rapidly. Unless that civil war is won by someone who can re-create an Iraqi state, Iraq will become a stateless region of permanent chaos, a generator and supplier of the non-state Islamic forces who are our real enemy. That may also happen if the wrong elements win the civil war, extremist Shi'ites allied with Iran or extremist Sunnis with strong al-Qaeda sympathies. The factions who might create a government we could live with are either Ba'athist or connected with the current Iraqi government, neither of which is likely to come out on top. Eggs, once broken, are hard to unscramble.

In the absence of any good options, politicians of both parties in Washington, not wanting to hold the bag for the inevitable failure, will be able to agree only on a series of half-measures. We will train still more Iraqi troops or police, ignoring that both are mostly militiamen for one or another faction. We will pull our troops back into remote bases, where most already stay, remaining in Iraq while the civil war boils up around us. We will try to get the regional powers to help us out, despite the fact that those who would can't and those who can have no reason to do so. We will steam in circles, scream and shout, hoping desperately for a *deus ex machina* rescue that is unlikely to appear.

In a reality neither Republicans nor Democrats will dare face, we have only one option left in Iraq. That option is to admit failure and withdraw. We can do it sooner, or, at the cost of more American dead and wounded, we can do it later. Obviously, sooner is better, but that

would require a bold decision, which no one in Washington is willing to make.

In World War I, after the failure of the Schlieffen Plan, Kaiser Wilhelm II, wanted a compromise peace. Regrettably, he was unwilling to force that policy on his recalcitrant generals.

Today, in Washington, the generals want peace. They could give the politicians of both parties and both relevant branches of government the cover they need to make peace, by going public in favor of an early withdrawal. Unfortunately, that would require a level of moral courage not notably evident in the senior American military. In its absence, the whole American political system will continue to flounder in a sea of half-measures, American troops will continue to die in a lost war, and the crisis of legitimacy of the American state will continue to grow.

*November 11, 2006*



# Davy Jones's Locker

Last week, for three days running, the *Washington Times* carried front-page stories about the interception of a U.S. Navy aircraft carrier, the Kitty Hawk, by a Chinese submarine. The submarine, a Song-class diesel-electric boat, popped up undetected in the middle of a carrier battle group, which was operating in deep water off Okinawa. Armed with Russian-made wake-homing torpedos that can ruin a carrier's day, the sub was well within range of the Kitty Hawk when it surfaced.

While the *Washington Times* headline read "Admiral says sub risked a shootout," the incident meant little in itself. Navies play these kinds of "gotcha" games with each other all the time; both U.S. and Soviet subs were quite good at it during the Cold War. Since neither the U.S. nor China are seeking war, there was no danger of a naval Marco Polo Bridge Incident. The paper quoted an unidentified U.S. Navy official as saying, correctly, "We were operating in international waters, and they were operating in international waters. From that standpoint, nobody was endangering anybody. Nobody felt threatened."

There are nevertheless some important lessons here. One is that, contrary to the U.S. Navy's fervent belief, the aircraft carrier is no longer the key capital ship. It ceded that role long ago to the submarine. In one naval exercise after another, the sub sinks the carriers. The carriers just pretend it didn't happen and carry on with the rest of the exercise.

About thirty years ago, my first boss, Senator Robert Taft Jr. of Ohio, asked Admiral Hyman Rickover how long he thought the U.S. aircraft carriers would last in the war with the Soviet navy, which was largely a submarine navy. Rickover's answer, on the record in a hearing of the Senate Armed Services Committee, was, "About two days." The

Committee, needless to say, went on to approve buying more carriers.

Another lesson is that diesel-electric subs can be as effective or more effective than nuclear boats in same situations. The U.S. Navy hates the very idea of non-nuclear submarines and therefore pretends they don't count for much. You can buy four to eight modern diesel-electric submarines for the cost of a single American U-cruiser nuke boat.

At this point, the Chinese sub's successful interception of our carrier does raise an interesting question: How was that sub in the right position to make an interception? What a nuclear submarine can do but a diesel-electric sub cannot is undertake long, high-speed chases. Was it just dumb luck that the Chinese sub was where we, in effect, ran into it? Or were the Chinese able to coordinate the sub's movement over time with successful tracking of our carrier battle group? If the latter is the case, the Chinese Navy may be starting to become a real navy instead of just a collection of ships. That transformation is far more important than whether China has this or that piece of equipment. It won't happen fast, but it bears watching.

Or does it? The somewhat regrettable message from the world of real war, 4th Generation war, is that deep-water battles or prospective battles between navies means little if anything. Speculating about the balance between U.S. Navy aircraft carriers and Chinese submarines is like wondering what would happen at Trafalgar if Villeneuve's van had responded immediately to his signal to wear and support the center of the Allies' line, or Admiral Gravina had led his Squadron of Observation straight for Collingwood's column. It's fun to think about—personally, I enjoy it immensely—but *c'est ne pas la guerre*. Control of coastal and inland waters may play highly important roles in 4th Generation war, but deep water naval battles, like the Glorious First of June, if they occur, will be jousting contests with broomsticks. In a real war, the U.S. Coast Guard may be more useful than the U.S. Navy.

That is the real lesson of the Chinese sub incident: The U.S. Navy,

like the U.S. Air Force, without a torpedo fired or a single dogfight, is on its way to Davy Jones's Locker through sheer intellectual inanition. Preparing endlessly for another carrier war in the Pacific against the Imperial Japanese Navy, it has become a historical artifact.

In the late 19th century, the Chinese people, outraged by repeated foreign humiliations of China, took up a sizeable collection of money to build China a modern navy. The Dowager Empress used the funds to build a marble pleasure boat for herself in the lake near her summer palace. The U.S. Navy's carrier battle groups are the marble pleasure boats of the House and Senate Armed Services Committees of the U.S. Congress.

*November 20, 2006*

# More Troops

The latest serpent at which a drowning Washington Establishment is grasping is the idea of sending more American troops to Iraq. Would more troops turn the war there in our favor? No.

Why not? First, because nothing can. The war in Iraq is irredeemably lost. Neither we nor, at present, anyone else can create a new Iraqi state to replace the one our invasion destroyed. Maybe that will happen after the Iraqi civil war is resolved, maybe not. It is, in any case, out of our hands.

Nor could more American troops control the forces driving Iraq's intensifying civil war. The passions of ethnic and religious hatred unleashed by the disintegration of the Iraqi state will not cool because a few more American patrols pass through the streets. Iraqis are quite capable of fighting us and each other at the same time.

A second reason more troops would make no difference is that the troops we have there now don't know what to do, and their leaders don't know what they should be doing. For the most part, American troops in Iraq sit on their Forward Operating Bases; in effect, we are besieging ourselves. Troops under siege are seldom effective at controlling the surrounding countryside, regardless of their number.

When American troops do leave their FOBs, it is almost always to run convoys, which is to say to provide targets; to engage in meaningless patrols, again providing targets; or to do raids, which are downright counterproductive because they turn the people even more strongly against us, to the extent that is even possible. Doing more of any of these things would help us not at all.

More troops might make a difference if they were sent as part of a

change in strategy, away from raids and killing bad guys and toward something like the Vietnam war's CAP program, where American troops defended villages instead of attacking them. But there is no sign of any such change of strategy on the horizon, so there would be nothing useful for more troops to do.

Even a CAP program would be likely to fail at this stage of the Iraq war, which points to the third reason more troops would not help us: more troops cannot turn back the clock. For the CAP, or ink blot, strategy to work, there has to be some level of acceptance of the foreign troops by the local people. When we first invaded Iraq, that was present in much of the country.

But we squandered that good will with blunder upon blunder. How many troops would it take to undo all those errors? The answer is zero, because no quantity of troops can erase history. The argument that more troops in the beginning, combined with an ink blot strategy, might have made the Iraq venture a success does not mean that more troops could do the same thing now.

The clinching argument against more troops also relates to time: sending more troops would mean nothing to our opponents on the ground, because those opponents know we could not sustain a significantly larger occupation force for any length of time. So what if a few tens of thousands more Americans come for a few months? The U.S. military is strained to the breaking point to sustain the force there now. Where is the rotation base for a much larger deployment to come from?

The fact that Washington is seriously considering sending more American troops to Iraq illustrates a common phenomenon in war. As the certainty of defeat looms ever more clearly, the scrabbling about for a miracle cure, a *deus ex machina*, becomes ever more desperate—and more silly. Cavalry charges, Zeppelins, V-2 missiles, kamikazes, the list is endless. In the end, someone finally has to face facts and admit defeat. The sooner someone in Washington is willing to do that,

the sooner the troops we already have in Iraq will come home alive.

*November 29, 2006*

# Boomerang Effect

Last week, one of my students, a Marine captain, asked whether I had heard a news report about an “IED-like device” supposedly found near Cincinnati, and if I thought we would soon start seeing IEDs here in the U.S. I replied that I had not heard the news story, but as to whether we would see IEDs here at home, the answer is yes.

One of the things U.S. troops are learning in Iraq is how people with little training and few resources can fight a state. Most American troops will see this within the framework of counterinsurgency. But a minority will apply their new-found knowledge in a very different way. After they return to the U.S. and leave the military, they will take what they learned in Iraq back to the inner cities, to the ethnic groups, gangs, and other alternate loyalties they left when they joined the service. There, they will put their new knowledge to work, in wars with each other and wars against the American state. It will not be long before we see police squad cars getting hit with IEDs and other techniques employed by Iraqi insurgents, right here in the streets of American cities.

I know this thought—to say nothing of the reality when it happens—will be shocking to some readers. To anyone who really understands 4th Generation war, it should not be. 4th Generation war does not merely work on the will of a state’s political leaders, as some theorists have said. It does something far more powerful than that. It tears apart an opposing state at the moral level.

We saw this phenomenon in the effect the defeat in Afghanistan had on the Soviet Union. Just as that defeat led to the disintegration of the USSR, so defeat in the current Afghan war will bring the disintegration of NATO. We are seeing 4GW pull Israel apart today, to

the point where a leaden blanket of *Kulturpessimismus* now oppresses that country.

We will see the same thing here, powerfully I think, as a result of our defeat in Iraq. It will manifest itself in many ways, and one of those ways will be the progression of inner-city and gang crime into something close to warfare, including war against the state.

Police will not be surprised by this prediction. I have talked with cops about 4th Generation war, and they grasp the concept much better than American soldiers and Marines. Many have told me that they already recognize elements of war in what they are encountering, especially in inner cities. Cops have been killed while just sitting in their cruisers, because they represent the authority of the state. How big a step is it for those cruisers to get hit with IEDs instead of pistol shots?

The Bush administration, as usual, has it exactly backwards. The danger is not that the terrorists we are fighting in Iraq will come here if we pull out there. Rather, American involvement in 4GW in Iraq will create terrorism here from among the people we have sent to fight the war there. Educated well in the ways of successful insurgency, they will come home embittered by a lost war, by friends dead and crippled for life to no purpose. Thanks to America's de-industrialization, they will return to no jobs, or lousy service jobs at minimum wage. Angry, frustrated and futureless, some of them will find new identities and loyalties in gangs and criminal enterprises, where they can put their new talents to work.

It will, of course, be only a small minority of returning troops who will go this route. But something else they will have learned from the Iraqi insurgents, along with how to make and deploy IEDs, is that it takes very few people to create and sustain an insurgency.

The boomerang effect is a central element of 4th Generation war. When a state involves itself in 4GW over there, it lays a basis for 4GW



at home. That is true even if it wins over there, and all the more true if it loses, as states usually do. The toxic fallout from America's 4GW defeats in Iraq and Afghanistan will be far greater than most people expect, and it will fall most heavily on America's police.

*December 4, 2006*

# Knocking Opportunity

Last week, the Iraq Study Group Report burst upon a breathless world and proved to be an empty piñata. None of its recommendations has the slightest chance of reversing the course of the war in Iraq. Only those who just got into town on the last truckload of turnips expected anything more. All Washington Blue Ribbon Commissions are part of the kabuki theater, intended to fool the rubes back home into thinking something real is happening, when it isn't.

If the Iraq Study Group Report is empty of content, the responses to it from the war hawks—more accurately at this point, the war vultures, because what they are feeding on is dead—were as clueless as a Marine at a Mensa meeting. They denounced it as impracticable, which is true; as fanciful in thinking Iran or Syria has any reason to help us in Iraq, which is also true; and, in the case of Senator John McCain, as a recipe for defeat.

Senator McCain almost got it right. The Iraq Study Group Report is not a recipe for defeat, but an acknowledgment of defeat. Therein lies its value, and its function. It offers the Bush administration the bipartisan fig leaf it needs to cover its defeat in Iraq and our inevitable withdrawal.

Like all reports of Blue Ribbon Commissions, the *Report of the Iraq Study Group* is written so as to cover the backsides of its members. It does not come right out and say, “We’ve lost, and its time to get out.” The letter from the Co-Chairs begins, “There is no magic formula to solve the problems of Iraq. However, there are actions that can be taken to improve the situation and protect American interests.”

After this obligatory tip of the cap to Pollyanna, however, the report lays it out as clearly as Washington ever will. The Assessment of

the Current Situation in Iraq concludes on page 32:

*Despite a massive effort, stability in Iraq remains elusive and the situation is deteriorating. The Iraqi government cannot now govern, sustain, and defend itself without the support of the United States. Iraqis have not been convinced that they must take responsibility for their own future ... The ability of the United States to shape outcomes is diminishing. Time is running out.*

Short of concluding with a chorus of “Asleep in the Deep,” it would be hard for the Study Group to make the reality of the situation more evident.

Again, what is key is not the details of the report or the viability of its recommendations, but the response to it. Had it the slightest understanding of which end is up, the Bush White House, while politely disagreeing with some details of the report, would have accepted it as the only way forward. The vultures, led by the neocons, would have sadly concurred. The Joint Chiefs’ strings would have been pulled so they saluted and got on board the last train out of Baghdad.

It might have gone somewhat like this: According to the Friday, December 8 *Washington Times*:

*Yesterday afternoon, less than twenty-four hours after the release of the Iraq Study Group Report, President George W. Bush, accompanied by Iraq Study Group Co-Chairmen James A. Baker and Lee Hamilton and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Marine General Peter Pace, said, “While I do not agree with every detail of the Study Group’s Report, I accept that it represents the only way forward in Iraq that will have bipartisan support of the Congress and the American people. I therefore accept its recommendations as a package, as Secretary Baker has described them, and pledge this administration to their speedy implementation.”*

*“I now call on all members of Congress of both parties to join the administration and the members of the bipartisan study group to set aside all divisions and work together. I look forward to having all American combat troops home from Iraq early in 2008.”*

*President Bush was immediately followed by Mr. Baker, Mr. Hamilton and General Pace adding their endorsements to the administration’s new course and calling for an end to partisanship and national division over the war in Iraq.*

Instead, as we know, the Bush administration and the vultures have rejected the fig leaf the Iraq Study Group Report offers. Determined to achieve victory in Iraq, they guarantee that America’s defeat will be naked before all the world.

One member of the study group, former Democratic Congressman Leon Panetta, was quoted in the Sunday, December 10 *Washington Post* as saying, “I think the feeling was, how do you rescue this administration from the grip of ideology and force it to face the real world?”

The Bush administration’s only desire, unfortunately for the country, is to escape the grip of reality and immerse itself more deeply in the Jacobin ideology of neocons. It seems that, absent a miracle, we are doomed to wander in Oz for two more years.

*December 11, 2006*

## **Last Throw of the Dice**

In a parallel universe in which Thomas Jefferson won the 1796 election, I received a wire last week from the Executive Mansion. Would I meet with First Citizen George X. Bush to advise him on the war in Mesopotamia? Being a Small Endian, I was somewhat surprised to be asked to meet with a Big Endian First Citizen, but of course I telegraphed back that I would.

It was commonly thought that the war in Mesopotamia was not going well. We still had no effective answer to the Mesopotamians' war elephants, and our legionaries were getting squashed on too regular a basis. I had said publicly that we ought to give it up and go home, which made the invitation to the Executive Mansion all the more surprising. First Citizen Bush had to know what advice I would give him.

We met last Friday afternoon, in a gathering that included a few other opponents of the war besides myself. The First Citizen asked what we thought he should do in Mesopotamia, and we all told him we should get out as fast as we could, leaving lots of large caltrops on the roads behind us as we left. Then First Citizen Bush threw us a curveball.

“You've said just what I expected you to say,” he told us. “Now I want to ask you a harder question. I'm not going to pull out of Mesopotamia, at least not yet. I have decided on one last throw of the dice, one last attempt to win this war. What should that be?”

We war critics were silent. One by one, the others shook their heads. There was nothing left to try.

Then I had an idea. “First Citizen, if that's your question, I will give

you an answer. But remember, last throws save very few gamblers. The overwhelming probability is that this too will fail.”

“I understand that's your judgment. I want to hear your proposal anyway,” said the First Citizen.

“Very well,” I replied. “Take all our troops, and I mean all, out of the vast, secure, star-bastioned fortresses we have built all over Mesopotamia and send them into the Mesopotamian capital, Babylon. Make them move into the city and live there. Each small unit is responsible for maintaining order on the street where it lives. If an elephant shows up, they have to deal with it. If we can successfully de-elephantize Babylon, we would show the rest of Mesopotamia that we can still win. That might at least buy us a graceful exit. Again, I don't think it will work, but if you are determined on a last throw, this would be my advice. Legionaries sitting in fortresses do nothing to help win the war.”

“But I thought that famous military theorist you guys all like to quote—what's his name? Oh yeah, Vauban—said building and holding fortresses was the way to win a war,” replied the First Citizen.

Poor Vauban, I thought, so often quoted and so little read. He wrote more about taking fortresses than building and defending them. “First Citizen, this is not quite Vauban's kind of war,” I responded. “Mesopotamia is not the Spanish Netherlands, and Vauban didn't face elephants. But getting our troops out of their fortresses and into Babylon is only half my proposal.”

“OK, what's the rest of it?,” asked First Citizen Bush.

“You have to make an alliance with Persia,” I said.

“An alliance with Persia? Are you nuts? Those guys are Zoro-fascists! Just last week three good Americans were killed in Detroit when some Zoros jumped from their burning ziggurat and landed on them. Besides, don't you know they are trying to build flying chariots?”

Ally with them? Never!” The First Citizen was known for being firm in his likes and dislikes.

“I admit, First Citizen, that this new Zoroastrian practice of setting their ziggurats on fire and then jumping from them is a problem,” I replied. “And the Persians may well get chariots to fly regardless of what we do. But the fact of the matter is, we cannot hope to control Mesopotamia without their help. To obtain that help, we must in turn offer them what they want. An alliance with the United States would help solve many of their problems. I think they might go for it.”

The First Citizen pondered my advice. “Supposing I wanted to do that. How could I approach them?”

“You might send the Shah a small present,” I suggested. “I'm thinking of the people who pushed you into this disastrous war. You know, the neo-claques.”

“Why should I send the Shah the neo-claques?,” the First Citizen asked.

“Not all of them,” I replied. “Just their heads.”

Again, the First Citizen seemed lost in thought. Might he actually pursue a new course? Then, he recovered. “No, dammit, I won't ally with the Persians. I won't even consider it. You Little Egg-heads think you know so much. But I know something you don't, and it proves I'm right to stay the course.”

First Citizen Bush looked around the room with a cocky smile on his face. Relapsing into his native East Virginia grammar, he said, “I know smoking ziggurats is bad for your health!”

Merry Christmas!

*December 18, 2006*

# A State Restored

For more than a decade, Somalia has been Exhibit A in the Hall of Statelessness, a place where the state had not merely weakened into irrelevance but disappeared. Somalia's statelessness had defeated even the world's only hyperpower, the United States, when it had intervened militarily to restore order. 4th Generation war theorists, myself included, frequently pointed to Somalia as an example of the direction in which other places were headed.

Then, over the past several weeks, a Blitzkrieg-like campaign by the Ethiopian army seemed to change everything. A 4th Generation entity, the Islamic Courts, which had taken control of most of Somalia, was brushed aside with ease by Ethiopian tanks and jets. A makeshift state, the Transitional Federal Government, which had been created years ago by other states but was almost invisible within Somalia, was installed in Mogadishu. The Somali state was restored—or so it seems.

This direct clash between the international order of states and anti-state 4th Generation forces is a potentially instructive test case. If the Ethiopians and their sponsors succeed in re-creating a self-sustaining Somali state, it may put 4th Generation elements elsewhere on the defensive. Conversely, if the Somali state again fails, it will suggest that outside efforts to restore states are unlikely to succeed and the future belongs to the 4th Generation.

It is too soon to know what the outcome will be. However, we might want to ask the question, what does each side need to accomplish in order to succeed?

The first thing the Transitional Federal Government and its Ethiopian and other foreign backers must accomplish is to restore order. Many Somalis welcomed the Islamic Courts because they did



bring order. They shut down the local militias, made the streets safe again and began the revival of commerce, which depends on order.

Can the Transitional Federal Government do the same? Its problem is that its main instrument is the Ethiopian army, which is hated by many Somalis. Its own forces are largely warlord militias. If the TFG fails to bring order, not only will it have failed to perform the first task of any state, it will make the Islamic Courts look good in retrospect. Precisely this dynamic is now playing itself out in Afghanistan.

The pro-state forces' second task is in tension with the first: the Ethiopian Army must go home soon. This means weeks at most. If the Ethiopian invasion turns into an Ethiopian occupation, a nationalist resistance movement is likely to emerge quickly. Such a nationalist resistance would have to ally with the Islamic Courts, just as the nationalist resistance in Iraq has been pushed into alliance with Islamic 4GW forces, including al-Qaeda. Non-state forces are usually too weak physically to be picky about allies.

The third task facing the TFG is to split the Islamic Courts and incorporate a substantial part of them into the new Somali state. In the end, political co-option is likely to do more to end a 4GW insurgency than any action a military can take.

What about the Islamic Courts? What do they need to do to defeat the state?

They have already accomplished their first task: avoid the Ethiopian army and go to ground, preserving their forces and weapons for a guerilla war. Had they stood and fought, not only would they have lost, they would have risked annihilation. Mao's rule, "When the enemy advances, we retreat," is of vital importance to most 4GW forces.

The next task is harder: they must now regroup, keep most of their forces loyal, supplied, paid and motivated, and begin a two-fold campaign, one against the Ethiopians or any other foreign forces and the second against the Transitional Federal Government. This will be a

test of their organizational skills, and it is by no means clear they have those skills. Time will tell, time probably measured in weeks or months, not years.

Against occupying foreign forces, the Islamic Courts will need to wrap themselves in nationalism as well as religion, so that they rather than the TFG are seen as the legitimate Somali authorities. The fact that the TFG has to be propped up by foreign troops makes this task relatively easy.

Against the TFG itself, the Islamic Courts' objective is the opposite of the government's: it must make sure order is not re-established. Here, terror tactics come into if play, and if car bombs, suicide attacks and the like spread in Somalia, it will be a sign the Islamic Courts are organizing.

The Islamic Courts may have an unlikely ally here in the old war lords and clan militias. The Islamic Courts suppressed these elements, but their comeback will help, not hurt them. They were and may again become the main source of disorder, and all disorder works to the Islamic Courts' advantage.

The new government in turn needs to suppress these forces just as the Islamic Courts did, but it may be unable to do so, not only because it has no real army of its own but also because it has warlords and militias as key constituents. This mirrors the situation in Iraq, where the Shi'ite-dominated government cannot act against Shi'ite militias because it is largely their creature.

How will it all turn out? My guess is that in Somalia as elsewhere, the dependence of the formative state on foreign troops will prove fatal. In the end, 4th Generation wars are contests for legitimacy, and no regime established by foreign intervention can gain much legitimacy. On the other hand, if the Islamic Courts cannot organize effectively, the new government could win by default. Either way, it is safe to say that the outcome in Somalia will have an impact far beyond that small, sad

country's borders.

*January 5, 2007*

## Less Than Zero

On the surface, President Bush's Wednesday night speech adds up to precisely nothing. The President said, "It is clear that we need to change our strategy in Iraq," but the heart of his proposal, adding more than 20,000 U.S. troops, represents no change in strategy. It is merely another "big push," of the sort we have seen too often in the past from mindless national and military leadership. Instead of Dave Petraeus, why didn't Bush ask Sir Douglas Haig to take command?

Relying on more promises from Iraq's nominal government and requiring more performance from the Iraqi army and police are equally empty policies. Both that government and its armed forces are mere fronts for Shi'ite networks and their militias. If the new troops we send to Baghdad work with Iraqi forces against the Sunni insurgents, we will be helping the Shi'ites ethnically cleanse Baghdad of Sunnis. If, as Bush suggested, our troops go after the Shi'ite militias in Baghdad and elsewhere, we will find ourselves in a two-front war, fighting Sunnis and Shi'ites both. We faced that situation briefly in 2004, and we did not enjoy it.

All this, again, adds up to nothing. But if we look at the President's proposal more carefully, we find it actually amounts to less than zero. It hints at actions that may turn a mere debacle into disaster on a truly historic scale.

First, Mr. Bush said that previous efforts to secure Baghdad failed for two reasons, the second of which is that there were too many restrictions on the troops we had there. This suggests the new big push will be even more kinetic than in the past, calling in more firepower—airstrikes, tanks, and artillery—in Baghdad itself. Chuck Spinney has already warned that we may soon begin to reduce Baghdad to rubble. If

we do, and the President's words suggest we will, we will hasten our defeat. In this kind of war, unless you are going to utilize the Hama model and kill everyone, success comes from de-escalation, not from escalation.

Second, the President not only upped the ante with Syria and Iran, he announced two actions that only make sense if we plan to attack Iran, Syria or both. He said he has ordered Patriot missile batteries and another U.S. Navy aircraft carrier be sent to the region. Neither has any conceivable role in the fighting in Iraq. However, a carrier would provide additional aircraft for airstrikes on Iran, and Patriot batteries would in theory provide some defense against Iranian air and missile attacks launched at Gulf State oil facilities in retaliation.

To top it off, in questioning yesterday on Capitol Hill, the Tea Lady, aka Secretary of State Rice, refused to promise the administration would consult with Congress before attacking Iran or Syria.

As I have said before and will say again, the price of an attack on Iran could easily be the loss of the army we have in Iraq. No conceivable action would be more foolish than adding war with Iran to the war we have already lost in Iraq. Regrettably, it is impossible to read Mr. Bush's dispatch of a carrier and Patriot batteries any other way than as harbingers of just such an action.

The final hidden message in Mr. Bush's speech confirms that the American ship of state remains headed for the rocks. His peroration, devoted once more to promises of freedom and democracy in the Middle East and throughout the world, could have been written by the most rabid of the neocons. For that matter, perhaps it was. So long as our grand strategy remains that which the neocons represent and demand, namely remaking the whole world in our own image, by force where necessary, we will continue to fail. Not even the greatest military in all of history, which ours claims to be but isn't, could bring success to a strategy so divorced from reality. Meanwhile, Mr. Bush's words

give the lie to those who have hoped the neocons' influence over the White House had ebbed. From Hell, or the World Bank which is much the same place, Wolfi had to be smiling.

No, Incurious George has offered no new strategy, nor new course, nor even a plateau on the downward course of our two lost wars and failed grand strategy. He has chosen instead to escalate failure, speed our decline and expand the scope of our defeat. Headed toward the cliff, his course correction is to stomp on the gas.

*January 12, 2007*

# Variables

One way to look at the situation in Iraq is to try to identify variables, elements that could change. Without change, the war is likely to end with U.S. troops having to fight their way out, if they can.

The military situation in Iraq is not a variable. All that can change is the speed of our defeat. Some actions might slow it, although the time for such actions, such as adopting an ink blot strategy instead of capture-or-kill, passed long ago.

Other actions could speed our defeat, an attack on Iran chief among them. It now looks as if the Bush administration may have realized that an out-of-the-blue, Pearl Harbor-style air and missile attack on Iran's nuclear facilities is politically infeasible. Instead, the White House will order a series of small border incidents, U.S. pinpricks similar to last week's raid on an Iranian mission in Kurdistan, intended to provoke Iranian retaliation. That retaliation will then be presented as an Iranian attack on U.S. forces, with the air raids on Iranian nuclear targets falsely described as retaliation. Fabricated border incidents have a long history as *causus belli*; perhaps the Bushies can dress some German soldiers up in Polish uniforms.

As Bush made clear in last Wednesday's speech, his policies are not a variable. He will pursue the neocons' dreams all the way to Hell, where they originated.

That leaves the U.S. Congress, and it may well be the key variable in the equation. 2008 is not that far away, and electoral panic continues to spread among Hill Republicans. Senator Brownback is the first conservative Republican Senator to break with the administration, opposing the "surge." Conservatives have a central role to play here, because if they turn openly against the war, Bush will lose his base.

But the Democrats hold both Houses of Congress, so the main burden of ending a failed enterprise will fall on them. At present, they seem unwilling to go beyond symbolic but ineffectual measures, such as passing "non-binding resolutions." Why? It may be that they are paralyzed by a false understanding of the war, one stated by Vice President Cheney on "Fox News Sunday" when he said, "We have these meetings with members of Congress, and they agree we can't fail... "

In fact, we have already failed. The war in Iraq was lost long ago. In terms of the administration's objective of a democratic Iraq, which Bush re-stated in his Wednesday speech, it was lost before the first bomb fell, because it was unattainable no matter what we did. Now, not even the minimal objective of restoring an Iraqi state is attainable, at least until Iraq's many-sided, 4th Generation civil war sorts itself out, and probably not then. Events in Iraq are simply beyond our control; the forces our invasion and destruction of the Iraqi state unleashed far overpower any army we can deploy to Iraq, surge or no surge.

Once Democrats accept and announce that Congress cannot lose a war that is already lost, they will have the freedom of action they need to get us out. Polls suggest the public will go along; most Americans now realize the war is lost, regardless of what President Bush may say or do.

It is probably true, as Senator McCain constantly reminds us, that chaos will follow an American withdrawal. But that chaos became inevitable, not with America's withdrawal (it is already happening, even with U.S. troops present), but with its destruction of the Iraqi state. Again, the Democrats need to make this point to the American people, and make it often.

Senator Joe Biden, Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, put it best. According to the January 5 *Washington Post*, he said in an interview:

*I have reached the tentative conclusion that a significant*



*portion of this administration, maybe even including the vice president, believes Iraq is lost... Therefore, the best thing to do is keep it from totally collapsing on your watch and hand it off to the next guy—literally, not figuratively.*

I believe Senator Biden is correct; I said the same thing in an earlier column. If the question the Democrats put to the American people is, should we allow thousands more American kids to get wounded or killed so the Bush administration can put our withdrawal off until it is out of office, the public's answer will be clear. Killing our kids for national objectives is one thing; doing so for political advantage is something else.

The key variable thus comes down to this: Do the Democrats in Congress have the courage and the communication skills to level with the people about why the war in Iraq is continuing after we have lost it? If not, they will have proven themselves as unfit to govern as the Republican majorities they replaced.

*January 16, 2007*

## His Majesty's Birthday

With the birthday of my rightful Sovereign and *oberste Kriegsbeer* Kaiser Wilhelm II coming up fast on January 27 – *Hoch!*—I placed my usual call to His Majesty to offer my felicitations. Somewhat to my surprise, the duty *Funker* at Zossen said he had been ordered to patch me through to Madrid. *Der Reisekaiser* must be at it again, I thought, hoping that old tub the *Hohenzollern* had an easy passage through the Bay of Biscay, which was no sure thing in January.

My surprise was greater when the phone was answered not by our attaché in Madrid but by none other than the Count-Duke of Olivares, the *Privado*—what we would now call Prime Minister—to King Philip IV of Spain from 1622 to 1643. Those were the years in which Spain, the first true global power, had gone headlong down history's tube. Was the Kaiser trying to tell me something?

Olivares, it seems, was in on the joke. "Your *Allerhoechste* thought Madrid in my time had more in common with 21st century Washington than Berlin in his day," he said. "The Kaiser, after all, had no ambition to rule everyone. I did. As the greatest historian of Spain, the *Inglés* J.H. Elliott, wrote of me, I was heir "to the great imperial tradition, which believed firmly in the rightness, and indeed the inevitability, of Spanish, and specifically Castilian, hegemony over the world."

"Is our war in Iraq then the equivalent of Spain's war in the Netherlands?" I asked.

"That parallel is an interesting one," Olivares replied. "After all, the Enterprise of England was undertaken as a way to attain a decision in the Netherlands. Just as you attacked Iraq because you could not get at Osama, so we sent the Invincible Armada against England because we could not get at the Dutch rebels, especially the Sea Beggars. Compare

what your President Bush has said about the War on Terror to what the Jesuit Ribadeneyra said about the Armada:

*Every conceivable pretext for a just and holy war is to be found in this campaign...This is a defensive, not an offensive war; ... one in which we are defending the high reputation of our King and lord, and of our nation; defending, too, the land and property of all the kingdoms of Spain, and simultaneously our peace, tranquility and repose.*

Unfortunately, neither our enterprise nor yours met with success."

"What were the consequences of the Armada's defeat for Spain?" I asked Olivares.

"It was of course before my time," he replied, "and two-thirds of our ships did make it home. But let me again quote Señor Elliott if I may:

*the psychological consequences of the disaster were shattering for Castile. For a moment the shock was too great to absorb, and it took time for the nation to realize its full implications. But the unthinking optimism generated by the fantastic achievements of the preceding hundred years seems to have vanished almost overnight.*

"Why did Spain not reform its military and its overstrained finances and recover from its defeat?" I inquired of the man who knew best.

"We tried," Olivares replied. "Our reformers, the *arbitristas*, put forth many good plans. As soon as I became *Privado*, I pushed for a great reform program with all my considerable energy."

"What happened?"

"We abolished the ruff," Olivares replied.

"The ruff?"

"You know, that big starched thing we wore around our necks that made it look as if our heads were on platters."

"That was it?"

"That was it," Olivares said ruefully. "The interests at court that lived off the decay were too powerful to overcome. Perhaps you see why your Kaiser thinks there are some similarities between Washington in your time and Madrid in mine."

"Indeed," I said. "We recently tried to reform our Army by giving all the soldiers funny hats."

"There is another parallel, I think," Olivares added. "Our Kings Philip III and Philip IV were, to be diplomatic about it, not quite in the same class as Charles V or Philip II. Your President Bush reminds me a great deal of Philip III. He is not, I think, the fullest oil jar on the *estancia*."

"No," I said, "but what can we do about it?"

"Were I your *Privado* I would recommend he be retired to his estate in Mexico, perhaps with the title of Duke of Plaza Toro."

"That will come in a couple years," I told Olivares. "But what is the chance his successor will be any better?"

"Was Philip IV really an improvement over Philip III? In the end, a systemic crisis such as I faced then and you face now requires a change of dynasty. That came, eventually, for Spain, but too late."

"Now, if you will excuse me, I have a desk full of *consultas* I must read. At least we did not have Powerpoint. But then, I'm not in Hell." With that, Olivares faded into the ether.

I was happy to find that Kaiser Wilhelm has kept his excellent sense of humor. Just as Olivares tried to prevent Spain from committing suicide, so the Kaiser tried to prevent the suicide of the

west. Both failed, and we live among the ruins.

Meanwhile, we too write our *arbitrios*, and hope.

*January 23, 2007*

# The Real Game

Bush's splurge is already bringing premature claims of success, even though the first troops are just arriving in Iraq. A column in today's *Washington Times* by Ollie North quotes an American officer in Iraq as saying, "Do they (Members of Congress opposed to the war) even know that in the last two weeks we have set AQI (al-Qaeda in Iraq) and the Mahdi Army both back on their heels?" Well, maybe, but if they are back on their heels, it is only to sit and see how their enemy's latest operation evolves. That is smart guerilla tactics, and does not mean they have suffered a setback.

In Anbar province, al-Qaeda may have overplayed its hand. A number of reports suggest some of the local sheiks have turned against al-Qaeda, and we are providing the sheiks with discreet assistance in going after them. That is smart on our part. But Bush administration propaganda to the contrary, al-Qaeda does not represent the bulk of the Sunni resistance. The nationalists will continue to fight us because we are there, and the Ba'athists will continue to fight us so long as we represent a despised Shi'ite regime in Baghdad. We can and should try to negotiate settlements with both nationalists and Ba'athists, but political considerations in Washington and in Baghdad have largely tied the hands of our local commanders.

The Mahdi Army and other Shi'ite groupings have a different perspective. Once we understand what it is, we can see that it makes sense for them to avoid a confrontation with the U.S. military if they can. From the Shi'ite perspective, American forces are in Iraq to fight the Sunnis for them. Our troops are, in effect, the Shi'ites' unpaid Hessians.

Thus far, we have been willing to play the Shi'ites' game. Their

challenge now is to make sure we continue to do so as Bush's big push in Baghdad unfolds. Originally, they wanted U.S. forces to control access to Baghdad, cutting the Sunnis' lines of communication and reinforcement, while the Shi'ite militias carried on their successful campaign of ethnic cleansing. With Bush insisting American forces work in Baghdad, the Shi'ites came up with an alternate plan, one we have seemingly accepted: the Americans will drive out the Sunni insurgents, leaving Sunni neighborhoods defenseless. As the American troops move on, they will be replaced by Iraqi soldiers and police, mostly Shi'ite militiamen, who will ethnically cleanse the area of Sunnis, just as in plan A. Again, the Americans will have fulfilled their allotted function, fighting the Sunnis on behalf of the Shi'ites. Aren't Hessians great?

The potential spoiler is the possibility that the Americans will also go after some Shi'ite militias, particularly the Mahdi Army. If we do so by entering Sadr City in strength, the Mahdi Army can simply let us come—and go. We cannot tell who is a militiaman and who is not. They can let us mill around for a while, achieving nothing, then watch us leave. Big deal.

An action that might force them to respond would be an intensification of our ongoing drive to capture or kill Mahdi Army leaders. But they still would not have to respond in Baghdad. The classic guerilla response in such a case is to retreat from the area where the enemy is attacking and hit him somewhere else. An obvious place would be in Iraq's Shi'ite south, with our supply convoys coming up from Kuwait the target. Another response would be to match our escalation of raids with an escalation of mortar and rocket attacks on the Green Zone. As we go after their leaders, they return the favor by going after ours. There are some indications this may be occurring.

No doubt, our forces will attempt to be even-handed between Sunnis and Shi'ites. But this merely shows that we do not understand the real game. The real game, and a successful one to date, is to let the

Americans take the brunt of the fight with armed Sunni organizations, whether nationalist or Ba'athist or al-Qaeda or whomever, while the Shi'ite militias get the softer job of terrorizing Sunni civilians and forcing them out. That is likely to be the story of Operation Baghdad, regardless of our intentions.

Should the day ever come when we cease to play that game, our utility to the Shi'ites, and thus to the Shi'ite-controlled Iraqi government, will be over. Like Hessians in earlier wars, we will then be sent home. All it takes is a *fatwa* from Ayatollah Sistani, telling us to go. If we don't understand this, everyone else in Iraq certainly does, including Muqtada al Sadr.

*January 29, 2007*



## Raise the Bar or Cross It

Perhaps the most serious deficiency in the American armed forces is the fact that both of our ground forces, the U.S. Army and the United States Marine Corps, remain 2nd Generation military organizations (so do the Navy and the Air Force, but in the kinds of wars we are likely to fight, they don't much matter). The Marine Corps has at least attempted to move into the 3rd Generation (maneuver warfare), while the Army brontosaurus has kept its green head contentedly buried in the primeval ooze. To borrow from an old *bon mot*, the Marine Corps's situation is serious but not hopeless, while the Army's condition is hopeless but not serious.

We should all therefore greatly admire those few Army officers who have tried to wake their dinosaur up. None has done more than Major Don Vandergriff. Not only has he produced two excellent books that get at the heart of the Army's problem, its personnel system, he also led a highly successful reform of the Army's Georgetown University ROTC program. ROTC is, for the most part, a sad joke. Vandergriff's program was a highly demanding, creative exercise in building real leaders. Many of its graduates have gone on to outstanding performance as platoon and company commanders in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Major Vandergriff (recently retired, which illustrates why the Army is hopeless) has turned his experiences at Georgetown into a new book, *Raising the Bar: Creating and Nurturing Adaptability to Deal with the Changing Face of War*. Unlike most reform books, his is a book of solutions, not just problems.

Top-down reform, like the Army's ongoing "Transformation" program, changes little but appearances. Vandergriff recognizes that

real reform has to come primarily bottom-up. He writes:

*After long study and analysis of the Army's existing system, it is clear that focusing efforts on people who already have had their character defined and shaped by the antiquated personnel system, or what I refer to as today's leadership paradigm, will be ineffective. Rather, the effective transformation of the Army requires the cultivation of a very different military mindset, starting at the cadet, or pre-commissioning, level. As one former ROTC cadet—now a captain serving with the Special Forces—recently observed: "Why not begin the reform where it all begins?"*

At the heart of Vandergriff's reforms of Army education lies a shift away from teaching officers what to think and what to do—endless processes, recipes and formulas, learned by rote—to teaching them how to think through various means, including:

*1) a case study learning method; 2) tactical decision games; 3) free play force-on-force exercises; and 4) feedback... The academic methods employed in support of the pillars include: small group lectures, small group training exercises, exercise simulations, staff rides and private study.*

I would add, and I think Vandergriff would agree, that private study means reading real books on war, not the wretched junk contained in most Army manuals.

Rightly, Vandergriff rejects the "crawl, walk, run" approach now favored in American military education, which in reality seldom gets beyond "crawl." He recommends instead what one German general called "the Hansel and Gretel approach: first you let the kids get lost in the woods."

*The POI (Program Of Instruction) begins the development of adaptability through exposure to scenario-based problems as*

*early as possible. The POI should put students in tactical and non-tactical situations that are "above their pay grade" in order to challenge them.*

The purpose, I would add, is not just to challenge them but to develop in them the habit of "looking up" and seeing their own situation in a larger context that is essential for mission-type orders to work.

Perhaps the single most powerful tool to develop 3rd Generation leaders is the free-play field exercise. Only free-play exercises can teach leadership in war; scripted exercises, which make up almost all of current Army training, are useful only to train an opera company. Vandergriff stresses the importance of free-play training, writing that such exercises should be "seen as a course's or unit's premier event."

As with his recommendations for reform of the personnel system, Vandergriff's prescriptions for fixing Army education are right on the mark. How do we know? Because he didn't invent any of them. Everything he recommends was practiced in German officer education a hundred years ago and more. What worked for them then can work for us now.

And it might, except that the Army remains hopeless. I would like to think the Army's leadership would take Vandergriff's books, including *Raising the Bar*, turn to their subordinates and say, "Make it happen." But I know it won't happen. All that can happen is what the Army has seen a million times: the slogans and buzzwords change, but the organizational culture remains 2nd Generation, so everything else that is real does too. Faced with new ways of war demanding that it change or die, the Army will prefer to die, because it's easier.

Maybe Vandergriff should title his text book *Crossing the Bar*.

*February 5, 2007*

## **Distributed or Dumb Ops?**

For some years, the U.S. Marine Corps has been playing with a concept called "Distributed Operations." On January 11, it issued a short paper over the signature of Lt. General J. F. Amos, the grandiloquently titled "Deputy Commandant for Combat Development and Integration" (I can remember when Marines would have choked on a title like that) which defines and explains the concept. Well, sort of.

To understand the paper, a bit of background helps. There are two potential definitions of distributed operations, one that could carry the Marine Corps forwards in important ways and another that is essentially a scam. In the first, distributed operations is just a new term for true light or Jaeger infantry. While both the Marine Corps-and the U. S. Army call their foot infantry "light," in terms of its tactics it is line infantry. True light infantry has always fought distributed, with small units operating beyond range of mutual support or supporting arms. Those small units have depended on their own weapons, lived largely off the land and fought very much like guerillas, with tactics based on an ambush mindset. Even 18th century light infantry used tactics we would consider modern; see J. F. C. Fuller's book *British Light Infantry in the 18th Century* or the fascinating diary of a Hessian Jaeger captain in the American Revolution, Johann Ewald.

If the Marine Corps adopted true light infantry tactics under the label "distributed operations," it would extend its maneuver warfare doctrine in a logical and useful way. It would also adapt its infantry to 4th Generation war; as the FMFM-1A notes, what states need most to fight 4GW enemies is lots of light infantry.

But there is another definition of distributed operations lurking in dark corners at Quantico. This definition would use distributed ops as a

new buzzword for Sea Dragon, a pseudo-concept the Marine Corps came up with in the 1990s to justify programs. Sea Dragon sent little teams of Marines wandering around the countryside essentially as forward observers, whose purpose was to call in remote, hi-tech fires.

Unlike light infantry, the teams could not depend on their own weapons, which meant that by the time the hi-tech fires got there, they would be dead. Sea Dragon represented the ultimate wet dream of the French Army of the 1930s, an army reduced to nothing but forward observers and artillery. It was bunk.

So which way does the January 11 paper go? Unfortunately, it is too muddled to tell. On the one hand, it includes a long quote from my old friend Jeff Record on the importance of light infantry in small wars. On the other, it includes a long list of the usual big-bucks programs—"MRAP, EFV, JLTV, LAV, V-22, CH53K," L-70 class Zeppelins etc.—which distributed ops supposedly justifies. Oddly, successful light infantry like Hezbollah's doesn't have any of those *Wunderwaffe*. This kind of random program justification smells suspiciously like a disinterred Sea Dragon.

The paper gives a formal definition of distributed operations which clarifies nothing beyond continued intellectual confusion and Marines' inability to write:

*Distributed operations is a technique applied to an appropriate situation wherein units are separated beyond the limits of mutual support. Distributed operations are practiced by general purpose forces, operating with deliberate dispersion, where necessary and tactically prudent, and decentralized decision-making consistent with commander's intent to achieve advantages over an enemy in time and space. Distributed operations relies on the ability and judgment of Marines at every level and is particularly enabled by excellence in leadership to ensure the ability to understand and influence an expanded*

*operational environment.*

On the one hand, the reference to units operating beyond mutual support suggests true light infantry. On the other, nothing could be more wrong than the suggestion that anyone, i.e. "general purpose forces," can operate like light infantry. Jaeger tactics demand extensive training and a very high level of expertise. One wonders who wrote this definition, JAG?

In the end, the January 11 paper leaves distributed operations still balanced on a knife-edge between a major step forward in adapting to 4th Generation war and a plunge into the worst sort of Madison Avenue program justification babble. If Quantico wants to move distributed ops in the direction it ought to go, it needs to take it away from the usual colonels, contractors and consultants and give it to a small group of company and battalion commanders just back from Afghanistan and Iraq, giving them in turn a pile of books on the history of light infantry.

*February 13, 2007*

## A Swedish Lesson

Sometimes, single words can say more than whole essays. The Swedish captain in the 4GW seminar I lead at Quantico recently introduced me to such a word. It is the Swedish word for military intelligence: *underrättelser*. The literal translation of *underrättelser* is "correction from below."

What a remarkably instructive term for military intelligence! The more I have thought about it, the more "correction from below" has seemed to capture the essence of what good military intelligence requires—and what American military intelligence too often lacks.

To understand why this is so, we must first remind ourselves of the two most important facts about military intelligence: one, it is always incomplete, and two, some of it is always wrong. It has become fashionable in Washington to regard military intelligence as "hard data." Nothing could be further from the truth. As "data," most military intelligence is as soft as the Pillsbury Doughboy.

The question facing any military is how to deal with the inevitable difference between what military intelligence thinks about the enemy and what is actually the case. Our approach, the wrong one, is to seek ever-increasing amounts of "information." That information is funneled into various intelligence "functions" and "fusion centers," almost all of them remote from the fight, where the intel weenies sit around in their purple robes embroidered with moons and stars, staring into their Palantirs. They wave their wands labeled "IPB," and presto!, out comes—well, for the most part, crap.

Regrettably, in this 2nd Generation model, the crap cannot be acknowledged as such. The motto is, "Garbage In, Gospel Out." So the crap runs downhill to the battalions, companies, platoons and squads,

where the difference between what intel is telling them and what they are seeing with their own eyes becomes the "user's problem." Good commanders tell their guys to go with what they see. Bad commanders base their plans on the intel and issue orders that are doomed to failure.

Higher level commanders are even more victims of the current system than are their juniors. With sufficient guts, junior leaders can ignore the intel. Unless a senior commander is the sort who recognizes that his headquarters is a Black Hole and stays away from it as much as possible, he has no alternative to the virtual reality his G-2 presents to him. He is not only flying blind, he is flying blind while thinking he sees. Out of such double-blindness many great defeats have come.

What is missing here is precisely *underrättelser*, correction from below. Instead of dumping the errors on the users, the whole intel system should avidly seek correction from below to minimize them. Errors cannot be eliminated, because no matter how good the intel, it will be incomplete and some will be wrong. But correction from below, from the people who are directly encountering the enemy, is the only way to reduce them. By making "correction from below" literally their name for military intelligence, the Swedes have made the intel system's most necessary characteristic definitional. Intellectually, that is a remarkable achievement.

Defining military intelligence as "correction from below" also carries the culture of a 3rd Generation military over into the intelligence process. Just as another of those words that speak volumes, *Auftragstaktik*, builds tactics on the understanding that the levels of command nearest to the fight have the clearest tactical picture, so *underrättelser* builds military intelligence on the same understanding. The two work hand-in-glove: junior leaders act on the basis of what they see, not detailed orders from remote headquarters, and they simultaneously feed what they see into an intelligence process that is eager for their corrections. Neither action eliminates uncertainty in war, because nothing can, but both speed adaptation to it, which is the



goal in maneuver warfare.

We could, of course, learn from the Swedes and make "correction from below" definitional to our intelligence process, just as we could learn from the Germans and adopt mission order tactics instead of issuing detailed, controlling orders. But when you are the self-proclaimed "greatest military in all of history," why should you learn from anyone else? Just as blindness leads to hubris, so hubris leads inevitably to blindness.

*February 20, 2007*

# The Non-thinking Enemy

One of the rituals attending the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, when our opponents score a goal, is for an American general to materialize before the press and announce, in his best *Miles Gloriosus* manner, that "we face a thinking enemy." Wow. Who ever would have imagined that the enemy might think and learn?

The latest example followed the insurgents' success in shooting down seven American helicopters in Iraq. According to the February 18 *New York Times*, Major General James E. Simmons, an Army aviator, told reporters, "We are engaged with a thinking enemy." General Simmons should know; the mujaheddin shot down his helicopter on January 25, fortunately with no casualties.

One of the most basic phenomena of war is that the enemy thinks and learns. It doesn't always happen; an example of an enemy who did not think and learn was the Japanese submarine service in World War II. It kept on doing what it knew didn't work right through to the end. The result was about a 1:1 exchange ratio between Japanese submarines and their targets, a truly remarkable achievement in the annals of submarine warfare.

But it is so routine for an enemy to think and adapt that it is difficult to imagine one that did not. In fact, such an exercise might prove enlightening. What characteristics might a non-thinking enemy have?

First of all, such a military would have to be highly centralized. Decisions should be made as remotely from the battlefield as possible, with layers of middle and senior management given a veto over any new ideas or adaptations. Someone, in some headquarters, is bound to veto anything.

It would help if all headquarters were as large as possible. Not only would this maximize veto powers, it would also ensure that all decisions were made on a lowest-common-denominator basis. Usually, all large groups can agree on is maintaining the status quo.

Senior decision-makers should not be focused on the war. Their "real world" should be as disconnected as possible from battlefield results. Over-concern with bureaucratic empire-building, budget politics and personal career success are all useful tools for attaining this important disconnect.

A non-thinking military's feedback mechanisms should ensure that only good news is sent up the chain. The higher the level of command—including the nation's political leadership—the stronger the demand to suppress bad news should be. Messengers with bad news should routinely be shot, or at least exiled.

To maintain its opacity of mind, a non-thinking military should be insular. It should be careful not to look at the experiences of other militaries, historical or contemporary. A general spirit of false pride and bravado is always helpful in maintaining insularity. Past failures can be blamed on someone else.

An excellent means to ensure that thought is suppressed is to contract thinking out. Contractors could care less about truth; their measure of success is profits. Since the awarding of contracts is in the hands of senior officers whose desire to avoid adaptation is well known, contractors' unwillingness to suggest new ideas can be guaranteed. If most contractors are retired senior officers to whom any change would be an attack on their "legacies," so much the better. In the cause of not thinking, billions to contractors is money well spent.

Finally, a useful way to discourage thinking among junior leaders is to try to wage war by rote process. Those processes are developed and dictated downward by the same large headquarters whose inherent aversion to thought has already been noted. Better, those same

headquarters control training; soldiers and junior leaders who have been trained in obsolete tactics will have more trouble adapting than people with no training.

Despite all these powerful institutional incentives to stifle thought, the regrettable fact remains that junior levels of command, up through company and sometimes battalion, will still want to think and adapt, because they want to stay alive and even to win. Every effort must therefore be made to ensure they have to fight the system each step of the way in order to change something. The old bureaucratic rule, "Delay is the surest form of denial," is helpful here. This brings us back to the importance of centralization and large headquarters.

Some may object that a military so carefully structured not to think is hard to imagine in the real world. That is true, since its fate would be so sure. What kind of government would be so corrupt, so unconcerned about the security of the state it leads and the vast sums it would be wasting as to tolerate such a military? Simple self-preservation would dictate sweeping military reform.

Of course, it would be anyone's dream to have a non-thinking military like the one I have described as an opponent. Any thinking military, even one with the most paltry of resources, could look forward to victory presented on a silver platter.

Who might have such exquisite good fortune and vast favor of the gods as to acquire a non-thinking military as their enemy? Anyone who fights us.

*February 26, 2007*

# The Washington Dodgers

It's springtime for Congress, and the Washington Dodgers are batting 1.000 in the exhibition season. No, I'm not talking about baseball. I have just enough interest in sports to know that the Dodgers play in Brooklyn and Washington's baseball team is the Senators. The Dodgers I'm talking about are the Democratic majorities in the House and the Senate, for whom it is always exhibition season and dodging means not ending the war in Iraq.

Two examples show how in this game, no balls count as a home run. The Washington Post Express reported on March 2 that

*Just hours after floating the idea of cutting \$20 billion from President Bush's \$142 billion request for military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan next year, Senate Budget Committee Chairman Kent Conrad was overruled by fellow Democrats Thursday.*

*"It's nothing that any of us are considering," Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, D-Nev, told reporters.*

Then, the lead story in today's Washington Post begins with this paragraph:

*Senior House Democrats, seeking to placate members of their party from Republican-leaning districts, are pushing a plan that would place restrictions on President Bush's ability to wage the war in Iraq but would allow him to waive them if he publicly justifies his position.*

That's not pushing a plan, it is pushing on a rope, and the House

Democratic leadership knows it. You can almost hear their giggles as they offer the anti-war voters who gave them their majority one of Washington's oldest dodges, "requirements" the Executive Branch can waive if it wants to.

The kabuki script currently goes like this. Congressional Democrats huff and puff about ending the war; the White House and Congressional Republicans accuse them of "not supporting the troops;" and the Democrats pretend to be stopped cold, plaintively mewling that "Well, we all agree we have to support the troops, don't we?"

"Supporting the troops" is just another dodge. The only way to support the troops when a war is lost is to end the war and bring them home. Nor is it a challenge to design legislative language that both ends the war and supports the troops. All the Democratic majorities in Congress have to do is condition the funding for the Iraq war with the words, "No funds may be obligated or expended except for the withdrawal of all American forces from Iraq, and for such force protection actions as may be necessary during that withdrawal." If Bush vetoes the bill, he vetoes continued funding for the war. If he signs the bill, ignores the legislative language and keeps fighting the war in the same old way, he sets himself up for impeachment.

What's not to like?

For the Democrats, what's not to like is anything that might actually end the war before the 2008 elections. The Republicans have 21 Senate seats up in 2008, and if the Iraq war is still going on, they can count on losing most of them, along with the Presidency and maybe 100 more seats in the House. 2008 could be the new 1932, leaving the Republican Party a permanent minority for twenty years. From the standpoint of the Democratic Party's leadership, a few thousand more dead American troops is a small price to pay for so glowing a political victory.

Ironically, the people who should be most desperate to end the war

are Congressional Republicans. Their heads are on the chopping block. But they remain so paralyzed by the White House that they cannot act even to save themselves. The March 2 Washington Times reported that

*Republicans in Congress—including most who have defected from President Bush's plan to send reinforcements to Iraq—have closed ranks and are prepared to thwart the Democrats' continued efforts to undermine the war strategy...*

*All but one of the seven Senate Republicans that backed the anti-surge resolution in their chamber say they will not support any funding cuts.*

The likely result of all this Washington dodging is that events on the ground in Iraq and elsewhere will outrun the political process. That in turn means a systemic crisis, the abandonment of both parties by their bases and a possible left-right grass roots alliance against the corrupt and incompetent center. In that possibility may lie the nation's best hope.

*March 6, 2007*

# Conversations

A curious fact about the American military and American private industry in the early 21st century is their insistence on holding formal meetings. The practice is curious because these same institutions spend a great deal of time and effort studying "good management," which should recognize what most participants in such meetings see, namely that they are a waste of time. Good decisions are far more often a product of informal conversations than of any formal meeting, briefing or process.

History offers a useful illustration. In 1814, the Congress of Vienna, which faced the task of putting Europe back together after the catastrophic French Revolution and almost a quarter-century of subsequent wars, did what aristocrats usually do. It danced, it dined, it stayed up late playing cards for high stakes, it carried on affairs, usually not affairs of state. Through all its aristocratic amusements, it conversed. In the process, it put together a peace that gave Europe almost a century of security, with few wars and those limited.

In contrast, the conference of Versailles in 1919 was all business. Its dreary, interminable meetings (read Harold Nicolson for a devastating description) reflected the bottomless, plodding earnestness of the bourgeois and the Roundhead. Its product, the Treaty of Versailles, was so flawed that it spawned another great European war in just twenty years. As Kaiser Wilhelm II said from exile in Holland, the war to end war yielded a peace to end peace.

The U.S. military has carried the formal meeting's uselessness to a new height with its unique cultural totem, the PowerPoint brief. Almost all business in the American armed forces is now done through such briefings. An Exalted High Wingwang, usually a general or an admiral,



formally leads the brief, playing the role of the pointy-haired boss in Dilbert. Grand Wazoos from various satrapies occupy the first rows of seats. Behind them sit rank upon rank of field-grade horse-holders, flower-strewers and bung-holders, desperately striving to keep their eyelids open through yet another iteration of what they have seen countless times before.

The briefing format was devised to use form to conceal a lack of substance. PowerPoint, by reducing everything to bullets, goes one better. It makes coherent thought impossible. Bulletizing effectively makes every point equal in importance, which prevents any train of logic from developing. Thoughts are presented like so many horse apples, spread randomly on the road. After several hundred PowerPoint slides, the brains of all in attendance are in any case reduced to mush. Those in the back rows quietly pray for a suicide bomber to provide some diversion and end their ordeal.

When General Greg Newbold, USMC, was J-3 on the Joint Staff, he prohibited briefings in matters that ended at his level (those above him, of course, still wanted their briefs). Instead, he asked for conversations with people who actually knew the material, regardless of their rank. Five or ten minutes of knowledgeable, informal conversation accomplished far more than hours of formal briefing.

Why does the American military so avoid informal conversations and require formal meetings and briefings? Because most of the time, the people who actually know the subject are of junior rank. Above them stands a vast pyramid of "managers," who know little or nothing about the topic but want their "face time" as they buck for promotion. The only way they can get their time in the sun without egg on their faces is by hiding behind a formal, scripted briefing. At the end, they still have to drag up some captain or sergeant from the horse-holder ranks if questions are asked.

The PowerPoint briefing is another reason America has a non-thinking military. The tendency toward useless, formal meetings is of

course broader than the American military—again, the business world is full of it—but good leaders cut around it.

When General Hermann Balck was commanding 48th Panzer Korps on the Eastern Front with General F.W. von Mellinthin as his I-A, Mellinthin one day reproached Balck for wasting time by going out to eat with the troop units so often. Balck replied, "You think so? OK, tomorrow you come with me."

The next day, they arrived at a battalion a bit before lunchtime. They had a formal meeting, Balck asked some questions and got some answers. Then, they broke for lunch. During the informal conversation that usually accompanies meals, Balck asked the same questions and got completely different answers. On their way back to the headquarters, Balck turned to Mellinthin and said, "Now you see why I go out so often to eat with the troop units. It's not for the cuisine."

When Generals Balck and von Mellinthin visited Washington in 1980, John Boyd asked them to reflect on their leadership of 48th Panzer Korps and how they would have done it if they had possessed computers. Balck replied, "We couldn't have done it." Boyd didn't ask about PowerPoint, but I suspect General Balck's reply would have been equally to the point.

Despite the situation in Berlin, the Wehrmacht did know how to think.

Note: The idea for this column came from my old friend General Pat Garvey, USMCR, ausser Dienst. I suggest that anyone who takes umbrage at it contact him directly. Orange though I am, I do send an occasional St. Paddy's Day present.

*March 14, 2007*

## Flickers of Light

The March 14 *Los Angeles Times* contained that *rarissima avis*, good news from Ramadi:

*The commander of U.S. troops in Iraq wanted some sweets, and nothing was going to stop him. Not even the fact that he was tramping through a neighborhood that only days ago had been teeming with snipers and al-Qaeda fighters who would love nothing better than to say they had just shot Gen. David H. Petraeus.*

*With soldiers casting anxious glances along the desolate dirt road, the four-star Army general made a beeline for a tiny shop and helped himself to a bite-sized, honey-coated pastry preferred by the owner.*

*"Tell him the next time I come back to Ramadi, we'll eat his chow," Petraeus said as he headed into the blistering sun.*

As someone who navigates by bakeries, I would like to see this episode as a tale of a great man willing to venture all, even his life, in pursuit of the perfect éclair. The reality is less noble, but perhaps more useful. General Petraeus was showing by personal example that our forces in Iraq should put integration with the people before force protection.

This flicker of light was not alone in the darkness that is Iraq. In Anbar province, home base of the Sunni insurgency, the Marines report some progress. Turning al-Qaeda in Iraq's excesses against it, they have formed working alliances with some Sunni sheiks, who in turn are going after al-Qaeda. U.S. troops have moved into Sadr City in

Baghdad with some care instead of kicking down doors and humiliating the locals.

The official reports undoubtedly overstate the good news, because that is what the U.S. military always does (for an example of the opposite, see Williamson Murray's superb article on the German response to victory in Poland). But the reason these points of light will not overcome the Iraqi darkness is more profound. All these improvements in American forces' performance are at the tactical level, and that is not where most wars are decided.

Two points of military theory are important here. First, a higher level dominates a lower. If you win on the tactical level but lose operationally, you lose. If you win on the tactical and operational levels but lose strategically—Germany's fate in both world wars—you still lose.

Second, in most wars, including 4th Generation wars, success on higher levels is not merely additive. That is not to say, you cannot win operationally or strategically just by adding up tactical victories. We tried to do that in Vietnam, and the 2nd Generation U.S. military still does not understand why it didn't work. In 2nd Generation theory, it is supposed to work, which is why we are trying it again in Iraq and Afghanistan, and again not understanding why we are losing.

If we consider the operational and strategic situations in Iraq, we can easily see why no amount of tactical success can save us. Strategically, we are fighting to support a Shi'ite regime closely aligned with Iran, our most potent local opponent. Every tactical success merely moves us closer to giving Iran a new ally in the form of a restored Iraqi state under Shi'ite domination. The more tactical successes we win, the worse our strategic situation gets. This flows not from any tactical failure (though there have been plenty of those), but from botching the strategic level from the outset. Saddam's Iraq was the main regional counterweight to Iran, which means we should not have attacked it.

Operationally, we have been maneuvered by Iraq's Shi'ites into fighting their civil war for them, focusing our efforts against the Sunnis. As I have observed before, we are in effect the Shi'ites 'unpaid Hessians. That is why Muqtada al-Sadr has ordered his Mahdi Army not to fight us in Sadr City. It is not that he is afraid of us; he is simply making a rational operational decision.

Our only other apparent option is to take a more even hand and fight the Shi'ite militias as well as the Sunnis, which is what some in Washington want our forces to do. But that would make our operational situation even worse, because the Shi'ites lie across our lines of communication. If we get into a fight with them, they can cut off our supplies, leaving us effectively encircled—the essence of operational defeat.

It should be clear that no accumulation of tactical successes can retrieve either our operational or our strategic situations. Again, most wars are not simply additive.

That is not to say we could not repair our positions on the strategic or operational levels. On the strategic level, we could reach a general settlement with Iran, something the Iranians have proposed, and on very generous terms.

This would be the equivalent of Nixon's rapprochement with China, which rendered our defeat in Vietnam irrelevant. Unfortunately, the Bush administration, with its usual myopia, has refused even to consider the Iranian offer.

Operationally, we could open negotiations with all our Sunni opponents other than al-Qaeda in Iraq, attempting to reach a settlement that would isolate the latter. General Petraeus has dropped hints he would like to do this. We would have to assure the nationalist opposition that we do plan to leave, and the Ba'athists that they would be re-legalized and given some share of political power. It would require a delicate balancing act, since any arrangement with the

Ba'athists would enrage the Shi'ites, who could threaten our supply lines. It might nonetheless be possible, except that the Bush White House would again almost certainly veto it. As General Petraeus has probably already discovered, there is no position more difficult than that of minister to an idiot king.

In desperation, General Petraeus will probably be driven to seek operational and strategic success by fighting smarter on the tactical level. He will comfort himself that fighting smarter is at least better than fighting dumb, as we largely have to date. But it won't work, because it can't. Operational and strategic failures must be dealt with on their own levels and in their own terms. Anything else is lighting candles in a hurricane.

*March 20, 2007*

# Operation Anabasis

While dilettantes believe the attack is the most difficult military art, most soldiers know better. Carrying out a successful retreat is usually far harder.

One of history's most successful retreats, and certainly its most famous, is the "Retreat of the 10,000." In 401 B.C., 10,000 Greek hoplites hired themselves out as mercenaries to a Persian prince, Cyrus the Younger, who was making a grab for the Peacock Throne. Inconveniently, after the Greeks were deep in Persia, Cyrus was killed. The hoplites' leader, Xenophon, the first gentleman of war, led his men on an epic retreat through Kurdish country to the coast and home. Surprisingly, most of them made it. Safely back in Athens, Xenophon wrote up his army's story, cleverly titling it the *Anabasis*, which means the advance. It was not the last retreat so labeled.

If the above scenario sounds familiar, it should. America now has an army, not of 10,000 but of more than 140,000, deep in Persia (which effectively includes Shi'ite Iraq, despite the ethnic difference). We are propping up a shaky local regime in a civil war. Our local allies are of dubious loyalty, and the surrounding population is not friendly. Our lines of communication, supply and retreat all run south, to Kuwait, through Shi'ite militia country. They then extend on through the Persian Gulf, which is called that for a reason. If those lines are cut, many of our troops have only one way out, the same way Xenophon took, up through Kurdish country and Asia Minor (now Turkey) to the coast.

What is the chance that could happen? Higher than anyone in Washington or the senior military seems to think. Two events, separately or combined, pose a credible threat of severing our forces lines of communication. The first is an American or Israeli attack on

Iran (Iran has publicly announced that it will respond to an Israeli attack as if the U.S. were also involved). Iran potentially could cut our supply lines by encouraging Iraqi Shi'ite militias to attack them, by infiltration into southern Iraq of the Revolutionary Guards, by attacking with the regular Iranian Army or by blocking the Persian Gulf with mines, coastal batteries and naval forces. Regarding the first option, a British journalist asked Mr. al-Hakim, leader of SCIRI and the Badr Brigades and a recent White House guest, what his militia would do if America attacked Iran. "Then," he replied, "we would do our duty."

A second possible threat is a move to cut our lines of communication by the Shi'ite militias in response to events inside Iraq. At the moment, the Shi'ites are avoiding confrontations with American troops, not because they are afraid of them but because they are practicing good operational art. Their objective is to have the Americans fight the Sunnis for them. So long as we are doing that, it makes no sense to get into a dust-up with us.

However, loud voices in Washington want American forces in Iraq to start a two-front war, attacking the Shi'ite militias as well as the Sunni insurgents, on the grounds that both are threats to our puppet Iraqi government. Should those voices prevail, the Shi'ites would at some point have to respond, with Muqtada al-Sadr's Mahdi Militia probably in the lead. They would be foolish to fight us where we are strong, in and around Baghdad where the "surge" is focused. A far better target would be our vulnerable supply lines, which again run south through the Shi'ites' home turf. At the least, such an attack would draw many of our forces away from Baghdad, relieving the pressure on Sadr City. Potentially, it could leave our troops in Baghdad cut off and quickly running out of beans, bullets and POL, not to speak of bottled water. Anyone who thinks air transport could make up the difference should reference Hermann Goering and Stalingrad.

Both of these threats are sufficiently real that prudence, that old military virtue, suggests American forces in Iraq should have a plan for



Operation Anabasis, a retreat north through Kurdish Iraq to Turkey. Higher headquarters are unlikely to develop such a plan, because if it leaked there would be political hell to pay in Washington. I would therefore strongly advise every American battalion and company in Iraq to have its own Operation Anabasis plan, a plan which relies only on its own resources and whatever it thinks it could scrounge locally. Do not, repeat, do not expect the Air Force to come in and pick you up.

What might such company and battalion plans entail? I asked that question of Dave Danelo, a former Marine captain who now edits U.S. Cavalry's "On Point" website. Dave was recently in Iraq with U.S. units as a journalist, so his knowledge is current. His suggestions include:

- Have a route plan. Know where the safe areas are and why they are safe. For the Marines in Al Anbar Province, this could be Al Asad or Al Taqaddum Air Base. For soldiers in Mosul, it's Kurdistan. For troops in Baghdad, it's either of the above, or possibly Tallil Air Base in the south. For British troops in Basrah, who knows?
- Apply the Joseph Principle. In the Bible, Joseph advised the Egyptians to store away their goods during the seven years of feast. When seven years of famine hit, they were ready. Husband large stashes of everything at the company/battalion levels: MREs, water, ammunition, and, most of all, fuel.
- Iraqis, American contractors and oil companies have each developed parallel and redundant distribution systems that push fuel outside the U.S. military umbrella. Depending on who controls what in which neighborhood, these systems might remain intact if military supply lines are cut. Be prepared to commandeer these resources.
- Learn the black market fuel system and exploit it. Although black market fuel is horrible on humvee engines, it will get your unit out of Baghdad and into a safe zone.

It is of course possible, perhaps probable, that American forces in Iraq may not have to repeat Xenophon's retreat. So much the better.

Many contingency plans go unused, and all that is lost thereby is some time and effort spent in planning.

But when situations suddenly arise to which no thought has been given and for which no plans have been made, the result can be trouble. When the situation is a sudden loss of an army's lines of supply and retreat, the result can be loss of an army. However unfortunate a forced American retreat from Iraq would be, a successful retreat would be far less of a defeat than the encirclement and destruction of our army. Dunkirk was a British defeat, but it was not so serious a defeat as Yorktown.

It is time for American battalion commanders, S-3s, and company commanders in Iraq to get to know Xenophon. His *Anabasis* is still in print and readily available. Even if, as I fervently hope, we never have to put the plans for our own Operation Anabasis into effect, they will still have the pleasure of meeting the first gentleman of war.

*March 27, 2007*

## Blinking Red Light

On March 23, Iran seized 15 British sailors and Marines in the Shatt-al-Arab, accusing them of operating in Iranian waters. Normally, this sort of minor border incident would not be worth much thought. But given the strength of the war parties both in Washington and in Tehran, any incident is the equivalent of smoking in the powder magazine. So what is really going on here?

We probably will not know the answer to that question until British, American and Iranian archives are opened many years from now. But some careful thought may at least point us in the right direction.

The first possibility is that the whole thing is just what it seems to be, a border incident. The border between Iranian and Iraqi waters in the Shatt is vague at best, so both the British and the Iranians may think themselves in the right in their claims about the British boarding party's location. Or, one party or both may be attempting to stake a claim to some of those waters.

The Middle East being what it is, I suspect there is more to it. But we should soon know; if it is nothing more than a border dispute, Iran will accept Britain's promise to be more careful in future and let Her Majesty's sailors and Marines go.

A second possibility strikes me as more likely, namely that the Iranians grabbed some British hostages for a swap. The U.S. is holding five Iranians it took in a raid in northern Iraq in January. According to the *Sunday Washington Post*, "Iranian officials expected them to be released on the Iranian new year, March 21." Just two days after that release failed to occur, the Iranians grabbed the Brits. More, the Iranian forces who seized the British boarding party were Revolutionary Guard,

not Iranian Navy; the Iranians held by the U.S. are also Revolutionary Guards, from the Guard's elite Quds Force.

What could be more Middle Eastern than setting up a trade?

Washington is saying "no deal," but the decision will likely be made in London, unless Bush is in a mood to boot Fifi the Poodle, aka Tony Blair, down the stairs.

A third question is, could Britain and the U.S. have set the whole thing up to create an incident justifying a strike on Iran? That seems unlikely, given that Britain is not keen on war with Iran.

But what about the reverse? Could Iran have grabbed some British hostages as a way of pre-empting an American attack planned for April? This is where things get interesting.

Rumors have circulated in Washington for months naming April as the likely time for a U.S. strike on Iran's nuclear facilities. Such rumors are common in wartime and usually prove wrong. But starting about two weeks ago, the Russians have pulled out the hundreds of people they had working on Iran's first nuclear power plant, now nearing completion. The official Russian explanation was a "contract dispute," but if you believe that I have a great bridge up in Brooklyn I'd love to sell you. If in fact Washington plans to hit Iran in April, it almost has to have tipped the Russians off so they could get their people out. Not doing so would have meant lots of dead Russians, killed by American bombs, with serious consequences in Europe and the U.N. as well as to American-Russian relations. The Russian pull-out, if not a direct leak from Moscow to Tehran, would have tipped off the Iranians. The question for them then would be, how to pre-empt?

Seizing just 15 British servicemen would hardly seem likely to pre-empt a major attack. But here is where the eastern way of war differs from the western. In the indirect, eastern way of war, it is often considered preferable to go after a strong enemy's weak allies rather than his main strength. Would the Blair government collapse if, in

response to an American strike on Iran, the heads of those 15 Brits ended up on pikes outside the British Embassy in Tehran? Good chance of it. That would in turn leave the U.S. totally stripped of meaningful allies, not only against Iran but also in Iraq. Could that potential give the White House pause? It could. If an action by Bush brought down his most loyal ally, Blair, who else would ever ally with Bush?

Again, this is all speculative, as it must be without better sources in Tehran than I possess. But we can look for an indicator. If Tehran refuses all efforts to resolve the matter, even with a trade of prisoners, then Iran probably has some continued use for British hostages. Holding them means paying increasing political costs, especially in Iran's relationships with Europe, which are important to the Iranian regime. What is worth enough to pay those costs? Messing up American plans for an attack.

All of this, especially the Russians' pull-out from the Iranian reactor project, adds up to a blinking red light on the panel that monitors the risk of another war in the Middle East. With the dispatch of the aircraft carrier *Nimitz* to the Persian Gulf, which will put three carriers on station for a few weeks later in April, the whole panel should soon light up.

NB: As a follow-up to last week's column on Operation Anabasis, General Barry McCaffrey's report on his recent trip to Iraq states that:

*... at division and brigade level these C3I command posts are not movable. They simply are not prepared to effectively fight a war of maneuver. (For example, against the Syrians or the Iranians.)*

*We are overly dependant on Kuwait for logistics.*

If Iranian military action closed the Persian Gulf, the US combat force in Iraq would immediately begin to suffocate logistically.

All the pieces of a very ugly puzzle are falling into place.

*April 2, 2007*

## Horatio Hornblower's Worst Nightmare

The tiff over maritime boundaries in the Shatt-al-Arab between Iran and Great Britain seems to be over, with the British sailors and Marines released and returned to the U.K. I continue to suspect a deal was made regarding the five Iranian Revolutionary Guard officers held by the U.S. in Iraq. If they go home in a few months, we can be sure it was a *quid pro quo*, regardless of how much Washington and London deny it.

For Britain, and especially for the Royal Navy and Royal Marines, the incident ended in utter disgrace. The initial surrender of the British boarding party to what appears to have been a much larger Iranian force is the only defensible British action in the whole sorry business. Even in Horatio Hornblower's Royal Navy, a British frigate captain was not disgraced if he struck to a French or Spanish ship of the line. *Force majeure* remains a valid excuse.

But everything else that was said or done would have given Hornblower or Jack Aubrey an apoplexy. The failure of *HMS Cornwall* to foresee such an event and be in a position to protect her people; the cowardice—there is no other word for it—of the boarding party, including its two officers, once captured; their kissing the Iranian's backsides in return for their release; and perhaps most un-British, their selling their disgraceful stories to the British press for money on their return—all this departs from Royal Navy traditions in ways that would have appalled the tars who fought at Trafalgar.

Yet that is not the worst of it. The worst of it is the reaction of the Navy's higher-ups. According to a story in the April 7 *Washington Times*, the Royal Navy's top commander, Admiral Jonathon Band, leapt to the boarding party's defense with virtually Jerry Springeresque

words:

*He told the British Broadcasting Corp. he believed the crew behaved with "considerable dignity and a lot of courage" during their 13 days in Iranian captivity.*

*He also said the so-called confessions made by some of them and their broadcast on Iranian state television appear to have been made under "a certain amount of psychological pressure."...*

*"I would not agree at all that it was not our finest hour. I think our people have reacted extremely well in some very difficult circumstances," he said.*

Had the captives been 10-year old girls from Miss Marples' Finishing School, Admiral Band's words might make some sense. But these were supposed to be fighting men from the Royal Navy and Royal Marines! Yes, I meant men. What Politically Correct imbecile detailed a woman to a boarding party?

To understand just how bad the whole business is, one must first know a bit about Hornblower's navy. In the latter half of the 18th century, the Royal Navy developed and institutionalized what we now call maneuver warfare or 3rd Generation war. By the Napoleonic Wars, it was all there—the outward focus, where results counted for more than following orders or the Fighting Instructions; de-centralization (Nelson was a master of mission-type orders); prizing initiative above obedience; and dependence on self-discipline at the level of ship commanders and admirals. It is often personified as the Nelson Touch, but it typified a whole generation of officers, not just Nelson. In the 19th century, the Royal Navy lost it all and went rigid again, for reasons described in a wonderful book, Andrew Gordon's *The Rules of the Game*. But Hornblower's and Aubrey's navy was as fast-acting, fluid and flexible at sea as was the *Kaiserheer* on land.

When I told Andrew Gordon that I would love to write the



intellectual history of that first, maritime incarnation of maneuver warfare, he replied that the source material to do that may not exist, since Royal Navy officers of that time were not writing things down. He may be right, but I think one incident holds the key to much of that mindset: the execution by firing squad, on his own poop deck, of Admiral John Byng.

In 1756, at the beginning of the Seven Year's War, the French took the island of Minorca in the Mediterranean from the British. Admiral Byng was sent out from London to relieve the island's garrison, then under siege. He arrived, fought a mismanaged battle with the attending French squadron, then retired to Gibraltar. Deprived of naval support, the garrison surrendered. Byng was court-martialed for his failure, found guilty, and shot.

The reason Byng's execution played a central role in the development of maneuver warfare in the Royal Navy is the main charge laid against him. The capital charge was "not doing his utmost" in the presence of the enemy. In other words, Byng was executed not for what he did, but for what he did not do. Nothing could have done more to spur initiative in the navy. As Voltaire famously wrote, "Sometimes the British shoot an admiral to encourage the others." Encourage the others to take initiative and get the result the situation demands is exactly what it did. Without Byng, I doubt there would have been a Nelson.

Byng's execution points directly to what went wrong in the Royal Navy in the Shatt. It is not so much what people did as what they did not do. Neither the fleet commander nor the commander of *HMS Cornwall* prepared for such a situation. When it happened, *Cornwall* did not react. The captured sailors and Marines did not think about anything except their own skins. The Royal Navy, as represented by Admiral Band, seems decided to do nothing about its disgrace except pretend it did not happen.

*April 10, 2007*

# A Tactics Primer

It occasionally happens that a reader's e-mail is translated into dots and dashes and sent to me over Mr. Morse's wonderful electric telegraph. The sounder on my desk, opposite the inkwell and under the flypaper scroll, recently tapped out the following, from Jim McDonnell of Baton Rouge, Louisiana:

*Could you please explain what's meant by the remark about U.S. forces being unable to fight battles of encirclement? Is it that there are too few of them in Afghanistan or are you saying that our forces are constitutionally incapable of that kind of operation? If the latter is the case, that would make a column all by itself.*

It would, and it does. The problem is not numbers but tactical repertoire, or lack thereof. That deficiency, in turn, is a product—like so much else—of the American armed forces' failure to transition from the 2nd Generation to the Third.

2nd Generation tactics, like those of the 1st Generation, are linear. In the attack, the object is to push a line forward, and in the defense it is to hold a line. As we saw in so many battles in and after World War I, the result is usually indecisive. One side or the other ends up holding the ground, but the loser retires in reasonably good order to fight again another day.

Usually, achieving a decision, which means taking the enemy unit permanently out of play, requires one of two things, or both in combination: ambush or encirclement. Modern 3rd Generation tactics reflect an ambush mentality, and usually aim for encirclement. To that end, 3rd Generation tactics are sodomy tactics: the objective is to get in the other guy's rear.

On the defense, that is accomplished by inviting the enemy to attack, letting him penetrate, and then launching a counterattack designed to encircle him, not push him back out. This was the basis of the new, 3rd Generation German defensive tactics of 1917, and also the German Army's standard defense in World War II.

On the offense, the rule is not "close with and destroy" but "bypass and collapse." The goal is to penetrate deep into the enemy's rear, by stealth or by force, then roll up the enemy's forward units from the flank and rear while overrunning his artillery, headquarters and supply dumps. The Germans used a three-element assault instead of two, in which the largest element was the exploitation element. This approach was also used by the Panzer divisions on the operational level, leading to vast encirclements of hundreds of thousands of Soviet troops on the Eastern Front in 1941.

The U.S. military today knows little or nothing of this. It did attempt an operational encirclement of the Iraqi Republican Guard by 7th Corps in the First Gulf War, but that attempt failed because 7th Corps was too slow. On the tactical level, most American units have only one tactic: bump into the enemy and call for fire. The assumption is that America's vast firepower will then annihilate the opponent, but that seldom happens. Instead, he lives to fight again another day, like Osama and his al-Qaeda at Tora Bora.

While the central problem here is conceptual—sheer ignorance of 3rd Generation tactics—there is a physical aspect to it as well. On foot, American soldiers are loaded down with everything except the kitchen sink, and they will probably be required to carry that too as soon as it is digitized. To use tactics of encirclement, you need to be at least as mobile as your enemy and preferably more so. The kind of light infantry fighters we find ourselves up against in places such as Iraq and Afghanistan are just that, light. They can move much faster on their feet than can our overburdened infantry. The result is that they ambush us, then escape to do it again, over and over. Flip-flops in the alley beat

boots on the ground.

As the students in my seminar at Quantico discovered early in the year, the decisive break, both in tactics and in organizational culture, is not between the Third and 4th Generations but between the Second and Third. It is little short of criminal that the American military remains stuck in the 2nd Generation. The 3rd Generation was fully developed in the German Army by 1918, almost a century ago. It costs little or nothing to make the transition. To those who understand how the Pentagon works, that may be the crux of the problem.

*April 16, 2007*

## *The Changing Face of War*

Martin van Creveld drops books nearly as often as Amish wives drop babies. Unlike in Lake Woebegone, not all of them are above average. Van Creveld's latest book, *The Changing Face of War*, is what writers call a "toss-off." It is a good and useful book, a summary of the lessons of combat from the Marne to Iraq that would make an admirable text for an introductory course in military history. Unlike *The Transformation of War*, it offers no Big New Idea that demands a book like some vast intestinal gas pocket demanding a belch. Those who write know whereof I speak.

Yet it is precisely as a summary that *The Changing Face of War* has its value, and not just to undergraduates. Chapter Six, "The New World Disorder, 1991 to the Present" summarizes what a state needs to do to prevail over non-state forces. It does so most usefully in looking at the British Army's success in Northern Ireland, one of the few cases where the state's armed forces have won.

How did the British do it? Van Creveld puts it best:

*First, unlike President Bush in 2001, the British did not declare war, which would have removed a whole series of legal constraints and put the entire conflict on a new footing. Instead, from beginning to end the problem was treated as a criminal one...*

Note that, in contrast to what we hear from the Bush administration and the U.S. military, van Creveld sees the removal of restrictions on what troops can do as a disadvantage. He understands that in 4th Generation war, the counter-intuitive is often correct.

*Second, much of the day-to-day work was left to the RUC*

*(Royal Ulster Constabulary). Its members, having been locally recruited and assigned lengthy stays at their posts, knew the area better than anyone else. Accordingly, they were often able to discriminate among the various factions inside the IRA as well as between terrorists and others...*

*Third, never again (after Bloody Sunday, January 30, 1972, when British troops fired into a crowd and killed thirteen people) did British troops fire indiscriminately into marching or rioting crowds*

*Fourth, and in marked contrast with most other counterinsurgents from the Germans in Yugoslavia to the Americans in Vietnam and elsewhere, not once in the entire struggle did the army bring in heavy weapons such as tanks, armored personnel carriers, artillery, or aircraft to repulse attacks and inflict retaliation...*

*Fifth, never once did the British inflict collective punishment such as curfews, the cutting off of electricity and water, demolishing houses, destroying entire neighborhoods... As far as humanly possible, the police and the army posed as the protectors of the population, not its tormentors. In this way they were able to prevent the uprising from spreading.*

*Sixth and most important of all, by and large both the RUC and the army stayed within the framework of the law...From (1972) on, the British refrained from arbitrary imprisonment, torture, and illegal killings...*

*The most important insight of all, though, (came) over dinner in Geneva in 1995. My partner on that occasion was a British colonel, regiment of paratroopers, who had done several tours of duty in Northern Ireland. What he said can be summed up as follows...*

*the struggle in Northern Ireland had cost the United Kingdom*

*three thousand casualties in dead alone. Of the three thousand, about seventeen hundred were civilians...of the remaining, a thousand were British soldiers. No more than three hundred were terrorists, a ratio of three to one. Speaking very softly, he said: And that is why we are still there.*

When the U.S. armed forces understand and accept this, there will be some hope in places such as Iraq and Afghanistan. Until then, there is none.

*April 23, 2007*



## General Incompetence

Many years ago, a friend of mine who was an aide to the Marine Corps Commandant asked his boss how many Marine generals he thought could command competently in combat. The Commandant came up with six, out of about sixty.

That figure of ten percent should not surprise any historian. Militarily competent generals have always been in short supply. One need only think of either side in the American Civil War; as J.F.C. Fuller wrote, the main reason the Federals won is that they came up with two competent generals while the Confederacy had only one. Toward the end of that war, when Confederate President Jefferson Davis selected General Braxton Bragg to command the defense of the South's last remaining port, Wilmington, North Carolina, a Richmond newspaper's headline read, "Bragg sent to Wilmington; Good-bye, Wilmington."

Lt. Col. Paul Yingling's article in the latest Armed Forces Journal, "A failure in generalship," should therefore not surprise us. His argument that the failure in Iraq is due in part to bad generalship is valid. We have no reason to expect America's military to be an exception to history's rule that bad generals are more common than good generals. Especially in peacetime, few officers make general because of their military abilities. A comfortable pair of knee pads and an unlimited supply of lip balm are far more useful for attaining flag rank than an ability to defeat an enemy.

More worrisome is Yingling's other observation, also valid, that American general officers pay no price for military failure. When he writes, "As matters now stand, a private who loses a rifle suffers far greater consequences than a general who loses a war," he is not

exaggerating. Quite the opposite; our previous commander in Iraq, under whose command our situation there got steadily worse, paid the penalty of returning home to become his service's chief of staff. One suspects that, in the shades, Graziani is jealous.

The two central questions Lt. Col. Yingling's article raises are, 1) why do we promote so many military incompetents and 2) how can we alter the pattern? A thesis written by one of my former students, an Air Force captain, reveals part of the answer to the first. He found that the Air Force administers the Myer-Briggs Personality Inventory test at both the Air Force Academy and the War College levels. At the Academy, the bureaucratic personality type (ISTJ) is just one among many. But by the War College, ISTJs are completely dominant. Why? Because one of the characteristics of that type is that they will only promote others like themselves. As the old French saying goes, "The problem with the generals is that we select them from among the colonels."

As to altering the pattern, there is no single solution. Basing promotions at least in part on the results of free-play field exercises and war games would help. Perhaps the most helpful step would be to reduce greatly the number of generals (and colonels). That way we could pay more attention to the few we would select.

Let's take the Marine Corps as an example. It now has three divisions and seventy-some generals. What if, instead, we had a general to command each division (3), a Commandant and an Assistant Commandant (2), and one more to oversee the vast rabbit-warren at Quantico? What about the MEFs? Abolish them; no military benefits by having parallel chains of command. The air wings? The senior aviator rank should be colonel, with each division having one dual-hatted as wing commander and division air ops officer. Throw in one more general as general factotum; he could be stationed in Washington to attend cocktail parties. With just seven general officer slots to fill, it is not unreasonable to suppose the Marine Corps would be somewhat

more careful as to the military ability of those seven. Civilian overseers, both in DOD and in Congress, could devote time to considering the record of each candidate. Hint: never promote anyone who does not have at least one bad fitness report.

If our new Secretary of Defense wants to show that he really is different, there is one action he could take that would speak volumes. Instead of sending Lt. Col. Yingling to Adak, he could put him in charge of a project to change the kind of people we promote, not just to general but to all ranks above the company grades. One of the project's goals might be to ensure we have no more ISTJs than we have billets for logisticians and adjutants.

*April 30, 2007*

## **Review of *Brave New War***

While the White House and the Pentagon continue their long vacation in *Wolkenkuckucksheim*, in the real world the literature on 4th Generation war continues to grow. An important addition is John Robb's new book, *Brave New War: The Next Stage of Terrorism and the End of Globalization*. As the title implies, this book dares to question the inevitability of the Globalist future decreed by the internationalist elites, a one-world superstate where life is reduced to an administered satisfying of "wants." Robb perceives, rightly, that the Brave New War of the 4th Generation will put an end to the Brave New World.

Following a useful and well-written introduction to 4th Generation war, *Brave New War* offers four observations of strategic importance. The first is that the "global guerillas" of 4GW will use "systems disruption" to inflict massive damage on states at little cost to themselves. Modern states depend on the functioning of numerous overlaid networks—fuel pipelines, electric grids, etc.—which have critical linkages that are subject to attack. Robb writes:

*To global guerillas, the point of greatest emphasis is the systempunkt. It is a point in the system... that will collapse the target system if it is destroyed. Within an infrastructure system, this collapse takes the form of disrupted flows that result in financial loss or supply shortages. Within a market, the result is a destabilization of the psychology of the marketplace that will introduce severe inefficiencies and chaos.*

*Our problem is that the global guerillas we see in the long tail of this global insurgency are quickly learning how to detect and attack systempunkts.*

Here, I think John Robb's Air Force Background may mislead him to an extent. Air Forces have long believed that the bombing of critical nodes in an enemy's military, communications or economic systems can win wars; American air raids on German ball-bearing plants in World War II are a famous example. In reality, it seldom works because the enemy's re-routing, redundancy and repair capabilities enable him to work around the destruction. Robb is right that such destruction can increase costs, but wartime psychology can absorb higher costs. War trumps peacetime balance-sheets.

Robb's second strategic observation I think is wholly correct: 4GW forces gain enormous strength from operating on an open-source basis. Anyone can play, a shared vision replaces top-down control, and methods evolve rapidly through lateral communication.

*A great description of the dynamics of OSW (Open Source Warfare) is a bazaar. People are trading, haggling, copying and sharing. To an outsider it can look chaotic. It's so different from the quiet intensity and strict order of the cathedral-like Pentagon. This dynamic may be why Arab groups were some of the first guerilla movements to pick up on this new method and apply it to warfare.*

The combination of post-modern Open Source Warfare and pre-modern, non-state primary loyalties leads to the third observation, that 4GW turns globalization against itself.

*My conclusion is that globalization is quickly layering new skill sets on ancient mind-sets. Warriors, in our current context of global guerillas, are not merely lazy and monosyllabic primitives. They are wired, educated, and globally mobile. They build complex supply chains, benefit from global money flows, travel globally, innovate with technology and attack shrewdly.*

Finally, Robb correctly finds the antidote to 4GW not in Soviet-

style state structures such as the Department of Homeland Security but in de-centralization. What Robb calls “dynamic decentralized resilience” means that, in concrete terms, security is again to be found close to home. Local police departments, local sources of energy such as roof top solar arrays – I would add local farms that use sustainable agricultural practices – are the key to dealing with system perturbations. To the extent we depend on large, globalist, centralized networks we are insecure. Robb foresees that as state structures fail:

*Members of the middle class will (take) matters into their own hands by forming suburban collectives to share the costs of security—as they do now with education—and shore up delivery of critical services. These “armored suburbs” will deploy and maintain backup generators and communications links; they will be patrolled by civilian police auxiliaries that have received corporate training and boost their own state-of-the-art emergency response systems.*

If this all sounds a bit like what happened as the Roman Empire fell, it should. The empire in this case is not America or even the West, but the state system and the force that produced the state, the modern age. Modernity shot itself in the head in 1914. How much longer ought we expect the body to live?

*May 8, 2007*

# Death of Multiculturalism

The May 9 *Washington Times* reported that

*The six foreign-born Muslims accused of planning a shooting attack on the U.S. military base (Ft. Dix, New Jersey) included four ethnic Albanians, and U.S. officials say their arrests highlight how Islamic groups are using the Balkans region to help in recruiting and financing terrorism.*

That flapping sound you hear is chickens coming home to roost. In the 1990s, the United States intervened militarily in the Balkans to create two new Islamic states, Bosnia and Kosovo. Both of those states—states by courtesy, since state institutions are weak in both—are now happy homes for 4th Generation Islamic forces.

What led America to the strategic imbecility of replacing the Ottoman Empire as the protector of Balkan Moslems? Ideology, that worst of poisons loosed by the French Revolution. The specific ideology in question calls itself "multiculturalism," though in fact it is the cultural Marxism of the Frankfurt School. Officially, it proclaims that all cultures are equal, peaceful, happy, something to "celebrate," even if on the ground they resemble a dumpster too long unemptied. Unofficially, multiculturalism works tirelessly for the destruction of Western, Christian culture, which it seeks to wipe off the earth and out of history. Since Islam has the same objective, the two work in alliance, despite the fact that they are philosophical opposites.

Lest anyone think that multiculturalism in the Balkans was purely a product of the Clinton administration, the Bush administration has picked up exactly where Clinton's crowd left off. At present, the U.S. is working to ram independence for Kosovo through the U.N., stripping

Christian Serbia, an American ally in both World Wars, of its ancestral homeland. From a policy standpoint, such an action is absurd, as it creates an irredenta that guarantees another Balkan war. Morally, it is obscene, both as an act of Western suicide and as a gift to the same culture that is killing American troops in Iraq and Afghanistan. Only ideologically does it make sense, assuming one is a multiculturalist. Among ideologues, fantasies trump reality every time.

I have touched on this point in earlier columns, but here I want to state it as plainly as I can: in a 4th Generation world, multiculturalism is the death of states. We have two recent examples of this fact, the former Soviet Union and the former Yugoslavia. One of the characteristics of 4th Generation war is that cultural loyalties supercede state loyalties. *Ipso facto*, states that tolerate, or worse, encourage multiple cultural loyalties—as multiculturalism commands—become battlegrounds. Yes, there can be exceptions, as Switzerland illustrates. But the primary loyalty and level of government in Switzerland is the canton, not the federal state, and most cantons are monocultural. Switzerland's current very loose confederation is itself the product of a 19th century multicultural civil war.

It follows that the single most important aspect of national defense in the 21st century is immigration policy. States that want to survive will not admit immigrants from other cultures, and will give those who have already arrived a choice between adopting the state's existing culture or leaving. The alternative, again, is war, a very nasty sort of war. Europe has already heard the opening guns.

Overseas, the return to a world of cultures in violent conflict means cultural solidarity on the one hand—Serbia should be an ally, Moslem Albania not—and on the other hand a reluctance to intervene in regions dominated by other cultures. Iraq and Afghanistan both underline that point; the Western expeditionary forces sent to both places have been defeated and, sooner or later, will be forced to withdraw.

Like all ideologies, multiculturalism attempts to deal with these



inconvenient facts by forbidding their mention. It is politically incorrect to talk about them, political correctness being another alias of cultural Marxism. In America, daring to say that multiculturalism is death gets you kicked out of the Establishment. In Europe, it can get you arrested. If that reminds you of another Marxism, it should.

*May 21, 2007*

# The Folly of Maximalist Objectives

As Clausewitz wrote, the goals or objectives of states at war tend to change over time. In 18th Century cabinet wars, princes who were losing wisely reduced their objectives to what was attainable, while those who were winning were usually sufficiently prudent not to want too much. Wise statesmen such as Prince Bismarck kept their governments' objectives in check even during successful wars in the 19th Century.

But the advent of total wars between peoples, first in the wars of the French Revolution and Napoleon, then in the world wars of the 20th Century, unleashed the folly of maximalist objectives. Worse, leaders and states that were losing tended to inflate rather than trim their objectives, largely as sops to public opinion. This led to ruinous wars and equally ruinous peace treaties. As Napoleon's fortunes waned, he was repeatedly offered relatively generous peace terms by the Allies, all of which he rejected, hoping a last throw of the iron dice would recoup his losses. As World War I dragged on, both sides' war objectives expanded, preventing the compromise, reconstructive peace Europe needed and ending in the catastrophic *Diktat* of Versailles. The ultimate extension of maximalist objectives, the Allies' demand for unconditional surrender in World War II, turned half of Europe over to Communism for half a century.

Now, it seems, the Bush administration insists on extending the folly of maximalist objectives from total war into cabinet wars, and moreover into cabinet wars it has lost. In public, it blathers on about democracy for Iraq, a war objective that reaches beyond maximalism into pure fantasy. In private, its real objectives, unchanged since long before the war began, are no less disconnected from reality. It seeks an Iraq that is a willing American satellite, a bottomless source of oil for

America's SUVs, a permanent site for vast U.S. military bases from which Washington can dominate the region, and an ally of Israel. The skies will be darkened by winged swine long before any of these objectives are attained.

At this point, for those who want to continue the Iraq war, only one objective makes any sense: restoring a state in Iraq before we leave, or more likely as we leave. A state, any kind of state, under any government; to try to specify anything more is, in the face of our military failure, maximalism, and unreality.

The likelihood, unfortunately, is that no one can restore the state in Iraq. If anyone can, it is probably Muqtada al-Sadr. According to the May 26 *Birmingham News*:

*The influential Shi'ite cleric Muqtada al-Sadr publicly emerged Friday for the first time in months, calling for U.S. forces to leave Iraq and vowing to defend Sunnis and Christians. His appearance, and remarks, seemed part of an ongoing tactical shift by al-Sadr to recast himself as a nationalist who can unify and lead a post-occupation Iraq.*

This is less of a shift than it might seem. Al-Sadr has maintained communications, and perhaps more, with some Sunni resistance groups all along. I suspect he has had his eye on the brass ring, namely all of Iraq, from the beginning. He knows what the idiots in Washington seem not to know, namely that only a leader who has opposed the occupation and America can hope to have sufficient legitimacy to restore an Iraqi state.

What all this means, in concrete terms, is that America should facilitate al-Sadr's rise to national power. That does not mean embracing him; to do so would be to destroy his legitimacy. Nor is he fool enough to accept any such embrace. Rather, it means staying out of his way, avoiding fights with his Mahdi Army, selectively picking off

challengers to him within his own movement (which we may already be doing, wittingly or not), and letting our hopeless, worthless puppet government in Baghdad's Green Zone fall into history's wastebasket when the time is right.

None of this will ensure al-Sadr can restore a state in Iraq. Again, the odds are that no one can. But he seems to be the last, best hope.

The White House, of course, will accept none of this. Bush's maximalism is part and parcel of his defining break with reality. But our commanders on scene, Admiral Fallon and General Petraeus, may see an opportunity to restore the Iraqi state. If they do, they have a moral responsibility to act on it, the White House be damned. At this point in a lost game, we must take whatever route might, just might, lead to restoring an Iraqi state. The alternative, a stateless Iraq, will represent such a vast victory for Islamic 4th Generation forces that any real Iraqi government, however unfriendly to the United States, is infinitely preferable.

If the folly of maximalist objectives instead remains our guide, we will know soon enough. The U.S. will go to war with the Mahdi Army, do a Fallujah on Sadr City, and try to capture or kill al-Sadr himself. At that point the war in Iraq will effectively have no strategic objective at all, beyond being a gift beyond price to old Osama.

*May 29, 2007*

## A Perspective on Anbar

Good news continues to flow from a most unlikely place, Iraq's Anbar province, the home ground of Iraq's Sunni insurgency. Al-Qaeda has blundered and continues to blunder, attacking and alienating the local Sunni population. Adapting, for once, more quickly than the insurgents, the U.S. military has made tactical alliances with some of the Sunni insurgent groups, helping them to fight al-Qaeda. Last Thursday, the same phenomenon spread to a Baghdad Sunni neighborhood, where the locals turned their guns and IEDs on al-Qaeda. According to the June 1 *Washington Post*, America's second-in-command in Iraq, General Raymond T. Odierno, has authorized his subordinates to make cease-fire agreements with insurgent groups wherever they can.

How real is all this good news, and what does it mean? Some of it, no doubt, is puffery; friends who have recently returned from Anbar province do not describe their time there as a picnic. In the American military chain-of-command, good news is magnified as it moves up the chain while bad news is minimized. The higher you go, the less real the picture.

But some of the good news does appear real. Al-Qaeda has made a classic insurgency blunder. It is attempting to enforce its locally unpopular, Salafist brand of Islam in Sunni regions before it has won the war and consolidated power. In so doing, it has alienated part of its base, an error that can prove fatal. Worse, it seems unable to change course and adopt a "broad front" strategy, perhaps because the Salafist fanaticism of its fighters will not allow it to.

Equally real is the American attempt to capitalize on al-Qaeda's blunder. General Odierno's order allowing local cease-fires shows

genuine learning on our part. In Anbar, the Marine Corps seems to have done what successful counter-insurgency requires and adopted a policy of de-escalation, though one may wonder to what degree it is successful in getting the troops to do that.

At the same time, if we look at these developments through the lens of 4th Generation theory, they may mean less than we would hope them to. In 4th Generation war, there is not one opponent, but a vast kaleidoscope of players, whose relationships to each other change constantly. Each player may, at any given time, be at war with a number of other players, not just one. Alliances tend to be short-term and purely tactical. The fact that some Sunni groups are fighting al-Qaeda does not mean they accept our presence, much less our now-avowed intention to keep forces in Iraq for half a century as in Korea. The *Post* quoted the mayor of the Sunni Baghdad suburb that rose against al-Qaeda as saying, "But if the Americans interfere, it will blow up, because they are the enemy of us both, and we will unite against them and stop fighting each other."

More, the fact that some Sunni resistance groups may make cease-fires with American forces or even cooperate with them against al-Qaeda does not mean they accept the Shi'ite-dominated Iraqi government in the Green Zone. In judging the strategic implications of local cease-fires and alliances, we must remind ourselves that the strategic objective is re-creating an Iraqi state. Local cease-fires and alliances between U.S. forces and some Sunni resistance organizations do not necessarily move us toward that goal, however much they may benefit our forces on the ground or work against al-Qaeda. On the contrary, they may represent an acceptance on our part of the absence of an Iraqi state and our inability to create one. Such acceptance may be realistic and necessary, but it is also a recognition of strategic failure, whether or not we perceive it.

This points to a third important qualifier, one I have noted before: in this kind of war, as in many other kinds, strategic success cannot be

attained merely by adding up tactical successes. That is 2nd Generation, attrition- warfare thinking. On the contrary, the strategic level has a logic of its own, and attaining strategic goals requires good strategy, not just successful tactics. It is not clear, at this point, that America has anything that can be called a strategy in Iraq.

Putting the good news from Anbar in this larger perspective is not intended to diminish what the Marines are accomplishing there. Splitting our opposition is certainly preferable to uniting it; local, tactical alliances are better than no alliances; and local cease-fires do more for us than local fire-fights. Anything that furthers de-escalation is a plus. The fact that all of these may point to improving adaptability on the part of U.S. higher command levels is the best news of all. Rigidity at those levels, much of it no doubt driven by the rigidity of the Bush administration, has been both a cause and a sign of our despair.

But like German tactical successes on the Eastern Front in 1945, we ought not read too much into good news from Anbar. The bigger picture remains grim. Tactical successes, successes not in winning battles but in de-escalating the conflict, will only become meaningful if they are matched by changes of course at the strategic level, which is to say changes in policy. Any such changes would require the concurrence of a White House which, from all appearances, is millions of miles from Earth.

*June 4, 2007*

## The Perfect (Sine) Wave

Looking idly at the front page of last Wednesday's *Washington Post Express* as I rode the Metro to work, I received a shock. It showed a railroad station in Iraq, recently destroyed by an American air strike. So now we are bombing the railroad stations in a country we occupy? What comes next, bombing Iraq's power plants and oil refineries? How about the Green Zone? If the Iraqi Parliament doesn't pass the legislation we want it to, we can always lay a couple of JDAMs on it.

It turns out the bombed railroad station was no fluke. An AP story by Charles J. Hanley, dated June 5, reported:

*U.S. warplanes have again stepped up attacks in Iraq, dropping bombs at more than twice the rate of a year ago...And it appears to be accomplished by a rise in Iraqi civilian casualties.*

*In the first 4 1/2 months of 2007, American aircraft dropped 237 bombs and missiles in support of ground forces in Iraq, already surpassing the 229 expended in all of 2006, according to Air Force figures obtained by The Associated Press.*

Nothing could testify more powerfully to the failure of U.S. efforts on the ground in Iraq than a ramp-up in airstrikes. Calling in air is the last, desperate, and usually futile action of an army that is losing. If anyone still wonders whether the "surge" is working, the increase in air strikes offers a definitive answer: it isn't.

Worse, the growing number of air strikes shows that, despite what the Marines have accomplished in Anbar province and General Petraeus's best efforts, our high command remains as incapable as ever of grasping 4th Generation war. To put it bluntly, there is no surer or



faster way to lose in 4GW than by calling in airstrikes. It is a disaster on every level. Physically, it inevitably kills far more civilians than enemies, enraging the population against us and driving them into the arms of our opponents. Mentally, it tells the insurgents we are cowards who only dare fight them from 20,000 feet in the air. Morally, it turns us into Goliath, a monster every real man has to fight. So negative are the results of air strikes in this kind of war that there is only one possible good number of them: zero (unless we are employing the Hama model, which we are not).

What explains this military lunacy, beyond simple desperation? Part of the answer, I suspect, is Air Force generals. Jointness demands they get their share of command billets in Iraq, and with very few exceptions they are mere military technicians. They know how to put bombs on targets, but they know nothing else. So, they do what they know how to do, with no comprehension of the consequences.

In fact, the U.S. Air Force recently announced it is developing its own counter-insurgency doctrine, precisely because some people are suggesting air strikes are counterproductive in such conflicts. Well, yes, that is what anyone with any understanding of counter-insurgency would suggest. The Air Force, of course, cares not a whit about the realities of counter-insurgency. It cares only about protecting its bureaucratic turf, its myth of winning through air power and its high-performance fighter-bombers, which truly are its knights in shining armor, useful only for tournaments.

Once again, we see the U.S. military riding the perfect sine wave. It will seem as if it is beginning to get things right, only to ride the wave back down again into the depths of unknowing. It brings to mind one of my favorite Bob Newhart skits. Newhart is walking slowly behind a line of an infinite number of monkeys, seated at an infinite number of typewriters, trying to write the world's great books. Bob pauses behind one of the monkeys. "Uh, Fred, come here a minute. I think this one's got something. 'To be or not to be, that is the...gzrbnklap.' Forget about

it, Fred."

In this case, the gzrgnklap is airstrikes in 4GW, and the monkey is wearing Air Force blue.

*June 11, 2007*

## Some British Thoughts on Maneuver Warfare

I recently received a thoughtful letter from a British officer just back from commanding a company in Iraq. His subject was not 4GW, but 3GW, maneuver warfare, and the British Army's attempts to institutionalize it as doctrine. Like the U.S. Marine Corps, the British Army formally adopted maneuver warfare as doctrine in the late 1980s. The British term for it is Mission Command, one possible translation of the German term *Auftragstaktik*. As this British major notes, however, formal adoption of maneuver warfare doctrine and actual institutionalization of it are two different things. Let me quote some of his observations and offer some comments on them (I do not mention his name for his own protection; the British Army has a long and proud tradition of preferring its young officers not to have ideas).

*Since moving to a staff job I have reflected on the business of low-level tactical command and especially how we, the British, 'do'" Mission Command...*

*I suppose that my major premise is that we think we understand Mission Command because it is now a common part of our lexicon, it has been with us now for around twenty years, and we understand the mechanisms of mission type orders. However, I also think that we are now too comfortable with what is a shallow understanding of what Mission Command is all about; the problem is that that shallow understanding is so widespread and common that it has become the perceived wisdom.*

This is similar to the situation in the U.S. Marine Corps. The central maneuver warfare concepts are commonly used, but mostly as buzzwords. Young officers receive classes on the concepts, but when

their training moves to the field, they quickly see that what is done is mostly top-down, rigid 2GW. I cannot count how many U.S. Marines, junior officers and NCOs, have told me that what the Marine Corps says is great, but what it says is not what it actually does.

*The starkest manifestation of this is in UK Doctrine, which throughout discusses Mission Command as an activity delivered by the Commander and his staff. My problem with this is that at Company level there is no staff: ...*

Here, it is helpful to return to the source, namely the German Army. Not only did World War II German companies have no staff, neither did German battalions. At more senior levels, staffs were very small; a Panzer division staff had about twelve officers. Looking at it from a German perspective, our problem today is not lack of staffs, but too often, a failure to choose the right kind of people as commanders. The Germans understood that you need a different type of person as a commander from those you assign to staff our work. Commonly our commanders are, like our staff officers, process men, and it is rarely possible to make sound military decisions by following some rote process.

*Additionally, and here I think we are different from the US, we do not have the time-resource to train our young officers in Mission Command. Yes, they learn the principles, they understand mission-type orders and they can use them. But this is as part of a mechanistic process; it is instilled in him as a drill, rather than as a culture.*

This is precisely the situation in the U.S. Marine Corps, which also takes about a year to develop an infantry lieutenant. Time is part of the problem—in the old German Army, it took five years to become a lieutenant—but what is done with the time is a larger factor. Little is spent in developing military judgment, most in learning techniques.

Free-play exercises, tactical decision games, map problems, and staff rides made up most of the German curriculum, but not ours.

The last observation hits at the heart of the matter. Maneuver warfare is not just a change in tactics, it is a change in military culture, from the 2GW culture that is inward-focused on rules, processes, orders, centralized, prefers obedience over initiative, and depends on imposed discipline to a 3GW culture that is outward focused, decentralized, prefers initiative to obedience, and depends on self-discipline. The U.S. Marine Corps has not made this cultural transition—nor have the other American services—which means it also turns Mission Command into a drill, i.e., into its opposite.

*My experience as (a company commander) therefore highlighted what I would describe as a number of misconceptions about Mission Command...*

- *It is a mechanism. It is not: it is a way of thought that requires a deep and common understanding...*
- *It allows Commanders to have a more hands-off approach. Here I think I differ with your perspective a little. My view was that the ability of the young officer grew as he deepened his understanding of his profession and of Mission Command...As he increased in ability, I widened his boundaries and gave him more and more freedom of action...*
- *"Mission-type orders mean you can do whatever you want." Here I think we have a real problem in that one man's Mission Command is another's over-control; ...my perspective was that while failure in training is good for learning, I would control the scope by exercising control measures. I gave them the space within which to fail; but it was not boundless space...*

I agree with all these observations. The most important is the first:

maneuver warfare is a way of thinking, not a mechanism. Wherever it is reduced to mechanism, it is also reduced to 2GW, regardless of the buzzwords applied to the latter. A sheep in wolf's clothing remains a sheep.

As to the other two points, I refer again to the German example. German World War II commanders stressed that the degree to which they could use *Auftragstaktik* depended entirely on the degree to which their subordinates had been developed. As the war went on and the quality of replacements fell, they had to revert increasingly to *Befehlstaktik*. Mission Command is not a magic wand you can wave over a herd and magically transform it into competent military decision-makers and leaders. The German officer selection and development process was rigorous because it takes rigor to find and develop leaders who can do it. See Martin van Creveld's book *Fighting Power* for how the Germans selected and developed leaders.

This British officer's thoughts are important because if the British or the American armed forces are ever to succeed in 4th Generation war, they must first make the transition from the 2nd Generation to the 3rd. That requires a massive change in military culture. On this side of the pond, that cultural change has yet to occur. I wish the British Army better luck, though given the historic rigidity of the British Army command system, as chronicled in C. S. Foster's *The General*, I suspect the challenge is just as great.

*June 17, 2007*

# Legitimacy, Toujours Legitimacy

Over the past several weeks, another state has failed. In this case it was a proto-state, the Palestinian Authority. Following a Hamas coup in Gaza, the PA has been reduced to the West Bank, while a non-state, 4th Generation entity now rules in Gaza. Here we see the setting for a head-on clash between states and a non-state force, Hamas. How it turns out may be an important indicator for the development of 4th Generation War theory.

On the surface, the PA and its governing party, Fatah, seem to hold all the cards. Both Arab governments and the international community have rushed to support Fatah. Money, lots of it, will quickly flow into Fatah's coffers. The PA President, Mahmoud Abbas, is to meet today in a prestigious regional summit with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, King Abdullah of Jordan, and even Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert. It is clear what side the states are on.

Hamas and Gaza, in contrast, are effectively under siege. People cannot get out of Gaza, and most goods, beyond a trickle of food and medicine supplied by NGOs, cannot get in. Fatah is moving to cut off the cash going to Hamas, by requiring all non-governmental groups in its territory to get new operating licenses. It is safe to say Hamas's application will get lost in the mail.

Steven Erlanger of the *New York Times* described the states' strategy in a piece printed in the June 17 *Cleveland Plain Dealer*:

*The idea is to concentrate Western efforts and money on the occupied West Bank, which Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas and his Fatah faction control, in an effort to make it the shining model of a new Palestine that somehow will bring Gaza, and the*

*radical Islamic group Hamas, to terms.*

To this grand ambition, 4th Generation theory says, lots of luck.

It may work to some extent in the short term, if the people in the West Bank actually see some improvement in their conditions. Given the corruption of Fatah, that may or may not happen, however much money states pour in. But in the long run, 4GW theory is betting on Hamas. The reason, as always, is the core of the 4th Generation phenomenon: legitimacy.

Nothing could do more to de-legitimize Fatah and PA President Abbas than open support from Israel and the United States. Such open support may have played a role in Fatah's defeat in Gaza. Some months ago, the U.S. publicly announced a major grant, in the millions of dollars, to Fatah's armed forces. That allowed Hamas to call those forces a "Jew-American army" during the fighting in Gaza. How many Gaza residents, one wonders, wanted to support an army paid by America?

The Bush administration, as usual, refuses to learn. It is now busy undermining Fatah's legitimacy in the West Bank. According to a piece in the June 20 *Plain Dealer* by *LA Times* reporter Paul Richter, describing Israeli Prime Minister's White House visit last week:

*The leaders, appearing before a White House meeting, praised Abbas as a moderate and a democratically elected leader, and said they will work with him against his rivals in the militant Hamas movement...*

*Bush...praised Salam Fayyad, chosen by the Palestinian president this week as prime minister, as a "good fella."*

One can almost hear what is left of Fatah's legitimacy gurgle away into the sands of the desert.

Here we see displayed in all its naked glory what may be the main



reason the state cannot stem its crisis of legitimacy: it refuses to perceive it. As Martin van Creveld said to me years ago, "Everyone sees it except the people in the capital cities." By rushing to embrace Abbas and Fatah, with money as well as praise, Bush and Olmert may help them at the physical level of war, but at the moral level, it is the kiss of Judas. The gnostic gospel of Judas suggests that he, too, saw himself as a saint.

Speaking of the course of the Fatah-Hamas struggle to date, Steven Erlanger wrote in the previously-mentioned piece:

*Both the United States and Israel are reeling from the rapid and ignominious collapse of Fatah in Gaza in recent days, despite significant injections of U.S. political and military advice and aid.*

Until Washington comprehends that Fatah's defeat was it least in part because of, not despite, that open advice and aid, we should expect it to continue reeling.

*June 25, 2007*

# The Death of the RMA

In the 1989 *Marine Corps Gazette* article where I and four colleagues first laid out the Four Generations of Modern War, we foresaw two potential futures. One, the way the world has gone, was 4GW. The other, the direction the Pentagon has taken, became known as the Revolution in Military Affairs, or, more recently, Transformation. This vision of future war, a vision anchored in high-tech, high-price systems, is, I am happy to report, militarily dead.

While its corpse still twitches in Iraq and Afghanistan, its obituary was published in April, in Israel, when the Winograd Commission published its report. On May 29, a summary of its findings by Haninah Levine was made available by the Center for Defense Information. The defense industry fat cats must have read it and wept.

The Winograd Commission was established to examine the Israeli debacle in Lebanon last summer. According to the Levine summary, its first lesson is, "Western militaries are in active state of denial concerning the limitations of precision weapons." Speaking of the then-IDF Chief of Staff General Dan Halutz—Israel's first and, I suspect, last Chief of Staff drawn from the Air Force—Levine writes:

*Halutz encouraged the civilian leaders to believe that Israel could launch a precision air and artillery offensive without getting dragged into a broad ground offensive. ... the failure of Halutz and the General Staff to appraise the enemy's abilities: correctly at the outbreak of the war stemmed not from incorrect intelligence or analysis, but from a willed denial of the limitations of the IDF's precision weapons.*

In how many valleys of Afghanistan is the same sad lesson being

taught? In how many towns of Diyala province in Iraq, or streets in Sadr City?

Levine continues:

*The Winograd Commission traces studiously the origins of the General Staff's error of judgment. The commission outlines the changes which took place in Israeli military doctrine over the preceding decade in response both to strategic developments...and to technological developments — the so called "revolution in military affairs," whose keystone is the advent of precision air-to-surface and surface-to-surface weapon systems...*

*The first lesson of the Second Lebanon War is... that wishful thinking concerning the capabilities of precision weapon systems overpowered the General Staff's analytical abilities... Faith in advanced air and artillery systems as magical "game-changing" systems absolved the General Staff from the need to consider what capabilities (such as distributed and hardened facilities) the enemy possessed, and led the IDF into a strategic trap it had recognized in advance.*

This lesson, I think, can be extrapolated in two useful ways in the American context. First, the doctrinal trap set by the RMA has long been recognized. The trap, quite simply, is that for the RMA to succeed, it had to contradict the nature of war.

The RMA reduces war to putting fires on targets. It promises to use new technology to make everything targetable. But this means it also promises to eliminate uncertainty, to make war transparent, to eliminate the quality that defines war, the independent hostile will of the enemy. In other words, it is bunk. The fact that it is bunk was evident to a great many people from the outset, even people in Washington.

Why, then, did it get as far as it did and why does it remain Defense

Department policy even today? Here we can extrapolate again from the Winograd Commission's finding: the RMA's high-tech systems are indeed magically game-changing. But the game they change is the budget game, not war. The RMA has given the Pentagon such magical results as bomber aircraft that cost more per unit than the Navy's ships (the B-2), three fighters for one billion dollars (the F-22), and the most magical system of all, the Army's Future Contract System, a system no one can describe but costs more than any program in any other service. Boy, that's magic! Even the Wizard of Id must be jealous.

The fact is, Pentagon policy has nothing to do with war, which has a great deal to do with why we are losing two wars. The Pentagon is the last Soviet industry. It is not about producing a product, least of all a product that works. It is solely, entirely, about acquiring and justifying resources. That the RMA does supremely well.

The defeat in Lebanon seems to have confronted the RMA in Israel with the unpleasant reality of the outside world. Will two defeats have the same effect on Washington? Perhaps, but don't bet on it. Half a trillion dollars a year can buy a great deal of political magic.

*July 2, 2007*

## **Not 4th Generation War**

On Friday, July 13, a Boyd Conference at the Quantico Marine Corps Base will devote a day to the subject of 4th Generation war. As a panelist for one session of the conference, I have been asked to answer the question, "As one of the original authors and principal proponent of the 4GW concept, how well is it understood and acted upon by the West? By our adversaries?"

I will leave the second part of this question until Friday. As to how well the West grasps the concept of 4GW, the news, sadly, is bad on every level.

At the level of national governments, Western states not only do not grasp 4GW, they avert their eyes from it in horror, pretending it is not happening. In part they do so because they are the state, and the state does not want to admit that its own legitimacy has come into question. As Martin van Creveld said to me a decade or more ago, "Everyone can see it except the people in the capital cities."

In larger part, they ignore the reality of 4GW because it contradicts their ideology, commonly known as "multi-culturalism" but actually the cultural Marxism of the Frankfurt School. That ideology says that all the world's cultures are wonderful, happy, peaceful cultures except Western culture, which is oppressive and evil and must be destroyed. In fact, Western culture is one of only two cultures in human history that has succeeded over millennia (the other is Chinese). 4GW theory warns that we now face a world of cultures in conflict, that we must defend Western culture and that many, perhaps most, other cultures are threats, especially when they flood Western countries with immigrants. Cultural Marxism welcomes immigrants who will not acculturate precisely because they are threats to Western culture.

Western militaries are as blind to 4GW as are the governments that direct and fund them. They see themselves as knights in shining armor who exist to fight other knights like themselves, not low-born musketeer "terrorists." Conveniently, fighting other knights requires buying lots of armor, in the form of Aegis ships, "stealth" aircraft and "Future Combat Systems," all of which keep the bags of gold coming. 4GW is fought largely with weapons that can be made in somebody's garage. Garages offer few Board of Directors positions to retired generals.

Western military intellectuals also mostly misunderstand 4GW. Here, too, the reason is partly ideological. Some of those intellectuals are cultural Marxists, while others are simply afraid to defy cultural Marxism, knowing the penalty for doing so can be high.

Beyond ideology, intellectuals, like lesser beings, are prone to pour new wine into old bottles. It is comforting to say 4GW is nothing new (or so old as to have been forgotten). So we hear that 4GW is just insurgency, that all we have to do is re-learn stock counter-insurgency doctrine, dig out old "Small Wars" manuals, etc. Combine that with stiffening the backs of politicians so they "stay the course," and we can win 4th Generation wars as surely as we won in Algeria and Vietnam.

As I have said before and will say many times again, 4th Generation war is far larger than the insurgency/ counter-insurgency problem, as difficult as that problem is. Even for that relatively small aspect of the challenge (massive immigration of Third World people into Western countries is a far greater threat than anything we face in Iraq or Afghanistan), the old bottles will not hold the new wine. Counter-insurgency in a 4GW environment, with its ever-expanding multiplicity of players, is very different from counter-insurgency against a single enemy. As the students in my seminar at Quantico concluded early in our sessions last year, we now face many different models of insurgency, not just the Maoist model. That fact requires us to have many different models of counter-insurgency, most or all of

which we may have to apply simultaneously in a single conflict. What might have worked against Mao or in Vietnam will not work in 4GW.

No, the West does not get 4GW, not in conflicts overseas and, much more dangerously, not on its own soil. To Hitler's question, "Brennt Paris?", 4GW answers "oui." And not only Paris, but London, Brussels, Amsterdam, Los Angeles and a host of other Western cities and lands as well.

*July 11, 2007*

# Tordenskjold Sails Again

Last Friday's Boyd Conference at Quantico was the best-attended to date, and, thanks to a visitor from across the pond, one of the most encouraging. That visitor was a delegation from the Royal Norwegian Naval Academy in Bergen, Norway, a handsome and historic town I have had the pleasure of visiting more than once.

I am sure I was not the only person surprised to find the Norwegian Navy manning the registration desk when the conference opened. It was a nice touch, and a commentary on the U.S. military's total lack of interest both in John Boyd's work and in 4th Generation war, which was the focus of this conference. As usual at such events, almost all the U.S. military participants were Marine Corps captains, among whom the Boydian flame still flickers.

In marked contrast, Boyd is Big Stuff in Norway, as is 4GW. The Norwegians made their presentation at an informal second session of the conference on Saturday, and it was the best news many of us have heard in a long time. Quite simply, the Norwegian Navy is completely recasting the curriculum of their Naval Academy based on Boyd's work.

At present, their efforts are focused on the cadets' first year, which is exactly correct: if the academy can develop the right mind-set at the beginning, when the cadets' minds are most open, they will have largely won the battle. The key to that, in turn, is to put cadets in situations full of ambiguity and uncertainty, situations for which they have not been prepared, then help them more or less as needed (the less, the better) to find their own ways out.

That is just what the academy is doing, in a wide variety of ways. Many of the practical exercises are done ashore, which is fine; mind-



sets can be developed anywhere, not just at sea.

The Norwegians impressed all of us with a lesson they had learned inadvertently. At the beginning of their reform of the curriculum, they said, things got screwed up unintentionally more than once, as is inevitable with major change. The cadets had to unscrew it themselves. Doing so proved to be such a powerful learning experience that now the faculty creates deliberate screw-ups. We could hear John Boyd cackling his approval and delight; the faculty as well as the students had learned how to learn.

I shared with the Norwegians an idea I had come up with during a visit to the U.S. Naval Academy, where the education is as rigid as it is fluid in Norway. How about paintball at sea? Like all naval schools, the Norwegian Academy has small sailboats in which cadets learn basic seamanship. If a paintball gun were mounted on each broadside so the elevation could be changed but not the aim, the sailboat would become an 18th century warship. Naval paintball battles would require the cadets to rediscover and employ 18th century naval tactics, for both single ships and fleets. At least in Great Britain's Royal Navy, those tactics were highly fluid by century's end; maneuver warfare was actually developed at sea before it was born on land. The Norwegians loved the idea and said they would do it; at Annapolis, the midshipmen I suggested it to also loved it but said it would never happen, because they aren't supposed to have fun.

The Norwegians told us they faced a different challenge in extending their Boyd-based curriculum revisions into the academy's second and third years, where much of the instruction is in regular academic subjects such as mathematics and English. In teaching English, I suggested, there is one easy solution: have the cadets learn English by reading and writing about naval fiction that teaches maneuver warfare thinking, such as C. S. Forester's Horatio Hornblower series and C. Northcote Parkinson's excellent naval novels, both set in the age of sail. Could mathematics also be taught with

reference to naval tactics, without becoming Jominian? It is a question someone more skilled in math than myself might want to consider.

I have no doubt that along with John Boyd, Norway's greatest naval commander, Tordenskjold, is looking down on the revolution underway at the Royal Norwegian Naval Academy and smiling. The Boyd-based curriculum the academy is implementing might end up producing lots of Tordenskjolds, a man noted for breaking the rules and thereby getting results. While Norway's navy is small compared to that of the United States, it is pioneering a path which the U.S. Navy would do well to follow.

*July 16, 2007*

# How to Win in Iraq

For many years, critics of us critics have often said, "You are good at talking about what the American military does wrong. But what would you do instead?" In fact, some of us associated with the Military Reform Movement of the 1970s and 1980s have offered our solutions all along. Gary Hart and I offered a whole book of alternative policies in the 1980s, *America Can Win: The Case for Military Reform*.

The question occurs again now with reference to the war in Iraq. Had our advice been taken, America would never have attacked Iraq. But it did, and now our troops are bogged down in a hopeless quagmire. How can America get out other than by accepting defeat?

I offer what I hope is a constructive answer to that question in the July 30 issue of *The American Conservative*, in a piece modestly titled "How to Win in Iraq." The key is re-thinking what we mean by winning.

The Bush administration's maximalist strategic objectives are not attainable, and they never were. They are the product of fantasy, not strategy. But if, as President Bush repeatedly says, we are fighting to defeat al-Qaeda and other terrorists—meaning the non-state forces of the 4th Generation—then victory can realistically be defined as seeing the re-creation of a state in Iraq.

Our invasion and subsequent blunders, such as sending home the Iraqi army and civil service, destroyed the state in Iraq. Iraq currently has a government of sorts, cowering in the Green Zone, but it is a Potemkin government because there is no state. A stateless Mesopotamia is a huge win for 4th Generation non-state forces such as al-Qaeda, because they flourish in such statelessness.

Conversely, were a state to be re-created in Iraq, they would lose. That is true almost regardless of the nature and orientation of a new Iraqi state. States do not like competition, and any real Iraqi state would quickly roll up the non-state forces on its territory. The fact that an Iraqi state would almost certainly be Shi'ite-dominated while al-Qaeda is poisonously Salafist makes that all the more certain.

The central strategic question, then, is, how can a state be re-created in Iraq? There is no guaranteed answer; it may not be possible. What is guaranteed, however, is that the United States cannot do it. The problem is legitimacy. To be real, a future Iraqi state must be perceived by Iraqis as legitimate. But anything the United States, as a foreign invader and occupier, creates, endorses or assists automatically thereby loses its legitimacy.

What the U.S. must therefore do is get out of the way. When elements in Iraq move to re-create a state—and those elements must be independent of the current al-Maliki government, which, as an American creation, has no legitimacy—we have to let them try to succeed.

There is, in turn, only one way for us to get out of the way, and that is to get out of Iraq, as rapidly as we can. As the elephant in the parlor, our presence cannot be of no effect. If we work against proto-state elements in Iraq, we make their job all the harder and their success less likely. If we work for them, there goes their legitimacy out the window. To put it as plainly as possible, so long as we are present, no one has a chance of re-creating a state in Iraq, which is to say we have no chance of winning.

The icing on the cake here is that our withdrawal from Iraq, under the strategy I propose, is no longer the retreat of a beaten army. It is, precisely, a strategic withdrawal, a withdrawal required by our strategy as necessary to accomplishing our strategic goal.

In a short column, I cannot cover all that is in the article in *The*

*American Conservative*; it includes, among other things, the possibility of a victory by Iran. The July 30 issue is on the magazine counters, and anyone intrigued by the idea that we might still win this miserable war can pick up a copy.

But if we define winning correctly, as defeating Islamic 4GW elements including al-Qaeda, and if for once we can accept the fact that America's power is limited and we need an indirect approach, I think we might yet snatch a few chestnuts from the fire. After almost 4,000 dead, tens of thousands of wounded, and a couple trillion bucks down the drain, it would be nice to leave old Osama, like Snidely Whiplash, saying, "Rats! Foiled Again!"

*July 23, 2007*

## America's Last Successful Mideast War

Americans who know any history – there may be a couple of dozen left – are all familiar with America's first Mideast war, that against Tripoli under President Jefferson. Far less well known is our war with Algiers in 1815. A nicely-written new book, *The End of Barbary Terror* by Frederick C. Leiner fills the gap.

The most surprising aspect of this splendid little war—there were such things, once—is that the United States was able to wage it. In 1815 we had just gotten our pants pretty well kicked by the Brits, Washington was in ruins and the Treasury was empty. Nonetheless, in response to the seizure of one small trading vessel by Algiers, we declared war and dispatched not one, but two powerful naval squadrons to the Mediterranean.

It turned out that the first squadron of three frigates, one sloop of war, four brigs and two schooners, under the command of one of America's most brilliant naval commanders of all time, Stephen Decatur, was enough to do the job. Despite their fearsome reputation, the Algerine warships proved to be sitting ducks. Decatur quickly took two of them, including the best of the lot, the frigate *Meshuda*, whose crew fled below and hid in the hold after two broadsides. In a preview of Arab state militaries of today, one U.S. officer "expressed amazement that the Algerine navy was 'a mere burlesque' with 'miserably contrived' equipment, poor gunnery and poorly disciplined crews." (In fairness, it should be noted that the shore defenses of Algiers were formidable and well-manned.) After its initial defeats at sea, Algiers quickly came to terms.

Beyond the doubtful quality of Arab navies, does our last successful Mideast war offer any lessons for our own time? In the face

of our all-too-often wretched generalship in today's Mideast wars – perhaps now improving in Iraq, still rock-bottom in Afghanistan – Decatur's example certainly recommends itself. But behind what Decatur did stands something more: the selection of Decatur as commander of the first squadron.

Then as now, seniority played a great role in selecting men for top commands. Decatur was 36 years old in 1815. We had, of course, a young navy, but five captains were senior to Decatur. The Secretary of the Navy, Benjamin W. Crowninshield, and President Madison, should, had they played the game as the system intended, have chosen someone more senior. They might have selected, for example, the most senior officer in the Navy, Alexander Murray. Mr. Leiner writes:

*When he had last served in the Mediterranean a dozen years before, William Eaton, the United States consul at Tunis, had sneered that the United States "might as well send out Quaker meeting houses to float about the sea, as frigates with Murray in command." Murray was sixty years old in 1815, nearly deaf, and described by Commodore Rogers as "an amiable old gentleman... (whose) pretensions...as a navy officer are of a very limited description."*

Or, they might have chosen Hugh Campbell, tellingly known as "Old Cork" in the service ...

*Commodore Rodgers devastatingly described him as "a good old gentleman, but ... an enemy to everything that is likely to call the reflections of his mind into operation."*

Any resemblance between such figures and senior American military leaders today must remain conjectural. It is historical fact, however, that Madison and Crowninshield cut through the system to find a leader in his mid-30s, rather than his 50s or 60s. It is perhaps as much to Crowninshield as to Decatur that we should look for a lesson

for our own times.

A larger question at which Mr. Leiner is too good a historian to more than hint – and then perhaps at the desire of his publisher – is whether Decatur's slam-bam approach to dealing with Muslim "terrorists" tells us anything. Could a similar way of dealing avail us more today than the de-escalation 4th Generation theorists usually recommend?

Here we quickly see the difference between yesterday's terrorists and today's. If there is one thing Old Osama has, it is legitimacy. The heads of government of Algiers and the other Barbary states, in contrast, had none. While nominal vassals of the Ottoman Sultan, they were in fact nothing more than gang leaders. They were chosen, kept in power and regularly removed from power and from the ranks of the living by small bands of Janissaries, who in turn ran the Barbary states. Those Janissaries were terrorists to Christian seamen and local Moslems alike. No one outside their ranks gave a fig what happened to them.

With essentially no base beyond their racket, Deys of Algiers were easy pickings. Take a frigate and a brig, and they had to deal. Osama, in vast contrast, has a base that numbers in the tens or hundreds of millions of people, in Algiers, Tunis and Tripoli, but equally in the suburbs of Paris, in Birmingham and in Detroit. It will take more than a squadron of frigates, or our whole Navy of iron ships and wooden men, to squeeze a deal out of him.

*August 1, 2007*



## One Step Forward, Two Steps Back

The surge in Iraq continues to generate good news, at least in the American press. Today's *Cleveland Plain Dealer* includes a typical story, in this case by Robert Burns of the Associated Press:

*The new U.S. military strategy in Iraq, unveiled six months ago to little acclaim, is working...*

*The U.S. military, partnering in many cases with Iraqi forces, is now creating (a) security cushion — not everywhere, but in much of the north, the west and most important in key areas of Baghdad...*

*The U.S. military has caught some momentum, thanks to the extra 30,000 troops — for a total of 159,000 on the ground — that Bush agreed to send as part of the new counterinsurgency strategy announced in January. The troops are interacting more with the local people and are protecting them more effectively.*

To the degree the good news is true, it probably has more to do with the last sentence quoted above than with troop numbers. It may also reflect a large dose of *post hoc ergo propter hoc* reasoning. Some of the decline in violence in Baghdad is due not to U.S. troops but to the fact that the Shi'ites have completed the ethnic cleansing of mixed Sunni-Shi'ite neighborhoods. A good portion of the improvement in Anbar province is a product of al-Qaeda blunders, which have alienated part of its base. While adoption of classic counter-insurgency techniques by U.S. forces is genuine good news, we should not assume events in Iraq are solely or even primarily a result of our actions. We are one player among many, and not always the most important.

It is also easy to forget the strategic measure of effectiveness, i.e., whether or not we see the re-emergence of a state in Iraq. Such American successes as are real stem largely from accepting the fact that there is no state and filling the void with local alliances. As Mr. Burns writes:

*Despite political setbacks, American commanders are clinging to a hope that stability might be built from the bottom up — with local groups joining or aiding U.S. efforts to root out extremists — rather than from the top down, where national leaders have failed to act.*

That is what American commanders should do, because it is all they can do. But it is a step away from, not toward, a restored Iraqi state.

That strategic step backwards is accompanied by a large and dangerous operational step backwards, namely moving toward a war with Iraq's Shi'ites. The August 6 *Plain Dealer*, in a story by AP's Kim Gamel reported that

*Attacks against U.S. forces were down sharply last month nationwide, and military officials have expressed cautious optimism that a security crackdown is working. At the same time, the number of attacks launched by breakaway factions of the Shi'ite Mahdi Army militia has increased, said Lt. Gen. Raymond Odierno, second-in-command.*

*He did not provide a total number of militia attacks. But he said 73 percent of the attacks that wounded or killed U.S. troops last month in Baghdad were launched by Shi'ite militiamen, nearly double that figure six months earlier.*

This is a danger sign that should engage the urgent attention of senior American commanders. If we replace a war against Iraqis Sunnis

with a war against the Shi'ites, we will not only have suffered a serious, self-inflicted operational defeat, we will endanger our whole position in Iraq, since our supply lines mostly run through Shi'ite country.

I say such a defeat would be self-inflicted because Shi'ite attacks on Americans in Baghdad seem to be responses to American actions. In dealing with the Shi'ites, we appear to be doing what spurred the growth of the Sunni insurgency, i.e., raids, air strikes and a "kill or capture" policy directed against local Shi'ite leaders. Not only does this lead to retaliation, it also fractures Muqtada al-Sadr's Mahdi Army as he tries to avoid fighting us. Such fracturing works against, not for, the potential re-creation of an Iraqi state.

A return to practices we know are counter-productive in dealing with Iraq's Shi'ites raises the question of motive. Are we so bloody stupid that at the same time we finally seem to have learned something about counter-insurgency with regards to the Sunnis we are repeating the same mistakes with the Shi'ites?

But perhaps something else is going on here. According to the story by Miss Gamel, General Odierno did not blame his own actions, but Iran's, for the increase in Shi'ite attacks on Americans. Is a war with Iraq's Shi'ites a prelude to war with Iran? For the sake of the army we have in Iraq and our strategic position in the region, let us hope not. Sometimes, sheer stupidity is the most reassuring explanation for our actions.

*August 7, 2007*

## Importing More 4th Generation War

One of 4th Generation war's more effective Trojan horses is refugees. They arrive on someone's shore desperate, pathetic, deeply grateful for the smallest crust or copper flung their way. Only a Scrooge could have a heart so cold as to turn them away.

Regrettably, in a 4th Generation world, Western countries need lots of Scrooges in charge of their immigration policies. A story in the July 15, 2007 *New York Times* by Theo Emery, "In Nashville, a Street Gang Emerges in a Kurdish Enclave," tells an all-too common story:

*Miles from downtown, Nashville's southern, neighborhoods are home to a thriving enclave of Kurdish immigrants ...*

*Bound by a common language and ethnicity, Kurds here tend to shun attention. But a growing problem has turned an unwanted spotlight on them a group called the Kurdish Pride Gang, thought to be the nation's only Kurdish street gang ...*

*Police officials say that Kurdish Pride members have grown increasingly vicious and brazen. Investigators believe that the gang has committed about 110 home burglaries since January, including two involving rapes, said Mark Anderson, a Nashville police detective who works in a gang unit.*

*In a case involving the rape of a pregnant victim, a 17-year-old suspect, Zana Noroly, hanged himself in his jail cell in April. Messages in his memory are ubiquitous on the Web pages of Kurdish youth ...*

*Earlier this month, a grand jury indicted four members of the gang for conspiracy to commit first-degree murder in a case in*

*which a gang leader, Aka Nejad, is accused of shooting at a park policeman who interrupted a drug deal last year.*

This particular imported 4GW problem – gangs are a major source of 4th Generation war – comes from a group of refugees who are, on other counts, models. Kurds are generally hard-working, competent, family-oriented people who quickly become members of the middle class. Again quoting police officer Mark Anderson, the Times story notes that

*"Kurdish Pride are not the kind of kids that normally join gangs."*

*"For the most part, they come from two-parent homes, they come from families with a strong work ethic, where education is important," he said.*

The *Times* also notes that most Nashville Kurds are deeply distressed by Kurdish Pride. It quotes Kirmanj Gundi, a professor at Tennessee State University in Nashville:

*"We did everything to build a good reputation here in Nashville and elsewhere," said Mr. Gundi, 46, who is Kurdish, "and all of a sudden a few irresponsible hoodlums have tried to tarnish the reputations we've been working so hard over the years to create. That's sad. "*

The root of the problem, as is usual in 4th Generation war, is loyalty. As the *Times* story says, the Kurds, like virtually all refugees from other cultures, are "bound by a common language and ethnicity." Those bonds are stronger than formal American citizenship, and they provide a rich soil in which 4GW can grow. In America's poisonous popular culture, the necessary seeds are quickly planted among young men by the same rock and rap music, video games and examples from the culturally disintegrated black community that have overwhelmed

Hispanics and other immigrants. As always, the cultural Marxists fly cover over the whole diabolical mess, labeling any serious discussion of the problem "racism."

Once a state faces 4GW springing from a community of refugees, its options are limited. It can adopt a variant of the old Ottoman millet system, and demand that the community police itself, or it can try to attack the problem directly through the police. Both approaches usually founder on the same bonds of a common language and culture that provide the alternate primary loyalty. The millet system also accepts the weakness of the state as a given, which in turn accelerates the state's decline.

In the real world, as opposed to the dream world of "multiculturalist" ideologues, there is only one way to prevent refugees from other cultures from serving as Trojan horses for 4th Generation war: do not admit the refugees. They are carrying a plague for which states have no cure. It may seem heartless to turn plague carriers away at the door, but it is also necessary to survival. When the state's fundamental peace, security and order are at stake, the head, not the heart, must be the governing organ. America in particular must learn this lesson fast – for much of Europe, it is already too late – as cries grow to admit hordes of refugees from Iraq.

*August 13, 2007*

## More Kabuki

September approaches, and with it the supposed watershed in the Iraq war that General David Petraeus's report to Congress will represent. In reality, the report will make little difference in what the Democratically-controlled Congress does, because it has already decided what it will do, which is pretend to try to end the war while ensuring its continuation through the 2008 elections. That strategy seems to offer the best promise of electing more Democrats.

Nonetheless, much of the country eagerly wants to hear what General Petraeus has to say. What he says about the progress of the war in Iraq, however, is a secondary question. The primary question is, how credible is his report? Will it be a real military analysis, honest and forthright, or will it just be more kabuki, political spin dictated by the Bush White House? If it is the latter, then its content is immaterial, because it is not credible.

I do not know General Petraeus, and I therefore cannot judge his character. What I have seen of his work is certainly better than that of his predecessors. His attempt to move our forces in Iraq out of their bases and into the neighborhoods where counter-insurgency must be fought is laudable, if hopelessly too late.

A story in the August 16 *Cleveland Plain Dealer* by AP's Steven Hurst unfortunately brings General Petraeus's credibility into some question. Hurst wrote:

*One of the most significant shifts for U.S. forces recently has been recruiting allies among former Sunni insurgent areas such as the western Anbar province. "A pretty big deal," said Petraeus.*

*"You have to pinch yourself a little to make sure that is real*

*because that is a very significant development in this kind of operation in counterinsurgency," he said.*

*"It's all about the local people. When all of a sudden, the local people are on the side of the new Iraq instead of on the side of the insurgents or even al-Qaida, that's a very significant change."*

The willingness of some Sunni tribes and insurgent groups to work with U.S. forces in al Anbar against al-Qaida is significant locally. However, all my sources state emphatically that the Sunnis who are now willing to work with us do not accept the new Iraq, which is Newspeak for the al-Maliki government in Baghdad and Iraq's future status as an American satellite with large U.S. forces permanently based on its soil. As is usually the case in 4th Generation war, the U.S.-Sunni local alliances are temporary tactical expedients, nothing more. The Sunnis we are working with make quite clear their continuing rejection of al-Maliki, Baghdad and the New Iraq at the same time they also reject al-Qaeda's terror tactics and its goal of a puritanical Islamic theocracy.

This is just one slip on General Petraeus's part, and given the way the U.S. military invents good news to pass up the chain, it may reflect what he is being told. At the same time, the term "New Iraq" is a Bushism. So does its use reflect what is coming up the chain, or what is coming down?

It is the latter possibility that is troubling, because it is the norm, not the exception. As American military officers gain rank, they soon learn that the absolute worst political sin is "committing truth." Any time they say something that contradicts what is coming out of the White House or the Office of the Secretary of Defense, they find themselves in very hot water. If they persist in the annoying practice, they discover they do not qualify for senior commands.

If General Petraeus is to present a genuine military report in September and not a cooked political document, he will have to buck



the system. It should be fairly easy to judge whether he has done that or not, because if he has, the White House will howl. The gap between the reality in Iraq and the administration's rhetoric is so wide that it should show dramatically in any genuine military analysis. If it does not, and if the White House regards his report complacently, with just a few quibbles as part of the kabuki, then it amounts to nothing more than one of Napoleon's bulletins—from which we got the phrase, "to lie like a bulletin."

Come September, we will find out what General Petraeus is made of. Depending on that, we may also find out something about the war in Iraq.

*August 19, 2007*

# Truth-tellers

As good news continues to flow from the surge—some of it true, some of it false and all of it spun—it is easy to forget the bottom line. The bottom line is whether or not we are beginning to see the re-emergence of a state in Iraq. Three recent news stories throw some light on that question, and it is not a favorable light.

The first, by Steven Hurst of the AP, ran in the August 26 *Cleveland Plain Dealer* under the title, "Sectarian violence in Iraq nearly double '06 level." Relying on the AP's own figures, the story reported that:

- Iraq is suffering about twice the number of war-related deaths throughout the country compared with last year – an average daily toll of 33 in 2006 and 62 so far this year.
- Nearly 1,000 more people have been killed in violence across Iraq in the first eight months of this year than in all of 2006
- Baghdad has gone from representing 76 percent of all civilian and police war-related deaths in Iraq in January to 52 percent in July, bringing it back to the same spot it was roughly a year ago.

Taken together, these figures illustrate an old saying about counter-insurgency, that it is like trying to pick up mercury. When counter-insurgency forces surge in one place, as we have in Baghdad, the insurgents roll someplace else. Meanwhile, the insurgency as a whole continues to grow.

The second story, "Militias Seizing Control of Electricity Grid" by James Glanz and Stephen Farrell, ran in the August 23 *New York Times*. It reports that:

*Armed groups increasingly control the antiquated switching stations that channel electricity around Iraq, the electricity minister said Wednesday.*

*That is dividing the national grid into fiefs that, he said, often refuse to share electricity generated locally with Baghdad and other power-starved areas in the center of Iraq...*

*In some cases, Mr. Wahid and other Iraqi officials say, insurgents cut power to the capital as part of their effort to topple the government.*

*But the officials said it was clear that in other cases, local militias, gangs, and even some provincial military and civilian officials held on to the power simply to try to help their own areas.*

The use of the term "fiefs" is a truth-teller of some importance. The rise of fiefdoms and the transfer of loyalty to local regions are signs of movement away from a state, not toward the re-emergence of an Iraqi state. That has already happened in Iraq with regards to security. The fact that it is now spreading even into distribution of electricity from what was once a national grid is not good news. Arguably, it tells us more about the general direction of Iraq than do claims of success from the surge.

The third story, "Children Doing Battle in Iraq" from the August 27 *Los Angeles Times*, points to further long-term disorder in Iraq:

*Child fighters, once a rare presence on Iraq's battlefields, are playing a significant and growing role in kidnappings, killings and roadside bombings in the country, U.S. military officials say.*

*Boys, some as young as 11, now outnumber foreign fighters at U.S. detention camps in Iraq. Since March, their numbers have risen to 800 from 100...*

*The rise of child fighters will eventually make the Iraq conflict*

*more gruesome, said Peter W. Singer, a Brookings Institution expert on child fighters.*

*He said militant leaders often treat children as a cheap commodity, and peace will be less attainable because conflict entrepreneurs now have an established and pliable fighting force in their communities.*

As we have seen in Africa, when children become fighters at an early age, they provide a pool of men who for at least a generation cannot do anything but fight. It is difficult to deprogram them and turn them into peaceful citizens. In turn, this leads to what we might call supply-side war, war driven largely by the presence of men who want to fight. This kind of half-war, half-brigandage swarmed over Europe during the interval between the end of the Middle Ages and the rise of the state. After Westphalia, the state put an end to it by rounding up the brigands and hanging them. In Iraq, where the fictional state cannot even round up kilowatts, supply-side war suggests that disorder will be rampant, and a state non-existent, for quite some time.

When Congress comes back into session in September to hear General Petraeus's report, we may hope that it will pursue these indicators and other truth-tellers like them and not confine itself to what the general tells it. Truth may be found more at the margins of what General Petraeus says, or in what he chooses not to address. For once, we need Members of Congress to think like statesmen, not like lawyers.

*August 29, 2007*

## **A Seam to Exploit**

It is reasonably clear that, contrary to the White House's claims, the "surge" had little or nothing to do with the improved situation in Anbar province in Iraq. That security there has improved is a fact; a Marine friend who just returned told me the whole province is now quiet. If we look past the Bush administration's propaganda and ask ourselves what really happened, we may find something of great value, namely a "seam" in Islamic 4th Generation forces that we can exploit.

As is widely known, the key to turning the situation in Anbar around was a decision by the local Sunni clans and tribes to turn against al-Qaeda. We did not make that happen, although we did make it possible, not by what we did but what we stopped doing, i.e., brutalizing the local population. Once U.S. forces in Anbar adopted a policy of de-escalation, the sheiks had the option of putting al-Qaeda instead of us at the top of their enemies list. De-escalation was, to use a favorite military term, the enabler.

As is also widely recognized, al-Qaeda itself then provided the motivator by its treatment of local Sunnis. Its error was one common to revolutionary movements, trying to impose its program before it had won the war. Worse, it did so brutally, using assassinations, car bombings that caused mass casualties and other typical terror tactics. Some reports suggest the final straw for Anbar's Sunnis was a demand by foreign al-Qaeda fighters for forced marriages with local women.

Again, in itself this is nothing new. Where we may begin to perceive something new, a potential seam in Islamic 4GW operations, is in al-Qaeda's response to its own blunder. It has refused to change course.

When other revolutionary groups have alienated the population by

unveiling their program too soon, before they consolidated power, their leadership has quickly ordered a reversal. Mao had to do so, and so did Lenin, in the famous NEP of the early 1920s. Competent leadership usually understands that a broad front strategy is a necessity until their power is so great it cannot be challenged.

Why doesn't al-Qaeda's leadership do the same? Here is where it starts to get interesting. Perhaps they have not done so because they cannot.

Unlike Bolsheviks and other revolutionary parties that acted within a state framework and modeled themselves on the governments of states, 4th Generation entities based on religious or cause-based appeals cannot practice what the Marxist-Leninists called democratic centralism. They cannot simply issue orders from the top and have those orders obeyed. Their organizations are too loosely structured for that. The leadership can inspire and give general guidance, but it cannot do much more than that. It cannot get its fighters to do things they don't want to do, or stop doing things they very much do want to do.

Here we may see a flip side of the de-centralization that makes 4GW entities so difficult for states to fight directly. One of state armed forces' favorite tactics, going after the leadership, has been shown over and over again not to accomplish much because local 4GW fighters do not depend on that leadership. But just as they do not depend on it, they also do not have to obey it. Their autonomy cuts both ways.

I am assuming that the leadership of al-Qaeda in Iraq and Osama himself are wise enough to want to reverse course in Anbar province, de-emphasize their extremist program and return to a broad front strategy. That assumption may be in error. They may be as detached from reality as their fanatical fighters, moved by the same fanaticism to enact their program prematurely. If so, our job of defeating them in Iraq will be all the easier, even if it does not necessarily move us closer to seeing a state re-emerge in Iraq.

But if my assumption is valid and al-Qaeda's leadership wants to change course but cannot, we may have found a seam in 4GW entities we can exploit. It will not exist in all 4GW organizations; gangs, for example, often have tight top-down discipline. Where they are decentralized, however, this dynamic of imposing their program prematurely may prevail widely. If that proves to be the case, then these entities will carry within them the seed of their own destruction. Our strategy, in turn, must allow this dynamic to play itself out, which means we must de-escalate and take the pressure off.

As is true of most 4th Generation theory, it is too soon to know if this insight is valid. But if we are to learn how to defeat 4th Generation enemies, this is the sort of question we must continually ask about 4th Generation war. We must constantly seek seams in our opponents that allow us to fold them back on themselves, or permit them to fold back on themselves with us careful not to get in their way as they do so. It is greatly to the credit of the Marines in Anbar province that they have learned that inaction is a form of action. Making that realization part of our doctrine for 4GW could in turn represent a real step forward.

*September 4, 2007*

# A Ticking Bomb

I returned at the end of last week from the Imperial fall maneuvers, held this year in *Ostland*. His Majesty's forces prevailed, for much the same reasons that Blue usually wins in American war games. As someone who has led Red to victory in several senior-level games conducted in Washington, I can assure you that isn't supposed to happen.

I don't think it possible for any historian to visit the Baltic countries or the rest of Central Europe and not reflect on the catastrophes World War I brought for that part of the world. Communism, World War II, National Socialism, the extinction of some communities and the expulsion of others, wholesale alteration of national boundaries, all these and more flowed from the assassination of the Archduke Franz Ferdinand on June 28, 1914. One pebble touched off an avalanche.

It did so because it occurred, not as an isolated incident, but as one more in a series of crises that rocked Europe in its last ten years of peace, 1904-1914. Each of those crises had the potential to touch off a general European war, and each further de-stabilized the region, making the next incident all the more dangerous. 1905-06 witnessed the First Moroccan Crisis, when the German Foreign Office (whose motto, after Bismarck, might well be, "Clowns unto ages of ages") compelled a very reluctant Kaiser Wilhelm II to land at Tangier as a challenge to France. 1908 brought the Bosnian Annexation Crisis, where Austria humiliated Russia and left her anxious for revenge. Then came the Second Moroccan Crisis of 1911, the Tripolitan War of 1911-1912 (a war Italy actually won, against the tottering Ottoman Empire) and the Balkan Wars of 1912-13. By 1914, it had become a question more of which crisis would finally set all Europe ablaze than of whether peace



would endure. This was true despite the fact that, in the abstract, no major European state wanted war.

If this downward spiral of events in Europe reminds us of the Middle East today, it should. There too we see a series of crises, each holding the potential of kicking off a much larger war. There are almost too many to list: the war in Iraq, the U.S. versus Iran, Israel vs. Syria, the U.S. vs. Syria, Syria vs. Lebanon, Turkey vs. Kurdistan, the war in Afghanistan, the de-stabilization of Pakistan, Hamas, Hezbollah, al-Qaeda, and the permanent crisis of Israel vs. the Palestinians. Each is a tick of the bomb, bringing us closer and closer to the explosion no one wants, no one outside the neocon cabal and Likud, anyway.

A basic rule of history is that the inevitable eventually happens. If you keep on smoking in the powder magazine, you will at some point blow it up. No one can predict the specific event or its timing, but everyone can see the trend and where it is leading.

In the Middle East today, as in Europe in the decade before World War I, the desperate need is for a country or a leader to reverse the trend. Then, the two European leaders most opposed to war, Kaiser Wilhelm II of Germany and Tsar Nicholas II of Russia, were able to do little more than drag their feet, trying to slow the train of events down. That was not enough, and it will not be enough today in the Middle East either.

Where do we see a leader who can turn aside the march toward war? Not in the Middle East itself, nor among American Presidential candidates, only two of whom, Ron Paul and Dennis Kucinich, represent a real change of direction. Not in Europe, whose heads of government are terrified of breaking with the Americans. Not in Moscow or Beijing, both of which are happy to see America digging its own grave. No matter where we look, the horizon is empty.

Where vision is wanting, the people perish. As they did in Central Europe in the 20th century, by the tens of millions.

*September 25, 2007*

# John Boyd's Book

Colonel John Boyd, America's greatest military theorist, never wrote a book. But as a Marine friend of mine said, Col. Frans Osinga's new book, *Science, Strategy and War: The Strategic Theory of John Boyd*, is the book Boyd would have written if he had written a book. (As someone who worked with Boyd for about 15 years, I think the reason he did not write a book is that he loved giving his briefings, and he feared that if people could find his work in a book they would not ask him to brief.)

The central point Osinga makes is that, contrary to what is widely believed, Boyd's work cannot be summarized in the concept of the OODA Loop. The OODA Loop concept says that in any conflict, all parties go through repeated cycles of Observing, Orienting, Deciding and Acting, and whoever can go through the cycle consistently faster will win. At the tactical level, this is often true.

But as Osinga points out, as soon as one moves up into the operational, strategic and grand strategic levels, Boyd's theory grows far more complex. There, accuracy of observation and especially of orientation become at least as important as tempo. Attaining accuracy requires far more than obtaining information. In Boyd's own less-than-simple words:

*Orientation is an interactive process of many-sided implicit cross-referencing projections, empathies, correlations, and rejections that is shaped by and shapes the interplay of genetic heritage, cultural tradition, previous experiences and unfolding circumstances.*

*Orientation is the Schwerpunkt. It shapes the way we interact*

*with the environment—hence orientation shapes the way we observe, the way we decide, the way we act.*

*In this sense Orientation shapes the character of present observation-orientation-decision-action loops—while these present loops shape the character of future orientation.*

To make sense of all this, and more, Osinga begins by studying what Boyd studied. He works his way through Boyd's vast bibliography, which includes not only military history but also scientific thought and epistemology. Boyd immersed himself in multiple disciplines, applying his own prescription of analysis and synthesis, intellectual openness and constant cross-referencing to the creation of his military theories.

Osinga then proceeds to describe, discuss and analyze Boyd's vast briefings in chronological order, that is to say in the order in which Boyd developed them. Boyd's most famous briefing was *Patterns of Conflict*, with its contrast between attrition warfare and maneuver warfare. Again, Osinga notes that there is far more here than speed through the OODA Loop. Of key importance to 4th Generation war, Boyd introduces his three levels of war: not the traditional tactical-operational-strategic but physical-mental-moral. As Osinga writes:

*In Patterns of Conflict Boyd has thus offered his audience a new look at military history. With the conceptual lenses science offered him, with uncertainty as the key problem organisms and organizations have to surmount, he sheds new light on the dynamics of war...*

Gradually he unfolds a novel conceptualization of tactics, grand tactics, strategy and grand strategy that revolves around the process of adaptation in which open, complex adaptive systems are constantly engaged.

Boyd's next briefing, my personal favorite, was *Organic Design for Command and Control*. It offers a devastating implied critique of the

way the U.S. military is attempting to use technology to improve command and control. Boyd argues that, from a maneuverist perspective, you don't even want command and control, but rather appreciation and leadership.

From this point on to the conclusion of Boyd's work, each briefing becomes more theoretical and abstract. He offers one of the few useful definitions of strategy: "The Strategic Game is one of Interaction and Isolation." He describes a "conceptual spiral" that leads to a deeper understanding of how we can cope with uncertainty. Finally, he offers "the real OODA Loop," which is far too complex to present here but supports Osinga's assertion that there is more to it than speed, at least above the tactical level.

The John Boyd who emerges from this outstanding book is the John Boyd I knew. He was the opposite of the narrow technician, the type our armed services seem to prefer and promote. He ranged across a vast intellectual landscape, drawing from the most unlikely places ideas he could assemble in new ways to reveal more about the nature and conduct of war. I must relate one anecdote, one of the few occasions where I saw Boyd get shot down. Over dinner with General Hermann Balck, Boyd thought to pay Balck a jocular compliment. He said to him, "General, with your extraordinarily quick reactions (still evident despite Balck's 80+ years), you would have made a great fighter pilot." Balck instantly replied, "Ich bin kein Techniker"—I am not a technician!

I say unreservedly, "Buy this book!" Yes, it costs more than \$100. But Col. Osinga of the Royal Netherlands Air Force told me that if he can sell just a few more, his publisher will bring it out in paperback. So let the kids go hungry for a few nights and plunk down the cash. If you have any interest in war, this is a book your library cannot do without. Just as America cannot do without John Boyd's ideas, although our military has not yet figured that out.

*October 2, 2007*

## Not So Fast, John

Major General John Kelly is one of the Marine Corps' most thoughtful and most able leaders. Many who hope to see the Marine Corps' doctrine of Maneuver Warfare someday become real instead of just words on paper pray he has a bright future. When, as a major, he was commander of the Infantry Officers' Course at Quantico, he did what every Marine school director should do: he hauled all the old 2nd Generation lesson plans out into the courtyard, poured gasoline on them and burned them. I have known him since that time, and I regard him as a personal friend.

In late September, speaking to the San Diego Military Advisory Council, General Kelly said:

*I left Iraq three years ago last month. I returned a week ago after a two-week visit of getting the lay of the land for my upcoming deployment. It is still a dangerous and foreboding land, but what I experienced personally was amazing and remarkable—we are winning, we are really winning. No one told me to say that, I saw it for myself.*

I have to reply, not so fast, John. I have no doubt the situation General Kelly found in Anbar Province is much quieter than it was just a short time ago. That means fewer casualties, for which we are all thankful. But in the inherent complexity of a 4th Generation situation, it does not mean we are winning. If we put the improved situation in Anbar in context, we quickly see there is less to it than first meets the eye.

That context begins with the fact that Anbar is quieter primarily because of what al-Qaeda did, namely alienating its base, not what we

did. We enabled the local Sunnis to turn on al-Qaeda by ending, or at least reducing, our attacks on the local population. But if al-Qaeda had not blundered, the situation would be about what it had been since the real war started. We have not found a silver bullet for 4GW.

Nor is the war in Iraq a binary conflict, America vs. al-Qaeda, although that is how Washington now portrays it. al-Qaeda is only one of a vast array of non-state actors, fighting for many different kinds of goals. If al-Qaeda in Iraq disappeared tomorrow, Iraq would remain chaotic.

The fact that some Sunni tribes have turned on al-Qaeda does not mean they like us. It just means we have for the moment become the #2 enemy instead of #1, or perhaps #3, with the Shi'ites ranking ahead of us. Some think the Sunnis are just getting whatever they can from us as they prepare for another, more bitter round of the Sunni vs. Shi'ite civil war.

But the biggest reason for saying "not so fast" is that the reduction of violence in Anbar does not necessarily point toward the rise of a state in the now-stateless region of Mesopotamia. As I have argued repeatedly in this column and elsewhere, we can only win in Iraq if a new state emerges there. Far from pointing towards that, our new working relationship with some Sunni sheiks points away from it.

The sheiks represent local, feudal power, not a state. We are working with them precisely because there is no Iraqi state to work with. The Maliki government is a polite fiction. From a practical standpoint, there is nothing else we can do to get any results. But our alliances with Sunni sheiks in effect represents our acceptance, *de facto* if not *de jure*, of the reality that there is no state.

The sheiks, we must recognize, do not accept the Shi'ite puppet government in Baghdad or its armed forces, which are mostly Shi'ite militias who get government paychecks. The Baghdad government recognizes this fact. A story in the October 1 *Cleveland Plain Dealer*



quotes Prime Minister al-Maliki's Shi'ite United Iraqi Alliance as:

*"authorizing the (Sunni tribal) groups to conduct security acts away from the jurisdiction of the government and without its knowledge."*

*The statement went on: "We demand that the American administration stop this adventure, which is rejected by all the sons of the people and its national political powers."*

The ruling Shi'ites rightly fear that what we are actually creating is new Sunni militias which will fight the Shi'ite militias.

Finally, as if all this did not throw enough cold water on any notion that we are winning, just as the Marines are ramping down our war with the Iraqi Sunnis, in Anbar, the U.S. Army is ramping up a war with the Shi'ite population. Almost every day we read about another raid on the Shi'ites, all too often one where we have called in airstrikes on populated Shi'ite neighborhoods. A story in the October 6 *Plain Dealer*, "U.S. raid north of Baghdad kills 25," was typical:

*An Iraqi army official, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said U.S. aircraft bombed the neighborhood repeatedly and he claimed civilians, including seven children, were among those killed.*

*He said the civilians had rushed out to help those hurt in the initial bombing...*

*...the town's top official said U.S. forces targeted areas built up by the locals to protect their Shi'ite neighborhoods against attacks by al-Qaida gunmen.*

If we have not enjoyed fighting the 20 percent of the Iraqi population that is Sunni, how much pleasure will we find in fighting the 60 percent that is Shi'ite? Of course, an American attack on Iran will

only intensify our war with Iraq's Shi'ites.

So no, we are not winning in Iraq. The only meaningful definition of winning is seeing the re-emergence of a real Iraqi state, and by that standard we are no closer to victory than we ever were. Nor can I see anything on the horizon that could move us closer to such a victory, other than a complete American withdrawal, which begins to look as unlikely under the Democrats as under the Republicans. All we see on the horizon of Anbar province, sadly, is another mirage.

*October 9, 2007*

## Out of the Frying Pan...

The Pentagon last week floated a trial balloon suggesting that all U.S. Marines might pullout of Iraq and head to Afghanistan, while the Army would do the opposite and concentrate on Iraq. The rationale was mere administrative efficiency or neatness, which hardly justifies the turmoil the proposal would cause. I would personally be happy to see my Marine friends leave Iraq before the roof there falls in, but trading Iraq for Afghanistan is little more than a jump out of the frying pan into the fire.

If, however, a Marine Corps takeover of the war in Afghanistan were used as an opportunity to change the way we are waging that war, then it would be more than justified. What would meaningful change entail?

First, we would have to adopt a realistic strategic goal, one that might be attainable. The present strategic goal of turning Afghanistan into a modern, secular, capitalist state with "equal rights for women" and similar claptrap lies in the realm of fantasy. The most Afghanistan can become is Afghanistan in its better periods, which is to say a country with a weak central government, strong local warlords, endemic tribal civil war, a drug-based economy and a traditional Islamic society and culture. The dominant tribe, controlling the central government in Kabul, will be the Pashtun, because it always has been.

There are two possible strategies for attaining this goal, neither of which guarantees success, but both of which have a potential for success, unlike what we and NATO are doing now. The first is to split the Pashtun from the Taliban, making the Pashtun our allies instead of our enemies. Since the Pashtun always win in the end, we must be allied with them if we are not to lose.

The second possible strategy is to split the Taliban from al-Qaeda and similar ethnically Arab 4GW entities and make a deal with them in which they would again get Kabul and the government. That central government will, as always in Afghan history, be weak, so we are not giving up all that much. This strategy has the advantage that it would reduce the pressure on Pakistan, which remains a de facto ally of the Taliban. If Pakistan goes, and it is going, our position in the region collapses overnight.

Of the two strategic options, I think the second is more likely to work. It gives us a central authority to make a deal with; other than the Taliban, who can deliver the Pashtun to the alliance we need? The same lack of an alternate legitimate authority—the Karzai government is not one—makes splitting the Pashtun from the Taliban a tall order. Most probably, attempting to do so will leave us enmeshed in endless local politics we can neither understand nor bring to any sort of useful conclusion. While we would have to swallow some of our overweening pride to give Kabul back to the Taliban, the Taliban is not in and of itself any threat to America, so long as it is not in bed with al-Qaeda.

Both strategic options require a radical change in American tactics, from winning battles defined by kills to the tactics of de-escalation.

If the Bush administration is able to adopt these strategic recommendations, then handing Afghanistan over to the Marine Corps makes sense. The Marine Corps has generals who can think in strategic terms; if the Army has any, it has not sent them to Afghanistan. The Marines are perhaps slightly less addicted to firepower than the Army, though Marine aviation may be a problem. While Marine infantry tactics are little if any better than the Army's, it would be easier to retrain Marine infantry in true light infantry tactics, if only because the Marine Corps is smaller. Perhaps most importantly, Marines have learned something of the tactics of de-escalation in Anbar province in Iraq. Had they not done so, Anbar would still be an al-Qaeda stronghold.

The choke point, as always, is the Bush administration. The Marine Corps on its own cannot change our strategy in Afghanistan. It can advocate a change. Perhaps it can line up the Defense Department and the State Department behind such a change. But in the end, only the White House can make the decision. Will it do so? Only if it learns from experience, which so far it has shown no ability to do.

## Mahan vs Corbett

In an article in the November issue of the Atlantic Monthly, "America's Elegant Decline," Robert Kaplan reminds us of a geostrategic reality we can easily forget in the face of 4th Generation wars in Iraq and Afghanistan: we are inescapably a maritime power.

When Kaplan says "Hulls in the water could soon displace boots on the ground as the most important military catchphrase of our time," he engages in navalist hyperbole, unless he is anticipating the general Resurrection when the sea will give up her dead. We face no credible blue-water naval challenger. The Pentagon's threat inflators keep trying to puff the magic dragon, but the Chinese Navy remains merely a collection of ships.

We do not need naval supremacy because, as Kaplan writes, "Regular wars' between major states could be as frequent in the 21st century as they were in the 20th." If states are so foolish as to fight regular wars, they will find most are won by non-state, 4th Generation elements as defeated states disintegrate and even victorious states decline.

The reason we need naval supremacy because in a world where the state is weakening, water, and transport by water, grows in importance. People today think of land uniting and water dividing, but that became true only recently, with the rise of the state and the development of railways, which can only function in the safety and order created by states. From the dawn of river and sea-faring until the mid-19th century, water united and land divided. It was easier, safer, cheaper and faster to move goods and people by water than by land.

So it will be again in a 21st century dominated by 4th Generation war and declining or disappearing states. Already, in places such as the

Congo, the only way to move is on the rivers. A country that can control waterways anywhere in the world will have a great strategic advantage. Given our maritime geography and our long and proud naval tradition, that country should be the United States.

Unfortunately, we are not developing the naval capabilities we need to do that. The reason shows once again the importance of military theory. The U.S. Navy has to choose between two naval theorists, Captain Alfred Thayer Mahan and Sir Julian Corbett, and it has chosen wrongly.

Kaplan writes:

*The best way to understand the tenuousness of our grip on hard military power is to understand our situation at sea. This requires an acquaintance with two books published a century ago: Mahan's *The Influence of Sea Power Upon History, 1660-1783*, which was written in 1890, and Julian S. Corbett's *Some Principles of Maritime Strategy*, which came out in 1911...*

*Mahan believed in concentrating national naval forces in search of the decisive battle: For him, success was about sinking the other fleet...*

*Julian Corbett, a British historian, did not so much disagree with Mahan as offer a subtler approach, placing greater emphasis on doing more with less.*

Kaplan gets Mahan right, but not Corbett. Mahan in essence wrote naval theory for children; I was much impressed by *The Influence of Sea Power on History* when I was fifteen. Corbett in contrast writes for adults, focusing not on great naval battles but on the use of sea power in a larger context. That larger context is strategy suited to a maritime power, which expresses itself in amphibious warfare directed at a continental enemy's vulnerable peripheries. Corbett's two-volume history, *England in the Seven Year's War*, is probably the deepest study

of amphibious warfare ever written.

Where Kaplan really goes wrong is when he writes, "By necessity, the American Navy is turning from Mahan to Corbett." On the contrary, if you look at the U. S. Navy's shipbuilding program, it is almost purely Mahanian. Today as throughout the Cold War, the U.S. Navy is building a fleet perfectly designed to fight the navy of Imperial Japan. If someone wants to contest control of the Pacific Ocean in a war between aircraft carrier task forces, we are ready. Unfortunately, no one does, absent that general Resurrection when *Shokaku* and *Zuikaku*, *Soryu* and *Hiryu* will rise from their watery graves.

Were the U.S. Navy really to turn to Corbett, it would build lots of ships designed for operations in coastal waters and on rivers, often with troops on board. But such ships are small ships, and the U.S. Navy hates small ships. Some thirty years ago, when the Senator I worked for was trying to push the Navy into buying some small, fast missile boats, the PHMs, the then-Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral Holloway, said contemptuously in testimony, "The U.S. Navy has no place for little ships."

That attitude has not changed. Kaplan quotes a former deputy assistant secretary of defense, Jim Thomas, as saying, "The Navy is not primarily about low-level raiding, piracy patrols, and riverine warfare. If we delude ourselves into thinking that it is, we're finished as a great power."

Those are precisely the missions we need a Navy for in a 4th Generation world—a world in which, as I have noted before, the term "great power" has no meaning.

*October 23, 2007*



## A Question for Would-be Presidents

As the Presidential debate wallow their sorry way through a sea of inanities, leaving in their wake 600 million glazed eyes, a novel thought occurs: what if some mad cur introduced a real question into one of them? At the very least, it would be fun to watch the puppets' strings snap (each party has a single candidate who is not a Punchinello, Ron Paul for the Republicans and Dennis Kucinich for the Democrats). I have just such a question at hand, one that happens to be central to the future of our republic: How, dear sir or madam, do you propose, if elected President, to avoid a long war?

Wouldn't it be fun to watch Senator McNasty and Lady MacBeth, the Great Chicago Vacuum and the Little Brooklyn Duce wrestle with that?

Make no mistake, the Washington Establishment intends our future will be defined by a long war, with all that entails. Commentator/Cunctator Fabius Maximus wrote on July 24, 2007:

*The flood of information and commentary available today can obscure events of the greatest significance. We see that today, as America takes another step toward the long war. Without thought or reflection, without debate by our elected officials, without our consent.*

Fabius cites as evidence the opening lines of the 2006 Quadrennial Defense Review:

*The United States is a nation engaged in what will be a long war. Since the attacks of September 11, 2001, our Nation has fought a global war against violent extremists who use terrorism*

*as their weapon of choice, and who seek to destroy our free way of life.*

As usual in Washington, the names are changed to protect the guilty. *Washington Post* columnist Jim Hoagland wrote on October 21:

*Pentagon leaders have, in fact, shifted to talking of "an era of persistent conflict" rather than "the long war," a phrase that implied a military-dominated struggle with distinct battlefields and a clearly defined end. Today that sounds downright optimistic.*

*"Persistent conflict"...is "the new normal," General George Casey, the Army's chief of staff, told the House Armed Services Committee last month. The Army must remake itself with that in mind, he added.*

What' s wrong with this picture? Sun Tzu said it succinctly: "There is no instance of a nation benefiting from prolonged warfare." Acceptance by any Presidential candidate of a "long war" or "persistent conflict" is an admission of grand strategic imbecility. Which, just possibly, ought not be the highest qualification for public office, all appearances notwithstanding.

Our first, recently concluded long war should serve as a caution. Philip Bobbit said:

*The "Long War" is a term for the conflict that began in 1914 with the First World War and concluded in 1990 with the end of the Cold War. The Long War embraces the First World War, the Bolshevik Revolution, the Spanish Civil War, the Second World War, the Korean War, the War in Vietnam and the Cold War.*

In 1914, America was a republic with a small federal government, a self-reliant citizenry, growing industry, an expanding middle class, an uplifting culture and exemplary morals. By 1990 and the end of that

long war, we had become a tawdry and increasingly resented world empire with a vast, endlessly intrusive federal government, a population of willingly manipulated consumers, shrinking industry, a vanishing middle class, a debauched culture and morals that would shame a self-respecting stoat.

Where will another long war leave us? We need not speculate at random. The Newspeak "Patriot Act," a plunging dollar, \$2 trillion for one lost war and the devil knows how much for a second, a flood of Third World immigrants and cultural Marxism rampant in the highest places all point to the answer. What's left of America won't be worth a bucket of warm spit, or however you say that in Spanish.

A long war, or "persistent conflict," is not inevitable. It is ours only if we choose it. There are alternatives. A defensive, rather than an offensive, grand strategy is one. Closing our borders and minding our own goddam business is another. Iraq, Afghanistan, the Sudan, wherever can stew in their own heathen juice.

So how about it, all you would-be Presidents: what do you intend to do to keep America out of an inevitably disastrous long war? If you cannot answer that question, you shouldn't be running for dogcatcher of Dogpatch.

*October 29, 2007*

# Cops Who Think

Like most militaries, most police departments are not famous for their intellectual attainments. Doughnuts, it seems, are not brain food. Fortunately, that is beginning to change. Police are starting to understand that they, not the military, are on the front line of 4th Generation war, and they need to think about what that means for them.

Up until now, the leading police agency in thinking about 4GW has been the Los Angeles Sheriff's Department. That is not surprising; cops in L.A. face 4GW on the streets all the time, in the form of war between ethnically-defined gangs.

But the east coast is waking up. The New York Police Department has just put out an interesting study of the most dangerous variety of 4GW, the local kind. Titled *Radicalization in the West: The Homegrown Threat* and written by two NYPD Senior Intelligence Analysts, Mitchell D. Silber and Arvin Bhatt, this monograph is an important contribution to the slowly-growing corpus of 4GW literature.

The title is slightly and unintentionally misleading. The study reflects just one kind of homegrown 4GW threat, the Islamic variety. I'm sure the NYPD recognizes that there are many other domestic sources of 4GW beyond Islam, but it might want to clarify that point in a future edition.

*Radicalization in the West: The Homegrown Threat* proceeds from one unstated but critically important assumption: if police are acting as "first responders," after an incident has occurred, they have failed. Success in defending civil society requires not first response but prevention.

Prevention can only be done by police, because only police, not the

military, are sufficiently integrated with society to get the "tips" prevention usually requires. The need for such integration in turn explains why police should never allow themselves to be militarized, despite most cops' enthusiasm for military gear. Militarization automatically separates police from civil society, which leaves them blind and deaf.

The study begins with an observation by NYC Police Commissioner Raymond W. Kelly:

*While the threat from overseas remains, many of the terrorist attacks or thwarted plots against cities in Europe, Canada, Australia and the United States have been conceptualized and planned by local residents/citizens who sought to attack their country of residence.*

The bulk of the study seeks to identify a pattern these homegrown 4GW fighters follow in their self-development.

*Where once we would have defined the initial indicator of the threat at the point where a terrorist or group of terrorists would actually plan an attack, we have now shifted our focus to a much earlier point—a point where we believe the potential terrorist or group of terrorists begin and progress through a process of radicalization. The culmination of this process is a terrorist attack...*

*An assessment of the various reported models of radicalization leads to the conclusion that the radicalization process is composed of four distinct phases:*

- *Stage 1 : Pre-radicalization*
- *Stage 2 : Self-radicalization*
- *Stage 3 : Indoctrination*

- *Stage 4 : Jihadization*

Each of these phases is unique and has specific signatures...

The NYPD shows its grasp of the realities of 4GW by not seeing the enemy as a structure or organization:

*Al-Qaeda has provided the inspiration for homegrown radicalization and terrorism; direct command and control by al-Qaeda has been the exception rather than the rule among the case studies reviewed in this study...*

*Rather, it is a phenomenon that occurs because the individual is looking for an identity and a cause...*

- *Salafist Islam provides the identity and cause these young men are seeking—and as a number of the case studies show, it has an appeal beyond ethnic boundaries. The NYPD study correctly notes that:*
- *This ideology is proliferating in Western democracies at a logarithmic rate...*
- *The Internet is a driver and enabler for the process of radicalization...*
- *Prior to 9/11, the entire radicalization process moved at a much slower rate...*
- *The radicalization process is accelerating in terms of how long it takes and the individuals are continuing to get younger.*

For those who believe the terrorist threat is waning, *Radicalization in the West: The Homegrown Threat* should provide a needed wake-up call. Al-Qaeda may today be less able to carry off 9/11 style operations

than it was when it had its Afghan sanctuaries, but it has replaced that operational model with a model based on leaderless resistance. The leaderless resistance model is less vulnerable to counter-attack by state armed forces and may, over time, also be more deadly.

The good news here is that unlike the military, the cops get it. Perhaps that should not surprise us. Several years ago, I gave my "Four Generations of Modern War" talk to a police conference. I did not modify the talk for a police audience; I told them I did not know enough about policing to be able to do that. They had to translate it from military to police terms themselves.

While perhaps 10 percent of the average military audience gets what I am saying, 90 percent of the cops understand it. For cops, the real world is the street, not the internal world of promotion and budget politics that absorbs most American military officers. Outward focus, it seems, makes a difference.

*November 13, 2007*

## In the Fox's Lair

One reason parts of Iraq have quieted down, at least for a while, has received widespread attention: the Sunni split from al-Qaeda. Al-Qaeda's own tactics alienated its base, which is usually a fatal political mistake, and for once we were wise enough not to get in the way of an enemy who was making a blunder.

But there has been little comment on an equally important reason for improved stability in Iraq, Muqtada al-Sadr's stand-down order to his Mahdi Army militia. Just as it seemed we were headed straight for a war with the Shi'ites, they sheared away. We now appear to be doing the same; at least the papers here no longer report daily raids and air strikes on Shi'ite areas. That too suggests we may have learned something.

But it does not explain the Mahdi Army's quiescence. I have no secret agent in the Desert Fox's lair, so I cannot report what Mr. al-Sadr is thinking. I doubt he is afraid of a confrontation with the U.S. military. Fighting the Americans is more likely to strengthen than weaken his hold on his own movement. So what gives?

The Sunday, November 18 *New York Times* made passing mention of a possible clue. It suggested that the Mahdi Army and some other Shi'ites have backed away from confronting the U.S. because Iran asked them to.

If that is true, it bumps the same question up a level. Why are the Iranians asking their allies in Iraq to give us a break? I doubt it is out of charity, or fear, although elements within Iran that do not want a war with the United States seem to be gaining political strength.

Here's a hypothesis. What if the Iranians had determined, rightly or



wrongly, that the Bush administration has already decided to attack Iran before the end of its term? Two actions would seem logical on their part. First, try to maneuver the Americans into the worst possible position on the moral level by denying them pretexts for an attack. Telling their allied Shi'ite militias in Iraq to cool it would be part of that, as would reducing the flow of Iranian arms to Iraqi insurgents and improving cooperation with the international community on the nuclear issue. We see evidence of the latter two actions as well as the first.

Second, they would tell their allies in Iraq to keep their powder dry. Back off for now, train, build up stocks of weapons and explosives, and work out plans for what they will do as their part of the Iranian counter-attack. Counter-attack there will certainly be, on the ground against our forces in Iraq, in one form or another. In almost all possible counter-attack scenarios, it would be highly valuable to Iran if the Mahdi Army and other Shi'ite militias could cut the American supply lines running up from Kuwait and slow down their movements so that they could not mass their widely dispersed forces. In John Boyd's phrase, it would be a classic Cheng-Chi operation.

Again, I cannot say this is what lies behind the Mahdi Army's stand-down; Zeppelin reconnaissance over Iran has been inconclusive. But it is consistent with three probabilities: that the Bush administration has decided to bomb Iran, that the Iranians plan in response to roll up our army in Iraq and that Muqtada al-Sadr and other Iraqi Shi'ite leaders coordinate their actions closely with Tehran.

In past wars, quiet periods at the front have often preceded a big push by one side or both. Such may prove to be the case in Iraq as well, at least as far as Muqtada al-Sadr and his Mahdi Army are concerned. If so, in view of the situations in Pakistan, Afghanistan and Lebanon and the almost certain failure of the Tea Lady's Annapolis initiative, 2008 may see the Islamic world in flames from the Himalayas to the Mediterranean. To paraphrase Horace Greeley, buy gold, young man, buy gold.

*November 26, 2007*

## Academics Awake!

Tom Lehrer sang of ivy-covered professors in their ivy-covered halls, and seldom indeed does anything worth reading come from academia. Between the stultifying effects of cultural Marxism, aka Political Correctness, and the narrowness demanded by über-specialization, academia offers only hard and stony ground to the fragile seeds that are new insights.

Nonetheless, it seems that even academics are waking up to the concept of 4th Generation war. A few have escaped the White Tower of academia long enough to produce a new book on the subject, *Global Insurgency and the Future of Armed Conflict: Debating fourth-generation warfare*, edited by Terry Terriff, Aaron Karp and Regina Karp (Routledge, UK). Like most collections of essays, it has its ups and downs, but there are enough of the former to make the volume worth a look.

*Global Insurgency* begins by outlining the framework of the Four Generations of Modern War, first in a re-print of the original 1989 Marine Corps Gazette article and then in a chapter by Tom Hammes. I disagree with a number of Hammes's characterizations of 4GW, including defining it as insurgency, but together these two pieces set the stage well enough

The next section, a critique of 4GW and the larger Four Generations framework, is disappointing. Most of the chapters fall into one of two categories, Clausewitz worship or complaint that the framework uses history selectively, which all theory must. The Clausewitzian temple dogs at times work themselves into such a fit they become funny, i.e. denying that World War II was fought within the state system because it was war between alliances... of states.

The better chapters come toward the end of the book, and several are very good indeed. One of the most informative is Paul Jackson's "Fourth Generation Warfare in Africa: back to the future?" The state system has always been a fiction in most of post-colonial sub-Saharan Africa, which means it's easy to find 4GW in its purest, pre-1st Generation form. Jackson writes:

*One of the central difficulties facing analysts and militaries in African conflicts is accurately identifying various groups involved in violence. This is exacerbated by a continuing flux of alliances and temporary agreements, as well as a cycle of group creation and disintegration...*

*The combatants themselves are difficult to define. Any cursory glance at the literature dealing with rebel movements leads to a number of different definitions: rebels, brigands, subversive elements, gangs, criminals, warlords, militia, etc...*

*This is encouraged by a an emphasis on a pseudo-feudal system of primitive accumulation, whereby territory is only valued for the resources it holds and those resources are granted as a means of paying subordinates.*

Welcome to a world without the state.

Frank Hoffman also offers a fine chapter, "Combating 4th Generation Warfare," which he prefers to call Complex Irregular Warfare. Hoffman recognizes that classical approaches to war which emphasize physical destruction may be counter-productive:

*The traditional way to approach strategic options to impose our will upon an opponent is Delbruck's two major options. One is the strategy of annihilation, which calls for the substantial if not the total destruction of the enemy force. The alternative approach, more common to the weaker side, is to employ a strategy of exhaustion...*

*“Incapacitation” may be more appropriate in many cases. We rarely intend or need to annihilate a rebel force, and may find it counterproductive to do so with respect to long-term political objectives.*

One of the better ways to learn how to fight 4GW is to look at foreign practice, and Rajesh Rajagopalan’s chapter, “Fighting 4th Generation wars: the Indian experience” offers several suggestions. Under The Indian army’s 4GW doctrine,” he states:

*Five elements make up the Indian army’s 4GW doctrine. The first is the limitation on the quantum of force used in operations... Indian forces engaged in 4GW operations get no artillery or close air support. And this principle has almost never been violated...*

*The third element in the Army’s approach is dominating the affected area...Thus the stress is on blanketing the area with troops more than conducting offensive operations...This approach is somewhat unique to the Indian experience, and it is premised on two important elements: a huge infantry pool...and an acceptance of the inevitable higher casualties.*

The volume’s editors add thoughtful perspectives of their own to the collected essays, in the introduction and the conclusion. In sum, *Global Insurgency* offers enough of real-world, practical value to those stuck with fighting 4GW or helping prepare others to do so to make it worth reading. By the usual standards of academic works, that makes it a masterpiece.

*December 5, 2007*

# Operationalizing Tactical Successes in Iraq

Recent tactical successes in Iraq, especially the reduction in violence in Anbar province and in Baghdad, have led some people to assume that we are now “winning the war.” However, for any tactical successes to add up to a win, they must be operationalized. That is, through operational art, they must be positively related to strategic success. While reducing the level of violence is no doubt necessary for strategic success in Iraq, it does not automatically lead to that goal.

If our enemies in Iraq and elsewhere are non-state 4th Generation forces, then strategic success is best defined as their opposite, i.e., seeing the re-emergence of a state in Iraq. While Iraq currently has a government, it remains largely stateless. Restoring a real state in Iraq requires not just a government, but a government that is generally accepted as legitimate. No government created or installed by a foreign occupying power is likely to achieve legitimacy.

This poses a serious operational obstacle for U.S. forces in Iraq, one that is common in 4th Generation conflicts. While we can only win if a real state re-emerges, we cannot create such a state, nor be seen as doing so. When it comes to legitimacy, we have a reverse Midas touch. The operational question, therefore, is: how do we indirectly encourage and facilitate the re-emergence of a state in Iraq?

The basic answer, in the view of the seminar, is to facilitate a bottom-up re-creation of an Iraqi state by building connectivity among local areas that have achieved a reasonable level of security. There is no guarantee expanding connectivity will eventually lead to a state, but it seems to offer the best chance of attaining that decisive strategic goal.

The seminar’s specific ideas for developing increasing connectivity

include:

*Recognize that increased economic activity which raises local living standards is likely to be welcomed by the Iraqi people, and that restoring economic connectivity is a promising tool to that end. Until the American invasion and subsequent dissolution of the Iraqi state, Iraq had a national economy. The basis for a national economy therefore still exists in the minds and experiences of Iraqis (which is an advantage over some other stateless areas). Actions by U.S. forces that could encourage the growth of economic connectivity include:*

- *Establish safe roads for commerce between Iraqi cities.*
- *Provide capital for businesses that function beyond the local level, e.g., regional banks.*
- *Provide matching grants to fund local chambers of commerce, and increase the percentage of the match if the local chambers form regional and trans-regional chapters.*
- *Restore the railroads and water transport. Railroads in particular further regional and national commerce.*
- *Make traditional tourist and resort areas safe, along with routes to those areas from major cities.*

Beyond furthering regional and national commerce, ideas which could help the growth of connectivity include:

- *Fund the establishment and growth of regional and trans-regional educational institutions and sports leagues.*
- *Go beyond traditional “sister cities” arrangements to create “sister state/province” relationships between*

*American states and Iraqi provinces. Such a relationship between, for example, Anbar province and an economically powerful American state such as New York or California could provide multiple inducements to connectivity among local areas in Anbar.*

- *Create something similar to the Boy Scouts. A national Iraqi youth organization that brought young Iraqi men from different sects and regions together could help reduce the recruiting base for sectarian and local militias.*

These examples merely illustrate our point, the need and potential for using improved security in portions of Iraq to generate connectivity that may, in time and with luck, lead to the bottom-up creation of a genuine, legitimate Iraqi state, one that is accepted by most Iraqis. While working indirectly to generate such connectivity may seem like a strange approach to operational art to some military practitioners, we believe it does constitute a linkage between tactical successes and the strategic goal, which is the essence of the operation level of war. It should not surprise us that, in 4th Generation war, operational art will have to change as much as traditional tactics must change if U.S. forces are to achieve what we can honestly call victory.

*December 13, 2007*



# Major Wormwood Reports

From: Major Wormwood, III Section (Current Ops)

To: General Screwtape, Chief-of-Staff, Supreme Infernal Headquarters, Chateau de Malpense

Re: End of year net assessment

Sir:

Your Lucifership asked for a short report on the state of the world before the week of December 25, when all Hell is too weak to work. Please forgive my non-use of our wonderful invention, PowerPoint, but we are short of majors to make up the slides.

I am happy to be able to report that our net assessment is favorable. 4th Generation war, and the disorder it represents, continue to expand their reach. The formerly Christian West, crippled by two of our favorite tools, hubris and ideology, flails helplessly before it. II Section, Intelligence, shares our view that the 21st century promises to be even bloodier than the 20th.

We have suffered what we believe will prove a temporary setback in Iraq. Our Glorious Ally on the Eastern Front screwed the goat, to use one of our troops' expressions. al-Qaeda's premature enforcement of Sharia led Iraqi Sunnis to rebel, even to the point of making tactical alliances with the Americans. As a result, the level of violence is down.

This is, however, just a calm before the storm. The American leadership does not understand 4GW and persists in seeing the Iraq war in binary terms. It therefore misses the developments favorable to disorder: rising Shi'ite-on-Shi'ite violence, endemic crime of every sort, sectarian hatreds that grow ever more bitter and, most important,

the lack of anything recognizable as a state. We assess that the current relative quiet in portions of Iraq is illusory and will be followed by further disintegration and stateless disorder. Let me add one minor but happy assessment from Hell's standpoint: the American invasion has virtually destroyed Iraq's ancient Christian community.

Otherwise, the news is everywhere encouraging. Both NATO and the United States are getting bloody noses in Afghanistan and cannot adapt. Western governments' devilish combination of ignorance and hubris prevents them from accepting the primary Afghan reality, which is that the Pashtun always win Afghan wars.

The spillover from Afghanistan, in turn, is pulling Pakistan apart. We assess that the Pakistani state will disintegrate in the near future, with strategic consequences far more Hellish than anything possible in Iraq. The potential combination of 4GW and loose nukes is one we view with delight.

Adding to the witches' brew is the likelihood of an American attack on Iran, which we assess as unaffected by the recent American National Intelligence Estimate. As you are aware, the American White House has fallen into one of Hell's favorite traps, a closed system. With outside reality excluded and all decisions a product of court politics, the probability of blunders is almost 100 percent. The leadership's erroneous belief that it is now winning in Iraq adds to its already towering hubris. Putting the two together, we assess a 60 percent-70 percent probability that American bombers will be hitting targets in Iran by the end of March.

Our optimism, however, is based less on what is occurring in the Islamic world, which we own anyway, than on the West's internal folly. Here we see on a grand scale the consequences of the West's abandonment of Our Enemy and its embrace of irreligion, which is another name for Our Father Below.

Having accepted and internalized the cultural Marxism of the

Frankfurt School—please offer my most humble greetings to its distinguished members, on whom I know you dine regularly—Western elites embrace anything that promises the West’s destruction. From a military perspective, that includes invasion by millions of immigrants from other cultures, immigrants who regard the West and its traditions with loathing and contempt. Even as they spread 4th Generation war from one Western country to another, the elites’ ideology forbids any honest discussion of what is going on. Defense is impossible, because no Western country dare acknowledge it is under attack. I beg you offer Hell’s propaganda department my deepest thanks for the wonderful goblin-words it has created to stop all discussion; my two favorites are “racism” and “fascism.”

So long as the West busies itself in sandboxes such as Iraq and Afghanistan and ignores what is happening on its own soil, we assess that Hell’s victory is certain. By the end of the 21st century, our most dangerous opponent for two millennia, the Western Christian tradition, will be wiped off the earth and out of history. That will, we trust, be worth popping the corks in the Supreme Infernal Headquarters’ mess on more than a few bottles of warm goat urine.

We must put two qualifiers on this assessment. First, we assess a 10 percent probability that Western publics will rebel against their elites’ cultural Marxism and its demand for self-destruction. With cultural Marxists controlling virtually all Western institutions, including most churches, this is not something Hell need lose a day’s sleep over.

The other qualifier is that Our Enemy could intervene personally and restore “faith” in the West. As you know all too well, that is the sort of thing He has been known to do, often at great cost to Himself, just when things look brightest for us. I am happy to be able to say that assessing the likelihood of such an event requires access to black programs above my clearance level.

*December 19, 2007*

# Kicking the Can Down the Road

A piece in the December 27, 2007 *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, "Vote on fate of Kirkuk postponed," by Tina Susman and Asso Ahmed of the *L.A. Times*, reported that:

*"Kurdish lawmakers agreed Wednesday to a six-month delay in a referendum on whether the oil-rich city of Kirkuk should join the semi-autonomous region of Kurdistan or remain under Iraqi central government control...."*

"Also Wednesday, the head of the Iraqi parliament's constitutional review committee, Humam Hamoudi, said he would request a three-month delay in rewriting the national constitution. That would mark the fourth time the target date...has been put off...."

"The delay in the constitutional revision could hinder progress on other issues...."

As the Iraqis kick the can down the road, so do the Americans. The American-funded Sunni militia, aka the Concerned Local Citizens or the Awakening, has grown to 72,000 volunteers in nearly 300 communities in Iraq. They have been credited with reducing violence in some of Iraq's most violent areas. But many people, including some Sunnis, worry that the groups could destabilize Iraq.

The concern is a valid one. With our usual charming naiveté, we seem to think the Sunnis have become our friends. But they are merely using us to help them get ready for the next round with the Shi'ites and, in the case of Kirkuk, the Kurds.

In fact, kicking the can down the road, more formally a strategy of

delay, makes good sense in the face of Iraqi realities – provided we do something with the time gained. Regrettably, it appears we are doing little but sitting on our bayonets, waiting, like Mr. McCawber, for something to turn up.

What might we do with this pause between phases of the Iraqi civil war? Obviously, get out. Violence is not likely to diminish much further; at some point it will almost certainly start to rise again. What better moment can we hope for than the present to announce "Mission accomplished" and head for the door?

The Bush administration will not make a decision to withdraw no matter how favorable the opportunity. It has adopted the ugly baby approach, planning to hand the war off to its likely Democratic successor.

But what of the Democrats who control both Houses of Congress? Why do they keep funding the war, as they just did again?

The reasons are several, and none of them are pretty. Obviously, Democrats think they will garner more votes in November if the war is still going on with no end in sight. Running against "Bush's war" appears more promising than ending it.

Most of the leading Democratic Presidential candidates are ambiguous, at best, about ending the war in Iraq if they win. Why? In part, because just as the neocons now dominate Republican circles, so the Democratic Establishment is in thrall to the neoliberals. Both cabals of neos favor a world-dominating American empire, run of course by themselves. We are reminded once again that while there may be, at least on paper, two parties, there is one Establishment. It does not look favorably on ending the games off which it feeds.

Then there is the matter of a certain Small Middle Eastern Country which likes the war in Iraq, and hopes for a war on Iran as well. Said SMEC speaks with a loud voice in Democratic Party circles, the voice of campaign contributions. Never does money speak more audibly than

in an election year.

So the politicians will sit and wait while the time we have so dearly bought in Iraq runs out. In no human activity is time more precious than in war. Frittered away, it can never be recovered. There is good reason why Napoleon said, "I may lose a battle but I will never lose a minute."

If we are to make good use of the time kicking the can down the road has bought us, it falls to the senior military to do so. The moral burden of command demands that they go public and say, "If we are going to get out of Iraq, the time to do so is now." Some of them may get fired for it, although General Petraeus is probably again untouchable for a time. The Bush White House still will not be moved, but squirm as they might the Democrats in Congress would almost have to act or risk a revolt of their base, which is not very happy at the moment in any case.

Regrettably, as we saw throughout the war in Vietnam, American generals are more likely to step up to the trough than to the plate.

*January 10, 2008*

## Side Effects

As we observe the slow and increasingly certain disintegration of Pakistan, we should force ourselves to confront an uncomfortable fact: events in Pakistan are to a large degree side effects of our war in Afghanistan.

The Jan. 12 *Washington Times* headline was "Pentagon Spies al-Qaeda in Pakistan," as if this were somehow news. It quotes the Joint Chiefs of Staff chairman, Adm. Michael Mullen, as saying, "There are concerns now about how much [al-Qaeda] turned inward, literally, inside Pakistan ... so [the Pentagon is] extremely, extremely concerned about that...."

One can only respond, *quelle surprise!* Of course al-Qaeda turned inward inside Pakistan. First, Pakistan is strategically a vastly more important prize than Afghanistan or Iraq could ever be. Second, when guerillas are put under pressure in one place, they go somewhere else. Third, we have allowed ourselves to be put in the position of fighting the Pashtun in Afghanistan, and there are lots of Pashtun in Pakistan. War with the Pashtun is war with the Pashtun, to whom borders drawn in London mean nothing.

Our attempt to contain the damage in Pakistan instead set the wreckage on fire. We forced our friendly local dictator, General/President Musharraf, to line up publicly with George Bush, to the point where his local nickname is "Busharraf." It is not intended as a compliment. Worse, we pressured him into sending the Pakistani army into the Northwest Tribal Territories, where it has gotten its backside kicked at the same time that it has brought more tribesmen into the fight. Defeat plus destabilization plus de-legitimatization, most of it American-inspired, has left Pakistan's government teetering on the



edge of disintegration, with a real danger that the disintegration could spread beyond the regime to the Pakistani state itself.

Not content with mere disaster, the Bush administration wants to put out the fire it set by pouring gasoline on it. A story in the Jan. 6 *Cleveland Plain Dealer* reported that "President Bush's senior national security advisers are debating whether to expand the authority of the CIA and the military to conduct far more aggressive covert operations in the tribal areas of Pakistan."

Pakistan has publicly said no, but that won't stop the Bushies. If the tribesmen soon have American captives to display, what little is left of Musharraf's legitimacy will be beheaded along with them.

Again, the point to remember is that most of this is a side effect of the war in Afghanistan. Why is this important? Because it reminds us that the ill effects of bad strategy tend to spread. The bad strategy is invading, occupying and attempting to transform countries whose culture is vastly different from our own. That is the essence of the neocons' neo-Trotskyite vision of the world revolution, which the Bush administration has made its own. Nor is George W. Bush the neocons' only dupe: the same poisonous nonsense flows in the speeches of most of the presidential candidates, from Obama on the Left to McCain on the nominal Right. Only Ron Paul and Dennis Kucinich have dared suggest we might serve ourselves better by minding our own business.

In statecraft as in war, side effects can prove fatal. If Pakistan collapses, turning into another stateless happy hunting ground for al-Qaeda and numberless other Islamic 4GW organizations, our position in Afghanistan will quickly become unsustainable. Our grand strategic position in the whole Middle Eastern/Southwest Asian region will be reduced to a two-legged stool, not the most stable of platforms. Osama in his cave will be distinctly more comfortable than W. in the Oval Office.

How will the Bush administration respond to such a cascade of

unfortunate events? By doing what it plans to do anyway: bomb Iran.

*January 16, 2008*

# Crossing the Channel

For centuries, Continental wars that included Great Britain tended to follow a pattern. The British would send an army to the Continent; it would be defeated by the French or Germans; the British would withdraw to their island; and their triumphant European enemy would draw up a superior force on the French or Dutch Channel coast. There was little doubt about the outcome, should that army land in Britain. But it could never get across the English Channel.

A recent conversation over dinner with a Marine lieutenant colonel, formerly a battalion commander in Iraq, helped clarify the nature of our “crossing the Channel” challenge in 4th Generation war. With a combination of good counter-insurgency tactics that de-escalate confrontations, a strategy of protecting the population and some luck in the form of blunders by our 4GW opponents, we may be able to restore some degree of order in places where the state has disintegrated. We may further be able to take advantage of the restoration of order to get things working again on the local level: open the schools, turn the power back on, create some jobs, see local commerce revive.

What we do not know how to do, either in theory or in practice, is move from these local achievements to seeing the re-creation of a state. Yet in 4GW, that is crossing the Channel, because unless we can do that we cannot win the war.

As I have said before, the restoration of some degree of local security, such as we now see in parts of Iraq, does not in itself mean we are winning. Restoring local security is necessary to win, but not sufficient. The valid measure of victory is whether or not a state arises anew out of statelessness. If it does, the non-state elements who define 4GW lose, regardless of the nature of that state. If it does not, we lose

and they win. That's the bottom line.

At present, the best we can do toward seeing a state resurrect itself is try to build some connectivity between areas where relative order has been restored and hope for the best.

But this is substituting hope for operational art. It is the equivalent to the French or Germans sitting with their army on the Channel coast, hoping that a lucky wind or a chance conjunction of fleets or the intervention of the Archangel Michael might let them get across. The precedent is not encouraging.

The worst we can do is what we have done in Iraq and Afghanistan, which is to set up a puppet government under heavy American protection and pretend that it is a state. Such pretense fools no one, not even ourselves, as our deals with local sheiks in Iraq demonstrate.

Theory tells us what we cannot do: establish legitimate state institutions in occupied foreign countries whose cultures and traditions are very different from our own. Unfortunately, theory has no answer to the question of what we can do, beyond hope. As the old saying goes, hope makes a good breakfast but a poor supper.

The problem of crossing the Channel in 4GW is actually more difficult than it was for those French and German armies encamped on the Channel coast, hoping. They knew perfectly well how to cross the English Channel: in boats. They just could not do it in the face of the Royal Navy. As one admiral told the British cabinet during the French invasion scare of 1805, "I do not say the French cannot come. I only say they cannot come by sea."

We have the boats and we have the superior fleet, in the form of complete material supremacy over our 4GW opponents. What we do not have is an understanding of how to employ that superiority to regenerate a state out of statelessness. Until theory can give us such an understanding – and it may find the problem insoluble – we, like yet another attempt to invade England, the Spanish Armada, will sail in

expectation of a miracle.

*January 23, 2008*

# My Master's Voice

Yesterday I placed my annual call to my All-Highest War Lord and Sovereign Master, Kaiser Wilhelm II, to offer my usual felicitations on his birthday. His Majesty was laughing when he picked up the receiver, so after congratulating him I took the liberty of inquiring what Heaven found so funny.

"Democracy," His Majesty replied.

"I take it you are watching this year's Presidential election in the U.S.," I said.

"The flea circus? That's part of it," said the Kaiser. "It nicely illustrates one of democracy's contradictions, namely that no one who is willing to crawl and grub for votes can be worthy of the office to which he aspires. There's no place for the *nolo episcopari* in democratic politics, it seems, nor for anyone with the slightest shred of character. Your Giulianis and McCains, Clintons and Obamas are happy to eat every toad in the public garden."

"I think the American public is no happier with their options this year than is Your Majesty," I replied.

"Thereby illustrating another funny aspect of democracy," the Kaiser shot back. "Who do they think is responsible? They are, of course. No candidate who told them the truth could get above 10 percent in the polls. They want nostrums, bromides, comforting lies, and they won't tolerate anything else. America speaks of citizens, but all it has are consumers whose heads are as fat as their bottoms. That too is where democracy leads, to an ever-declining lowest common denominator. It cannot do anything else."

"The funniest aspect of the whole business," His Majesty

continued, "is that the lower America sinks, the more determined its politicians are to force democracy on everyone else. All but one of your Presidential candidates has pledged to continue crusading for democracy, despite the lessons of Iraq and Afghanistan. By comparison, even the late Spanish Hapsburgs were models of realism."

"The democracy advocates — and I trust Your Majesty knows I am not one — would reply that democracy is necessary to freedom," I suggested.

"Another contradiction," said the Kaiser. "Prussia in my day was far more free than America is today, because Prussians understood what freedom is. Freedom is not doing whatever you feel like. Freedom is replacing imposed discipline with self-discipline. No democratic office-seeker would dare say that, because the voters would not like it. They want to be told that they can do whatever they please — spend without saving, live immoral lives without degenerating, vote without thinking — and suffer no unfortunate consequences. If the public wants to square the circle, Presto! A hundred politicians promise to do it."

"I trust that Your Majesty's preferred alternative to democracy is monarchy, as is mine," I said.

"Yours, mine and Heaven's," the Kaiser replied. "As I have said before, Heaven is not a republic. Though there are, I think, two countries God intends should be republics."

"And those are?", I asked.

"Switzerland, to show that it can be made to work, and America, to serve as a warning to everyone else."

"Were America to wake up to the virtues of monarchy — and God knows our current election campaign should wake us up — who would you recommend for the American throne?", I inquired.

"An Austrian Hapsburg, I should think," said the Kaiser. "They are accustomed to ruling over ramshackle, polyglot, decaying empires. My

old friend Emperor Franz Josef did so remarkably well."

"One last question, if I may," I said. "Should America continue on the unhappy road of democracy, what lies in our future?"

"Let's just say that the combination of military defeat and economic depression is not a happy one," the Kaiser answered. "And now I must ring off. I hear the band of the Garde du Corps playing, which means it is time to review the troops. I think the tune is, 'And the World Turned Upside Down.'

*February 1, 2008*



## Die and Win

One of the more intriguing questions Clio poses is the degree to which great military victories were the fruit of smart plans as opposed to dumb luck. Did the North Vietnamese expect the Tet Offensive to be a tactical defeat but an operational victory? They now claim they did, but we will not know until their archives are opened.

The war in Iraq poses a similar question: to what degree was the Sunni insurgency part of Saddam's plan, as opposed to a reaction generated largely by bad American decisions after his government fell? The Jan. 26, 2008, *Washington Post* ran an article about Saddam Hussein's main American debriefer, George Piro, which may shed some light on that question. According to the *Post*:

*"Hussein's strategy upon facing the U.S. invasion was to tell his generals to try to hold back the U.S. forces for two weeks, 'and at that point, it would go into what he called the secret war,' Piro said, referring to the Iraqi insurgency."*

This "straight from the horse's mouth" statement would seem to settle the issue. It doesn't, because it was given after the fact. Just as we now claim the "surge" led to the improved security situation in parts of Iraq, so Saddam, in American captivity, might have sought to bolster his place in history by claiming the insurgency had been his idea all along. The widespread caching of weapons and explosives lends credence to his claim, but until we find documentary evidence dating back before the campaign opened, we cannot be sure.

Why is the question important? Because if Saddam did plan to defeat America by going to guerrilla warfare after losing the conventional campaign, we can be reasonably certain anyone else we

threaten with invasion will adopt the same plan.

Saddam was neither a wildly popular nor a particularly secure dictator. Few Iraqis saw him as the father of their country, the way many Chinese saw Mao or many Cubans look on Castro. The Kurds hated him, the Shi'ites hated him, and he had to hide behind elaborate security measures even among Iraqi Sunnis. If Saddam can take the risks associated with preparing for guerrilla warfare, including spreading arms thickly all over the country and devolving much power of command downward, so can almost anyone.

That in turn creates a not insubstantial roadblock in front of neocon or neo-lib plans to "liberate" other countries. Even if the American military triumphs in another "race to Baghdad" campaign, do the American people or Congress have the stomach (or wallet) to face another guerrilla war that drags on for years? Like any good defense plan, a plan for guerrilla war against a conventionally superior invader has deterrence value. No one in his right mind wants to get into the briar patch with the tar baby.

After his capture, Saddam played for a place in history, and he played that role well. If the Sunni insurgency was part of his plan for defeating the American invasion, he will have earned some credit as a military leader, despite his gross blunders in other wars. If, as I think inevitable, other countries faced with an American threat adopt the same plan, Saddam will have lodged a barb in his assailant whose poison will work for years. He died, but perhaps he also won. In the Arab world, at least, that is a respected combination.

*February 5, 2008*

# The Best Counterinsurgency: Unentangle

Retired Air Force Colonel Chet Richards has published another short, good book: *If We Keep It: A National Security Manifesto for the Next administration*. The "it" in question is a republic, which we are unlikely to keep since republics require a virtuous citizenry. But suggesting a rational, prudent defense policy for the next administration is sufficiently quixotic we might as well also pretend the republic can endure.

Richards' first major point is that most of our armed forces are "legacy forces," white elephants designed for fighting the Red Army in Europe or the Imperial Japanese Navy in the Pacific. They have little utility in a world where nuclear weapons prevent wars among major powers, wars with minor powers can be won easily and usually aren't worth fighting, and legacy forces generally lose against 4th Generation opponents. Although they are largely useless, these legacy forces eat up most of the defense budget. Richards would disband them, save the Marine Corps, some useful tac air (i.e., A-10s) and some sealift, and give the money back to the taxpayer.

That will happen when pork stops flying. But the point is a good one; most of what we are buying is a military museum. I disagree with Richards that the Marine Corps or any other major elements of the U.S. armed forces are 3rd Generation forces, forces which have institutionalized maneuver warfare. The Marines talk it, but it is not what they do. I would prefer to keep enough of the Army to face the Corps with some competition, rewarding whichever service actually makes it into the 3rd Generation. Bureaucratic competition is a good thing.

Perhaps Richards' sharpest point is that DOD's latest fad,

counterinsurgency, is something of a fraud. He notes that whereas states have often been successful in defeating insurgencies on their own soil, invaders and occupiers have almost never won against a guerrilla-style war of national liberation. Not even the best counterinsurgency techniques make much difference, because neither a foreign occupier nor any puppet government he installs can gain legitimacy. Despite the current "we're winning in Iraq" propaganda, both Iraq and Afghanistan are almost certain to add themselves to the long list of failures. If neither the U.S. Army nor the Marine Corps can do successful counterinsurgency, what can they do? That brings us back to Richards' first point.

While all these observations are useful, there is one suggestion in *If We Can Keep It* that the next administration desperately needs to follow, Richards' recommendations on grand strategy. As Germany discovered in both World Wars, if you get your grand strategy wrong, nothing else you do well matters; you still lose. At the moment, America's grand strategy suggests we have the national character of a rich kid schoolyard bully. Somebody hit us pretty good from the back, so in retaliation, we've beaten up on some weak kids in the playground, one of whom had nothing to do with it but whom we had been wanting to thrash anyway. In the meantime, we've left the real perpetrators alone, even though everybody is sure we know where they are, and we've been careful not to pick on kids who look like they might hit back.

Not very attractive, is it?

The best passage in Richard's book prescribes the grand strategic antidote:

*"As a first step, therefore, the country needs to return to its roots. We need to restore our innate suspicion of foreign entanglements and concentrate on being the best United States of America we can be."*

With the ghosts of our Founding Fathers, I reply, Hurrah! This is advice the next administration can take, should take and will take – if, and only if, our next President is Ron Paul.

*February 14, 2008*

# War or Not War

Between February 8 and February 14, four American schools suffered attacks by lone gunmen. The most recent, at Northern Illinois University on February 14, saw five killed and 16 wounded. Similar attacks have occurred elsewhere, including shopping malls.

Is this war? I don't think so. Some proponents of "5th Generation war," which they define as actions by superempowered individuals, may disagree. But these incidents lack an ingredient I think necessary to war's definition, namely purpose. In 4th Generation War, the purpose of warlike acts reaches beyond the state and politics, but actions, including massacres of civilians, are still purposeful. They serve an agenda that reaches beyond individual emotions, an agenda others can and do share and fight for. In contrast, the mental and emotional states that motivate lone gunmen are knowable to them alone.

The whole "5th Generation" thesis is faulty, in any case. However small the units that fight wars may become, down to the superempowered individual, that shrinkage alone is not enough to mark a new generation.

Generational changes are dialectically qualitative changes, and those are rare. Normally, a dialectically qualitative change only occurs after time has brought many dialectically quantitative changes, such as a downward progression in the size of units that can fight. In effect, quantitative changes have to pool behind a generational dam until they form so vast a reservoir that their combined pressure breaks through in a torrent. I expect it will take at least a century for the 4th Generation to play itself out. A 5th Generation will not be in sight, except as a mirage, in our lifetimes.

This is not to say that the lone gunman phenomenon, and its increasing frequency, are wholly unrelated to 4th Generation war. They have some common origins, I think.

At the core of 4GW lies a crisis of legitimacy of the state. A development that contributes to the state's crisis of legitimacy is the disintegration of community, or *Gemeinschaft*. Since the beginning of the Industrial Revolution and the rise of the powerful, highly intrusive state, community has increasingly been displaced by society, *Gesellschaft*, where most relationships between people are merely functional.

That progression has now gone so far that never before in human history have so many people lived isolated lives. I sometimes visualize a conversation between a Modern man and a Medieval man, where the proud Modern says, "You poor man! It must have been terrible living without air conditioning, automobiles, washing machines and hot showers." The Medieval man replies, "You poor man! It must have been terrible living so alone."

Isolation and the alienation, anomie and rage that proceed from it fuel both lone gunmen and a broad sense of detachment from the state. Why give loyalty to the state if the society it governs offers nothing but alienation? In turn, alternatives to the state, such as gangs, offer alternatives to isolation as well.

The commonality does not stop here. Increasingly, people who are cut off from other real people fill the void with virtual people. They spend their lives immersed in television, video games, the internet and so on. As Dave Grossman has demonstrated, those technologies can do an excellent job of turning loners into killers, both by overcoming their inhibitions to killing and by giving them refined shooter skills. The same technologies spread alternate loyalties, such as al-Qaeda, Deep Green environmentalism, (which has spawned numerous acts of terror, both here and in Britain) and a variety of other virtual worlds.

In sum, the decline of the state and the disintegration of community march on together. So, through the video screen, do the rise of alternate loyalties and the generation of lone gunmen. Both are part of the end of the Modern Age, facilitated and accelerated by technologies that are Modernity's penultimate achievements. As Ortega warned, civilized men are being replaced by technologically competent barbarians. Barbarians act out their emotions by killing, and they give their allegiance to chieftains, not states. Lone gunmen are not carrying on war, but the phenomena that create them also feed the 4th Generation. The calamitous 21st Century will give us more of both.

*February 21, 2008*



## Kosovo: Fools Rush In

If the Balkans had an anthem, it would be that 1950's doo-wop hit, "Fools rush in, where angels fear to tread." The latest Balkan fools are the United States and the European Union, which have rushed in to recognize what Serbian Prime Minister Vojislav Kostunica rightly calls the "fake state of Kosovo." Why is it a fake state? Because there are no Kosovars, only Serbs and Albanians. Each group seeks to unite Kosovo with its homeland, historic Serbia or Greater Albania. An independent Kosovo has the half-life of a sub-atomic particle.

The action of the U.S. and the E.U. in stripping Serbia of Serbs' historic homeland is both a crime and a blunder. It is a crime, first, because no one, not even the U.N., has a legal right to dismember a sovereign state, and second, because the narrative used to justify the illegal action is a lie. The stated justification is that the Serbs, under Slobodan Milosevic, were ethnically cleansing Kosovo of Albanians. As German courts have established, there was no ethnic cleansing of Albanians in Kosovo until NATO started bombing Serbia. After NATO launched Mrs. Albright's splendid little war, its unprovoked attack on Serbia, the Serbs dumped the Albanians on NATO's doorstep as a vast logistics sponge. That wasn't terribly nice, but when you are a very small country fighting all of NATO, you do what you can. Ironically, after Serbia was forced to capitulate when Russia withdrew her support, NATO blithely presided over the ethnic cleansing of two-thirds of Kosovo's Serbs by the Albanians.

In international affairs, blunders are worse than crimes, and two of the blunders contained in the recognition of Kosovo are likely to have consequences. The first is the creation of an *irredenta*, which guarantees another Balkan war. Serbia will never accept the wholesale alienation of one of her provinces. Like France after 1871, her whole

policy will focus on recovering her lost territory as soon as the moment is ripe.

The second blunder is further alienating Russia, this time in a way she cannot ignore. If the U.S. and the E.U. are blind to the ghost of 1914, Russia and Serbia are not. The fact that Russia went to war to protect Serbia then puts pressure on Moscow to do so again, lest the Putin government look weak domestically as well as abroad.

Washington and Brussels scoff at the thought, but Russia and Serbia certainly have military options. A guerrilla war against European and American troops and police in Serb-inhabited portions of Kosovo is likely to occur spontaneously, at least at a low level. IEDs and sniper ambushes are easy enough to arrange. Belgrade can ramp it up by smuggling in shaped-charge anti-armor mines, dual-warhead RPGs and sniper rifles, along with Serbian special forces to make sure they are used effectively. If Europe responds with economic measures against Serbia, Russia now has enough petro-dollars to support Belgrade economically. If NATO threatens a new bombing campaign, Russia can up the ante too by sending Russian air defense troops and equipment to Serbia. The last time NATO bombed Serbia, Russia was too weak to respond. That is not true now, nor is President Putin for sale the way Mr. Yeltsin was.

The last thing the world needs now is a new Balkan war, with NATO and Russia caught in a contest of mutual escalation. Is there a way to walk this dog back? I think there is, if Washington and Brussels regain some sense of reality. They can do what Bismarck did in 1878 and call a conference. There, a solution could be negotiated that all parties might live with, even if none really liked it. One such solution would be to partition Kosovo between Serbia and Albania, with Serbia compensated for her loss of some of Kosovo by being allowed to annex the Serbian portion of Bosnia. The fact that both Kosovo and Bosnia are fake states would make such a deal all the easier. As the E.U. has already discovered, maintaining fake states is an expensive and never-

ending business.

Fools rush in, but sometimes even fools are wise enough to back out again. Berlin, are you listening? The Congress of Berlin of 2008 may be as successful as the Congress of Berlin of 1878 in averting war in Europe.

*February 28, 2008*

# Linearity

One of several dead hands the 1st Generation of Modern War lays on contemporary state militaries' throats is linearity. Most state militaries both seek and expect linearity on and off the battlefield. Sometimes, this manifests itself in tactics that offer magnificent, if unintentional *tableaux vivants*. I recall a field exercise years ago with the Second Marine Division at Camp Lejeune where, rounding a bend, we found a lieutenant had built a perfect 19th-century fortress wall across the road, complete with firing step. The division sergeant major, in whose jeep I was riding, said, "My God, it's the siege of Vicksburg!"

More often, linearity manifests itself in a military service's culture, as a subtle but omnipresent mindset. It is easy to understand why this is so. Both on land and at sea, tactics became linear right at the beginning of the 1st Generation in the mid-17th century. In armies, that was when lines of infantrymen two or three deep replaced the square formations of the *tercios*. In navies, beginning with the British Navy in the Dutch Wars, the line ahead replaced the general melee. The two developments were causally related: the line ahead was adopted when generals took command of the British fleet under the Commonwealth.

The 1st Generation lasted about two centuries, centuries in which the culture of state militaries was formed. Linearity on the battlefield carried over directly into that culture, where it remains today. In 2nd Generation militaries, such as the American, the tactics too remained largely linear. As late as the First Gulf War a battalion commander in the Second Marine Division was nearly relieved for "breaking the line" when he pulled his unit back to avoid an Iraqi fire sack.

The expectation of linearity lies behind much of the U.S. military's misreading of the current situation in Iraq. If you look at its projections

of success, they follow a line. It foresees a linear "building process" where its alliance with some Sunni militias in Anbar province and parts of Baghdad leads to similar alliances elsewhere, with no regression in "pacified" areas. Similarly, it expects the Sunnis to follow their acceptance of U.S. forces with acceptance of the Shi'ite-dominated government in Baghdad and its army and police. These lines, which lead to improved security, then mesh with other lines such as economic and political developments that represent the reemergence of a state in Iraq. It graphs nicely as a series of vectors on a chart, all pointing up. Linearity has marched from Waterloo to PowerPoint.

Unfortunately, 4th Generation wars (and many other types of war as well) are not linear. Rather, they are chaotic, an unending melee of coming together and splitting apart that leaves an occupier running in place. Seemingly linear progress is matched or exceeded by non-linear regression. The state military perceives the former much more readily than the latter because linearity is what it expects. You find what you seek, whether or not it is there.

The reality in Iraq is that both Sunnis and Shi'ites are split along many different axes. Factions come together in temporary alliances of convenience, including with the foreign occupiers, only to split apart again and fight former allies. Reality for all parties is local and short-term. To the Iraqis, one alliance, such as with the Americans, does not imply any other alliance, such as with the central government. Arrangements that appear contradictory to us are natural to them. Linear progress toward a set of goals that represent a state is not what they expect. Our linearity and their non-linearity are ships passing in the night.

It will happen from time to time that the chaos shakes out into patterns in which we can see linear progress. But the reality remains chaos, which means the patterns will soon reform into other, quite different shapes. We cannot anticipate what those shapes might be. If we can be quick enough, we may be able to use some of those new

shapes, as we have used the unexpected outbreak of fighting between local Sunni militias and al-Qaeda. What we must not do, if our orientation is to be accurate, is project these kaleidoscopic pattern shifts in linear terms.

Regrettably, that is what the U.S. military in Iraq is doing now. Given its 1st Generation heritage, it may not be able to do anything else.

*March 4, 2008*

## Dollars and Sense

At a recent book party for Winslow Wheeler's new history of the Military Reform Movement of the 1970s and 1980s, I was asked for my views on the prospects for genuine reform. I replied that "So long as the money flow continues, nothing will change." Chuck Spinney, a reformer who spent decades as a polyp in the bowels of the Pentagon, agreed.

Events on Wall Street suggest that the day when the money flow stops may be approaching. Despite President Hoover's assurance that "Prosperity is just around the corner," the American economy is in free-fall. After decades of frivolity, that economy now amounts to little more than a pyramid of financial pyramids, all requiring a constant inflow of borrowed money. The inflow is endangered by the developing Panic of '08, where the junk mortgage crisis and the collapse of the housing market combine to dry up lending. What happens to pyramid schemes when money stops flowing in at the bottom? Maybe a recession; maybe a depression. That's why pyramid schemes are illegal, unless the government runs them.

A tanking economy and world credit markets tighter than Scrooge's sphincter will require large cuts in federal spending. That will include the Pentagon. If a new administration were to turn to the military reformers and ask us how to cut defense spending while still securing the country, what would we advise?

Here's what I would propose:

First, adopt a defensive rather than an offensive grand strategy. America followed a defensive grand strategy through most of her history. We only went to war if someone attacked us. That defensive grand strategy kept defense costs down and allowed our economy to

prosper. We do not have to be party to every quarrel in the world.

Second, scrap virtually all the big-ticket weapons programs such as new fighter-bombers, more Aegis ships, and the Army's Rube Goldbergian Future Combat System. They are irrelevant to where war is going.

We should not plan for conventional wars against hypothetical "peer competitors," which can only be Russia or China. We should do our utmost to make Russia an ally, and we should make a fundamental, bi-partisan national strategic decision that we will not go to war with China. Regardless of who "won" such a war, it would destroy both countries, just as the two World Wars destroyed both Germany and Britain. The world needs China to serve as a source of order in what will be an increasingly disorderly 21st century. We should welcome the growth of Chinese power, just as Britain learned (reluctantly) to welcome the growth of American power in the 20th century. It is only a threat to us if we make it one.

Third, as we cut, preserve combat units. That means, above all, Army and Marine Corps infantry battalions. Cut the vast superstructure above those battalions, but keep the battalions. Infantry battalions are what we need most for 4th Generation wars, which we should do our utmost to avoid but which we will sometimes be drawn into, even with a defensive grand strategy.

In the Navy, keep the submarines. Submarines are today's and tomorrow's capital ships, and geography dictates we must remain a maritime power. Keep the carriers, too, though there is little need to build more of them. Carriers are big, empty boxes, which can carry many things besides aircraft. Mothball most of the cruisers and destroyers. Build lots of small, cheap ships useful for controlling coastal and inland waters, and create strategically mobile and sustainable packages of such ships. Being able to control waters around and within stateless regions can be important in 4GW.



Fighter-bombers are largely useless in 4th Generation wars, where their main role is to create collateral damage that benefits our enemies. Keep the air transport squadrons and the A-10s, and move them all to the Air National Guard, which flies and maintains aircraft as well as or better than the regular Air Force at a fraction of the cost. Reduce the regular Air Force to strategic nuclear forces and a training base.

In all the services, vastly reduce the baggage train: the higher headquarters, the development commands, the education bureaucracies and the armies of contractors. As Mark Twain said of the male teat, they are neither useful nor ornamental.

Finally, as we cut, undertake reforms that cost little but will make our remaining forces more effective. Reform the personnel systems to create unit cohesion, eliminate the surplus of officers above the company grades and reduce careerism by ending up-or-out. Reform tactics and doctrine by moving from the 2nd Generation to the Third, which is to say from French attrition warfare to German maneuver warfare. This requires a change in military culture, in military education, and in military training. The adoption of 3rd Generation tactics, doctrine, and culture must be real, not just words on paper as it has been in the Marine Corps.

A program of military reform along these lines could give us more effective forces for 4th Generation wars and such minor conventional wars as we might face within a defensive grand strategy than the forces we now possess. It could do so for a defense budget less than half the size of the current budget. To the reigning Military-Industrial-Congressional Complex, that potential is a threat, not a promise. When the MICC's money runs out, it will suddenly become a necessity.

*March 12, 2008*

# Operation Cassandra

Admiral Fallon's resignation, which may have been forced, was the last warning we are likely to get of an attack on Iran. It does not mean an attack is certain, but the U.S. could not attack Iran so long as he was the CENTCOM commander. That obstacle is now gone.

Vice President Cheney's Middle East tour is another indicator. According to a report in *The American Conservative*, on his previous trip Cheney told our allies, including the Saudis, that Bush would attack Iran before the end of his term. If that report was correct, then his current tour might have the purpose of telling them when it is coming.

Why not just do that through the State Department? State may not be in the loop, nor all of DOD for that matter. The State Department, OSD, the intelligence agencies, the Army and the Marine Corps are all opposed to war with Iran. Of the armed services, only the Air Force reportedly is in favor, seeking an opportunity to show what air power can do. As always, it neglects to inform the decision-makers what it cannot do.

The purpose of this column is not to warn of an imminent assault on Iran, though personally I think it is coming, and soon. Rather, it is to warn of a possible consequence of such an attack. Let me state it here, again, as plainly as I can: an American attack on Iran could cost us the whole army we now have in Iraq.

Lots of people in Washington are pondering possible consequences of an air and missile assault on Iran, but few if any have thought about this one. The American military's endless "we're the greatest" propaganda has convinced most people that the U.S. armed forces cannot be beaten in the field. They are the last in a long line of armies that could not be beaten, until they were.

Here's roughly how it might play out. In response to American air and missile strikes on military targets inside Iran, Iran moves to cut the supply lines coming up from the south through the Persian Gulf—can anyone in the Pentagon guess why it's called that?—and Kuwait on which most U.S. Army units in Iraq depend. The Marines get most of their stuff through Jordan, so they are less vulnerable to Iranian attack. Iran would probably attack by hitting shipping in the Gulf, mining key choke points, and destroying the port facilities we depend on, mostly through sabotage. It would also hit oil production and export facilities in the Gulf region as a decoy: we focus most of our response on protecting the oil, not guarding our army's supply lines.

Simultaneously, Iran activates the Shi'ite militias to cut the roads that lead from Kuwait to Baghdad. Both the Mahdi Army and the Badr Brigades—the latter now supposedly our allies—enter the war against us with their full strength. Ayatollah Sistani, an Iranian, calls on all Iraqi Shi'ites to fight the Americans wherever they find them. Instead of fighting the 20 percent of Iraq's population that is Sunni, we find ourselves battling the 60 percent that is Shi'ite. Worse, the Shi'ite territories lie directly across those logistics lines coming up from Kuwait.

U.S. Army forces in Iraq begin to run out of supplies, especially POL, of which they consume a vast amount. Once they are largely immobilized by lack of fuel, and the region gets some bad weather that keeps our aircraft grounded or at least blind, Iran sends two to four regular army armor and mech divisions across the border. Their objective is to pocket American forces in and around Baghdad.

The U.S. military in Iraq is all spread out in penny packets fighting insurgents. We have no field army there anymore. We cannot reconcentrate because we're out of gas and Shi'ite guerrillas control the roads. What units don't get overrun by Iranian armor or Shi'ite militia end up in the Baghdad *Kessel*. General Petraeus calls President Bush and repeats the famous words of General Ducrot at Sedan: "*Nous*

*sommes dans un pot de chambre, et nous y serons emmerdés"*, Bush thinks he's overheard Petraeus ordering dinner.

U.S. Marines in Iraq, who are mostly in Anbar province, are the only force we have left. Their lines of supply and retreat through Jordan are intact. The local Sunnis want to join them in fighting the hated Persians. What do they do at that point? Good question.

How probable is all this? I can't answer that. Unfortunately, the people in Washington who should be able to answer it are not asking it. They need to start doing so, now.

It is imperative that we have an up-to-date plan for dealing with this contingency. That plan must not depend on air power to rescue our army. Air power always promises more than it can deliver.

As I have warned before, every American ground unit in Iraq needs its own plan to get itself out of the country using only its own resources and whatever it can scrounge locally. Retreat to the north, through Kurdistan into Turkey, will be the only alternative open to most U.S. Army units, other than ending up in an Iranian POW camp.

Even if the probability of the above scenario is low, we still need to take it with the utmost seriousness because the consequences would be so vast. If the United States lost the army it has in Iraq, we would never recover from the defeat. It would be another Adrianople, another Manzikert, another Rocroi. Given the many other ways we now resemble Imperial Spain, the last analogy may be the most telling.

I have said all this before, in previous columns and elsewhere. If I sound like Cassandra on this point, remember that events ended up proving her right.

*March 26, 2008*

# Prognosis

Most wars move not at a steady pace but in a series of fits and starts. For about half a year, we have been enjoying something of a lull in the war in Iraq. Anything that reduces casualties is to be welcomed. But the bulletins' claims that the downward trend in violence will continue should be seen more as political vapping than military analysis. Events begin to suggest that the lull is ending and Mars is in the ascendant.

To make a prognosis, we first must understand why we have enjoyed a period of relative quiet. There are four basic causes. In order of importance, they are:

1. al-Qaeda's alienation of much of its Sunni base, to the point where many Sunni insurgents changed sides. As I have pointed out before, al-Qaeda in Iraq made a common error of revolutionary movements: it attempted to impose its program before it had consolidated power. As best I can see from Olympus, it seems to be persisting in that error, perhaps because its loose discipline does not allow it to do otherwise. That is good news for us. But we dare not forget that in 4GW, all alliances are temporary. The Sunni Awakening militias like our money but they don't much like us.
2. Muqtada al-Sadr's decision to order his Mahdi Army to observe a truce, now extended to August of this year. The truce remains in his interest, because he needs to husband his strength for a winner-take-all final gambit.
3. Moving many U.S. troops off their FOBs and into neighborhoods where they can try to protect the population.
4. Last and not least, the surge. This usefully added some additional troops for #3, but without the former move it would have simply created more Fobbits. A question I have not seen addressed is what

percentage of the troops for #3 were already in the country. My bet is a large majority.

If we look at where each of these is now going, we see rough water ahead:

1. al-Qaeda in Iraq and other anti-U.S. forces are both attacking and penetrating Sunni militias now working with U.S. forces; the penetration tactic is likely to prove more effective. U.S. forces are also killing Sunni militiamen who are working with us, by accident of course, but sufficiently often to strain relations. Much of this results from our counter-productive and just plain stupid use of air power in a country we occupy. American attack aircraft are the best friends of al-Qaeda and the Taliban. The most powerful alienating factor is the irreconcilable hostility between most Sunnis and the Shi'ite government in Baghdad. The Sunnis know we created the government and remain allied to it. The government fears any armed Sunnis. We are left with one foot on the boat and one on the dock, a position that is difficult to sustain indefinitely.
2. Muqtada al-Sadr is feeling increasing pressure from his street to respond to U.S. attacks on Shi'ite neighborhoods. He has quietly been using U.S. and Iraqi government forces to whack dissenters within his own movement. But this can easily blow back on him. At this point his street cred is or soon will be on the line, at which point he has to respond or see his militia fragment. The Mahdi Army can send U.S. casualties soaring overnight.
3. Any rise in American casualties means politicians in Washington will want U.S. troops to head back to the FOBs. The absurd American definition of force protection means many within the military will want to do the same. Petraeus will stay the course, rightly, in this case, but he's on his way out. And just because we've gotten it right once doesn't mean we won't get it wrong again.
4. The extra troops brought over by the surge will go home this

summer. Again, this is far less important than what the remaining troops do, and points #1 and #2 also, but it is a factor.

The main story of the current lull is one of lost opportunity. Whether soon or in the more distant future, the war in Iraq will get hotter again. The lull gave us what might be our only opportunity to leave Iraq with some tailfeathers intact. Just as the Bush administration's blindness got us into this war, so its rigidity made us pass over our best chance to get out. Like opportunity, Mars only knocks once. Next time, he blows the building.

*March 27, 2008*

# Die Panzerwaffe

Bruce Gudmundsson, author of the best book on the development of modern tactics by the German Army in World War I, *Stormtroop Tactics*, has a new book out. Its title is *On Armor*, but thankfully, it is not just another book about tanks. Most books about tanks, like most books about fighting ships and combat aircraft, are essentially children's literature. Their invariable theme is "Look at the big tank/cruiser/fighter go bang/boom/splat."

In contrast, what *On Armor* offers is tanks and other armored fighting vehicles in multiple contexts. The contexts, not the tanks, make this book valuable and important.

One context is combined arms. That tanks fight as one element of combined arms may seem obvious today, but as Gudmundsson notes, it was not obvious to many early tank theorists. Much of *On Armor* is devoted to discussing the evolution of armored units and the many types of vehicles other arms required if they were to work with tanks. Armored personnel carriers, mechanized *Sturm* and anti-tank artillery, and armored cars all share the limelight here with tanks. More important than the vehicles are the functions other arms performed when working with tanks. Gudmundsson correctly writes that in World War II, the Germans always made an initial breakthrough with infantry, saving the tanks for exploitation. Furthermore, when they tried breaking through with tanks, they failed.

Particularly good is *On Armor's* discussion of the evolution of the *Sturmeschutz* and *Panzerjager* in World War II. In the 1970's, in a small group discussion with General Hermann Balck, someone asked him how, on the Eastern Front, he had used these two vehicle types compared to the way he used tanks. He replied, "I used them all the



same way.” When he was asked about the utility of motorcycles, another vehicle type covered by *On Armor*, he said, “Their only problem was that I could never get enough of them.”

Another context that runs through *On Armor* is the tension between two characteristics armored vehicles require if they are to be effective, operational mobility and tactical combat power. Gudmundsson establishes this context at the outset, on the book’s first page:

*On Armor is not just another book about tanks. Rather, it is an attempt to make sense of nearly a hundred years of interplay between the two definitive characteristics of armored fighting vehicles – tactical utility and operational mobility. (The former is the ability to fight. The latter is the ability to rapidly travel over long distances in the absence of significant enemy forces.)*

The U.S. Army, which has only the most rudimentary understanding of operational art, has designed its tanks, especially the M-1 Abrams, for tactical utility with little thought for operational mobility. This is typical of 2nd Generation, French-model armies. The Abrams is essentially the latest version of the French Char B.

In contrast, German and Soviet tanks were designed to serve a doctrine of operational mobility. Not many years ago, a friend of mine was being shown over the German Leopard II tank by a German officer, who kept stressing the tank’s wide tracks. Puzzled, the American finally asked, “What’s the big deal about wide tracks?” The German officer replied, “The Pripet marshes!”

*On Armor* concludes with an especially thoughtful discussion of the future of armor. Gudmundsson writes:

*At the beginning of the story, these two characteristics (operational mobility and combat power) are embodied in very different classes of vehicles. Light armored vehicles (initially armored cars and trucks) had operational mobility while tanks had*

*combat power...In the middle of the story, which also coincides with the middle of the twentieth century, the two principle virtues of the armored vehicle are embodied in a single class of vehicle: an all-purpose tank such as the German Panzer III, the Soviet T-34, or the American Sherman. It was not long, however, before the two lines began to diverge again. By the end of the twentieth century, it was no longer possible to combine both operational mobility and first-class combat power in a single vehicle.*

I am not sure it is no longer possible, and I would probably use the German Panzer IV with the long-barreled 75 mm gun rather than the Panzer III as the German example, but Gudmundsson is correct about the divergence. The U.S. Marine Corps' wheeled Light Armored Vehicle was originally conceived as a way to give some Marine units operational mobility at a time when the M-1 Abrams was taking it away from tank battalions. *On Armor* is a fine book, one that is essential to understand many of the developments in land warfare in the 20th century. 4th Generation war renders much of the history that and nothing more; in 4Gw conflicts, all tanks in effect become *Sturmgeschütze*.

Operational art is practiced on the mental and moral levels of war as great sweeps of armored formations deep in the enemy's rear become militarily meaningless.

But history remains important as a history of how people thought through the problems of earlier times. *On Armor* offers that history of armored warfare better than any other book on the subject.

*April 1, 2008*

## A Confirming Moment

When Iraqi Prime Minister al-Kerensky sent his army to fight the Mahdi Army in Basra, President Bush called it a defining moment. It turned out instead to be a confirming moment. It confirmed that there is no state in Mesopotamia.

One of the most common signs that America's leadership is clueless about 4GW is the language they use. 4th Generation war has few, if any, defining moments. Nor does it have turning points, another common Bushism. In his testimony on Tuesday, General David Petraeus revealed the limits on his own grasp of 4GW when he said, "We've got to continue. We have our teeth into the jugular, and we need to keep it there." 4GW opponents have no jugular. 4GW is war of the capillaries. What we have our teeth into in Iraq is a jellyfish.

If we are to see Iraq and other 4th Generation conflicts as they are, and not through the looking glass, we need to use words more carefully. Because there is no state in Iraq, there is also no government. Orders given in Baghdad have no meaning, because there are no state institutions to carry them out. The governmental positions of Iraqi leaders have no substance. Their power is a function of their relationship to various militias, not of their offices. Mr. al-Maliki has no militia, which means he is a figurehead. The so-called Iraqi army and police are groupings of Shi'ite militias, which exist to fight other militias and which take orders from militia leaders, not the government. Government revenues are slush funds militia leaders use to pay their militiamen. All of these phenomena, and many more, are products of the one basic reality: there is no state.

The failure of Mr. al-Maliki's big push into Basra put Iraq's statelessness on display. Ordered to do something it did not want to do,

the Iraqi "army" fell apart, as militias usually fall apart when given unwelcome directives. Iraqi soldiers and police went over or went home, in considerable numbers. Those who did fight had little fight in them; the affair reportedly ended with the Mahdi Army controlling more of Basra than it did at the beginning. Mr. al-Maliki, desperate for a cease-fire, had to agree in advance to any conditions Muqtada al-Sadr cared to impose.

American policy proved even more reckless than that of Mr. al-Maliki. To win in Iraq, we must see a state re-emerge. That means we should stay out of the way of anyone with the potential to recreate a state. Muqtada al-Sadr is at or near the head of the list. The al-Maliki government isn't even on it.

So what did we do? Why, we went to war against al-Sadr on behalf of al-Maliki, of course. Our leadership cannot grasp one of the most basic facts about 4GW, namely that the splintering of factions makes it more difficult to generate a state. Should we have the bad luck to win this latest fight and destroy the Mahdi Army, we will move not towards, but further away, from that goal.

In the end, the administration's insistence that the Iraqi state, government, army and police are real blinds only itself. Iraqis know they are not. The American public knows they are not. The average Hottentot probably knows they are not. Do the members of the Senate Committees on Armed Services and Foreign Relations know less than the average Hottentot? Last week's hearings suggest as much; such is the power of empty words.

*April 18, 2008*

# Evaluating 4GW Missions

I spent last week with the Royal Marines in Plymouth, England, at a conference where they were trying to prepare intellectually for deployment to Afghanistan's Helmand province. Inspired perhaps by the atmosphere of historic Stonehouse Barracks, where Marines who served at Trafalgar once drilled, I came up with an approach to one of 4GW's most difficult theoretical challenges, connecting the relationship between the three traditional levels of war—tactical, operational, and strategic—and John Boyd's three new levels of war: the physical, the mental and the moral. The 4GW seminar wrestled endlessly with this problem with little success. If what I will lay out here works—which I leave to others to judge—it may represent a small step forward.

The major general leading the conference asked for two products, a "Why We're There" statement and some sort of graphic that could serve as an evaluative tool over the long term. Thinking about the second, it seemed to me the place to start was with a mission-type order that would encompass the entire British effort. The commander's intent is clear: restore order in Helmand province. 4GW theory suggests the *Schwerpunkt* should be de-escalation, because that is what promises to be decisive in restoring order. What we need is a mission generator that permits us to evaluate missions in terms of supporting the intent and the *Schwerpunkt*.

I suggested a simple grid, three boxes across and three down. Those across would be labeled "Physical" "Mental" and "Moral;" those down, "Tactical" "Operational" and "Strategic."

How would the grid work to evaluate possible missions? Let's consider three examples, looking just at the basics; in a column, I don't

have the space to fill in every box. First, killing the enemy: physically it reduces threats to order, mentally it makes some potential enemies afraid to fight us, but morally it turns us into Goliath and also obligates the relatives of those we kill to fight us in their blood-feud culture. Going down, it counts as a win tactically, offers little but attrition operationally and works against us strategically because every fight is an escalation that diminishes order. Since a higher level dominates a lower, on both scales killing the enemy is a net negative.

Next, consider capturing the enemy. Physically, it is harder and riskier than killing him. Mentally, it may be less frightening and therefore less effective. But morally it works in our favor because the strong appear merciful when prisoners are treated well and a suspicion of cowardice hangs over anyone who surrenders. Looking down, a capture is equal tactically to a kill as a win, operationally it is still just attrition warfare but strategically it is a plus because captives are useful chips in bargaining de-escalatory deals. Net result: missions should put a premium on capture vice killing.

Let's look at one more example, this time originating at the operational level. How might our grid help us evaluate moving out of FOB's into villages, towns and cities? Physically, the risk to our troops goes up. Mentally, we may be more apprehensive but the people become less frightened of us as they get to know us. Morally, it is a huge plus because we are now protecting the people instead of living in isolation in order to protect ourselves. Going down, tactically we may have to suffer more casualties than we inflict in order to de-escalate, which puts high demands on the self-discipline of the troops; operationally, it is a plus because when we establish order locally we are serving the intent; and strategically, the spread of order is what leads to mission accomplishment and our return home.

As the boxes fill and as we evaluate many potential missions, we begin to be able to do what John Boyd called many-sided cross-referencing. Of course, in considering the grid we must never forget the

intent and the Schwerpunkt, which are the first touchstones for any mission evaluation.

The Royal Marine major general who led the conference said the grid may be useful for considering second-order effects. I think that is true. But it is important that we not consider effects at the mental and moral levels to be secondary (which should not be confused with second-order). A 2nd Generation military will be tempted to do so, because it still thinks of the physical level as being the dominant one. We see that error repeated daily in a hundred ways in both Iraq and Afghanistan. Just as the operational and strategic levels dominate the tactical, so the mental and moral levels trump the physical. I think the Royal Marines understand that, as do many U.S. Marines. The armies of both countries, on the other hand, do not.

*May 21, 2008*

# Ancient History

When the world was young and hope dared live in Washington, a small group of people put together something called the Military Reform Movement. Its purpose was to measure defense policies and programs by the standard of what works in combat rather than who benefits financially. Launched in the 1970s, it peaked in the early 1980s and was gone by 1990. Why did it fail? Because in a contest between ideas and money, money always wins.

Two authors, Winslow Wheeler and Larry Korb, recently published a history of the Military Reform Movement, *Military Reform: A Reference Handbook*. Win Wheeler was in the thick of it at the time as a staffer to several members of the Congressional Military Reform Caucus. Larry Korb was on the peripheries, one of Washington's innumerable unemployed jockeys looking for a horse to ride.

To make my own position clear, I was initially a staffer to the Senator who started the whole thing, Bob Taft, Jr. of Ohio, then subsequently to Senator Gary Hart, who gave the movement its name and founded the Caucus with Representative Bill Whitehurst of Virginia. I was also part of the informal "Reform Group," which included John Boyd, Pierre Sprey, Jeff Record and Norman Polmar, that did the intellectual work for the Caucus.

The book's stronger chapters are those by Wheeler, who pulls no punches when discussing the ways various members of Congress betrayed the reform cause. The Washington Game is to create an image with the public that is a direct opposite to what the Senator or Congressman actually does behind closed doors, and the Caucus saw plenty of that game. Standouts were Senator Bill Cohen of Maine, who attended Caucus meetings while busily working with Senator John



Tower to block any reform of the Navy. Cohen subsequently went on to be perhaps the most ineffectual Secretary of Defense in the Department's history. Newt Gingrich really understood reform and played a big role in the early history of the Caucus, but did nothing to advance its ideas once he gained power. Dick Cheney also used reform to generate a public image, but now, as Vice President, does nothing.

As I said years ago to a Marine friend who was trying to get a job on Capitol Hill, working as Hill staff is the post-doctoral course in spiritual proctology. Wheeler's chapters dissect many an ass.

He does an equally good job on the press, which did what it always does: build something up to create news and then tear it down again to create more news. What drew many members of Congress to the Reform Caucus was the opportunity it offered to get some good ink. When the wind started blowing the other way, those illustrious legislators blew with it. But the corruption of the press itself is a story told less often, and it needs telling. Why do defense companies buy full-page ads in major newspapers? Not because anyone buys a fighter plane based on a newspaper ad, but because the six-figure price for a full page buys the newspaper.

Larry Korb's most important chapter is on "Defense Transformation," and he makes something of a hash of it. "Transformation" is the latest buzzword for what began as the "Revolution in Military Affairs," the notion that new technology would magically eliminate war's confusion, uncertainty and friction. Reform always took the opposite view, namely that to be effective in war, technology must be used in ways that conform to war's nature. Korb fails to see Reform and Transformation as opposites and enemies, although in the end he does lay out how Transformation failed in Iraq.

Wheeler's last chapter defines reform, with the hopeful purpose of renewing it and making its ideas available to a new President. The fiascos in Iraq and Afghanistan, coupled with federal spending that is endangering the country's financial stability, should put military reform

back on the political front burner. But that “should” means nothing in Washington, where all that counts is helping the usual interests feed off the nation's decay. The only presidential candidate who might pick up the reform agenda is Bob Barr, if he gets the Libertarian nomination.

The book concludes with four important appendices, including a superb piece by Don Vandergriff on improving military education. The Vandergriff piece alone is worth the price of the book.

It may be that the Military Reform Movement remains nothing but a historical footnote, one of many vain attempts to rescue a decaying empire from its appointment with history's dustbin. But as Win Wheeler makes clear in *Military Reform: A Reference Handbook*, it was also the source of some important ideas on how to win wars and, for those of us who were involved in it, a hell of a ride.

*May 29, 2008*

## Not Checking Six

As the U.S. remains fixated on two 4th Generation wars half a world a way, in Iraq and Afghanistan, 4GW is knocking at our back door. The death spiral of the Mexican state appears to be accelerating. To quote just one illustrative bit of evidence, the *Cleveland Plain Dealer* recently reported that:

*Seven Mexican federal agents looking for an arms cache died early Tuesday in a shootout with gunmen in the northern state of Sinaloa, officials said. The agents came under fire when they went to search a home in Culiacan, the state capital. Four other agents were wounded. At least one gunman was reported killed during the confrontation, which came as a wave of drug-related violence has washed over Mexico.*

The fact that seven government agents were killed and four wounded while only one 4GW fighter died suggests the raid was tipped off. The Mexican security forces have been so thoroughly penetrated by criminal gangs of every sort that the government's hands have been cut off. It may want to reassert the state's authority, but it has no uncompromised means of doing so.

Here we see a model of 4GW that is likely to be much more common than what we are now fighting in Iraq and Afghanistan, where the state has disappeared, despite our frenetic efforts to make its corpses, the al-Maliki and Karzai governments, gibber and dance. Most 4GW entities, unlike al-Qaeda, have no need to overthrow the state. They just need to render it sufficiently impotent to prevent it from interfering with their activities, as Hezbollah has done in Lebanon.

This will generally best be accomplished quietly, by taking relevant

aspects of the state from within. Those aspects may include the security forces, which usually are not difficult to penetrate; leading politicians, who can be bought, bullied, or both; and elements of the media. Mexican drug gangs have been effective in killing local political leaders and media figures who have opposed them. Others can be counted on to get the message.

The result is not the disappearance of the state but its hollowing out. To the outside world it remains a state, with all the sovereign rights of a state. Internally, it becomes a Potemkin village, a stage-setting on which dramas like elections can be played out while 4GW entities go about the real business of ruling. Often, that business will include much of the country's economy, which the state dares not throttle even if it could.

As I have noted previously, operating within a hollowed-out state may benefit many 4GW entities more than replacing the state. A Potemkin state protects 4GW organizations from foreign attack; the U.S. cannot go after drug gangs within Mexico except in a surreptitious manner, because doing so would violate Mexican sovereignty. The penetrated Mexican government will ensure that any cooperation with U.S. anti-drug efforts will not go beyond a check-the-box level. Everyone benefits from maintaining the fiction of a state: the 4GW gangs, the Mexican economy, the bank accounts of Mexican politicians, and the U.S. government, which can tell the rubes back home we are fighting the drug war in what amounts to shadow boxing.

Our continued fixation on just one 4GW threat, that from Islam in a geographically remote part of the world, has left our back door wide open. Like an aviator who doesn't check his six, we have set ourselves up to get hosed. To borrow from General Patton's famous metaphor, we have grabbed our own nose and presented our tail to our opponent for a good kicking. Anyone with the misfortune to live near our southern border, or have responsibility for security in that area, will attest that it hurts.

All this and much more is the price we are paying for our twin Syracuse Expeditions, our quixotic crusade to force democracy and the Brave New World on Iraq and Afghanistan. America desperately needs leadership that will at least attempt to reconnect with reality, including the fact that the U.S.-Mexican border does not presently exist. Those who insist on keeping their head in the clouds will find their ass on the ground, shot down in flames.

*June 2, 2008*

## *Pyrrhic Victory*

Robert Doughty's *Pyrrhic Victory: French Strategy and Operations in the Great War*, published in 2005, completes his trilogy on the French Army from 1914 to 1940. Both of his other books, *The Seeds of Disaster*, which is the definitive history of French Army doctrinal development between the wars, and *The Breaking Point*, the story of the French defeat at Sedan in 1940 when the 2nd and 3rd Generations of modern war met head-on, are in the canon. For those new to 4GW literature, the canon is the list of seven books which, read in the correct order, take the reader from the 1st Generation into the 4th.

Those who characterize the French as "cheese-eating surrender monkeys" would do well to read *Pyrrhic Victory*. France bore the main burden of World War I on the Western Front, the weight of which would have crippled any country. France lost almost 1,400,000 men killed or missing in action from a population of only 39 million, plus another 4,000,000 wounded. On average, she lost 890 soldiers killed every day from August of 1914 to November, 1918. Adjusting for population, that would roughly equal America suffering 7,000 soldiers killed daily for more than four years. Does anyone think today's American society could stand that?

*Pyrrhic Victory* is relevant to the American armed forces today on several grounds. First, it is the story of the development of methodical battle, which was largely a creation of General Petain, who comes across in this book as France's most thoughtful general. The U.S. armed services learned methodical battle from the French Army during and after World War I, and it remains the heart of American military doctrine today. As Doughty writes, "Within the constraints of the methodical battle, rigid centralization and strict obedience—not decentralization, initiative, or flexibility—became the bywords of the

officer corps." So they remain today. Several years ago, an instructor at the U.S. Army Armor School at Ft. Knox began his first lecture by saying, "I don't know why I have to teach you all this old French crap, but I do."

The answer to that captain's question is also illustrated in *Pyrrhic Victory*. Militaries have enormous continuity over time. Prior to World War I, the French Army's doctrine was to take the offensive under all circumstances. That doctrine killed almost half-a-million French soldiers in the four months from August to November of 1914 and nearly cost France the war right then and there. Nonetheless, it kept rearing its head again and again throughout the war, despite Petain's bitter and justified resistance. Reincarnated in the Nivelle offensive in April 1917, it failed again so disastrously that the French Army mutinied.

The common picture of World War I is of dunderheaded inability to learn on the part of all participants. It was certainly not true of the Germans, but Doughty's book tends to confirm the image for the Allies. The French, for all their slowness is giving up the *offensive á outrance*, nonetheless learned faster than the British, Russians or Americans, all of whom seemed to measure success in their own casualties. In the American Expeditionary Force's appallingly bad staff work lies the origin of another outdated habit of the U.S. military, the fixation of its schools on developing staff officers rather than commanders. The astounding degree to which the early 21st century U.S. armed forces still revolve around World War I is evident to historians, but apparently invisible to American soldiers and Marines.

There is also a lesson about learning in the German Army in *Pyrrhic Victory*, though it must be read between the lines. Doughty makes clear just how close the great German offensive of 1918 came to success. Why did it fail? As General Max Hoffman, one of the best operational minds in the WWI German Army, hints in his memoirs, German operational reserves were improperly deployed. That, I think,

was at least in part a consequence of Germany's fixation of developing the tactics that broke the deadlock of the trenches. Focusing on just one aspect of the challenge, the Germans neglected, and thereby forgot, some of their expertise at operational art—fatally, since in war a higher level dominates a lower.

These lessons are all relevant to the U.S. military in Iraq and Afghanistan today, because they are lessons about how militaries learn, or fail to learn, or learn while forgetting another. Could someone someday write a book about our current wars with the title *Pyrrhic Victory*? No, because we are not going to win those wars. Is there such a thing as Pyrrhic defeat?

*June 13, 2008*



# The Yellow Press

A person my age has watched many things decline in America, and few of them get any better. As one of my neighbors says, everything good is gone or going. In that category we must now include good reporting. When I started work in Washington in 1973, it was axiomatic that a newspaper reporter talked to many sources for any story. The story, in turn, reflected a number of viewpoints and perspectives. No reporter worth his bourbon would have dreamed of just printing some press release put out by the government.

But that is now what they all seem to do, especially in covering the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Forgetting that the phrase "to lie like a bulletin" is military in origin — the reference is to bulletins issued by Napoleon's *grande armée* — they print verbatim the happy talk the Bush administration obliges the U.S. military to spew. To the degree the war in Iraq is still covered, the American public is assured over and over that "violence is down." For the moment, that is true, but the implication that we are on a roll is not. 4th Generation wars do not move in linear fashion. Violence is down because the constantly shifting network of deals and alliances among Iraq's warlords has created a stable interlude. Those alliances will continue to shift, and as they do so violence will rise again. How many reporters are asking the talking dog majors who brief the press the central strategic question, namely whether there is any evidence a state is re-emerging in Iraq? As best I can tell, none. The same number appears to be trying to answer that question from other, more reliable sources.

The reporting on Afghanistan is, if anything, worse. On Sunday, June 22, the *Cleveland Plain Dealer* printed an AP article under the headline, "Marines drive Taliban from volatile province," the province being Helmand. The article itself more modestly claims victory in one

Helmand town, Garmser. If the 24th MEU has driven the Taliban out of Helmand province, I'll eat my yurt. One town, maybe, but what does taking a town mean in a guerilla war? When the Marines leave, which they will, the Taliban will return.

The fact of the matter is, the whole NATO/U.S. effort in Afghanistan is circling the drain. The American papers should be full of in-depth, multi-sourced stories about the war there. A friend just back from Britain reports that the British press is full of just such stories. In one recent ten-day period, the Brits lost nine soldiers killed, including their first woman. Was that reported anywhere in the U.S. press?

What lies behind the decline in the quality of American reporting? Cutbacks in the size of newsrooms are part of the answer. As the electronic image replaces the printed word, newspapers are dying. To those who know that perceiving reality requires more than shadows on the cave wall, that is bad news.

Lazy reporters are another part of the answer. It is easy to print the bulletins. Reporters have always been lazy, but now their editors let them get away with it. Not too many decades ago, any reporter who single-sourced a story would have been sent back on the street to get more sources, with a richness of invective few editors lacked in those days.

But the biggest reason, I suspect, is intellectual cowardice. After the defeat in Vietnam, many supporters of the war blamed the press for our failure. By printing the bad news, the press supposedly undermined popular support for the war and thereby caused our defeat. It's poppycock, of course. The Vietnam War was lost early in the game when the Military Assistance Command, Vietnam, at the demand of General William Depuy, ordered an end to efforts to control the populated coastal lowlands in favor of fighting formal battles against the enemy main forces in the highlands. Those units were sent there as bait, which MACV took.

But the American press was scarred by the accusations. Now, it is afraid to be accused of not supporting the troops if it does anything but print the bulletins. So the American public gets the mushroom treatment, and two failed wars continue ad infinitum. When the roof falls in both in Iraq and in Afghanistan, the shock will be considerable. America's yellow press will deserve no small share of the blame.

*June 25, 2008*

# The Necessary War

Pat Buchanan's new book, *Churchill, Hitler, and the Unnecessary War: How Britain Lost Its Empire and the West Lost the World*, is causing a stir, which is a good thing. Buchanan argues that both World War I and World War II were unnecessary wars; that Britain bears at least as much responsibility for both as Germany; that Winston Churchill was "the indispensable man" in reducing Britain from a world-encircling empire to "a cottage by the sea — to live out her declining years;" and that the consequence of the Western civil war that encompassed both World Wars—and the Cold War—has been the fall of the West.

Buchanan is correct on all counts. His book represents a counterattack in the necessary war, the war to introduce Americans to genuine history. At present, most Americans know only a comic-book version of history, one in which Germany deliberately started both World Wars as part of a drive to conquer the world, a drive stopped when valiant American armies defeated the German army. And, oh yes, some Brit named Churchill beat the Luftwaffe in the Battle of Britain. Thanks to the victories of the freedom-loving allies, we now live in the best of all possible worlds, where everyone can be a part of a democracy.

Nothing of the comic-book version of history is true, not even the Battle of Britain bit. Curiously, the key British records from the Battle of Britain remain classified "secret"; it seems the RAF was on the ropes. Buchanan goes after the rest of it with spirit and zest, demolishing it utterly. As Colonel House told Woodrow Wilson after talking extensively with Kaiser Wilhelm in 1915, the Kaiser neither wanted nor expected war. I have seen the last, desperate telegram he sent the Tsar, trying to avoid a general European war. He was mocked

for years before the war by many Germans as the "Peace Kaiser" because in crisis after crisis he backed down. Kaiser Wilhelm knew, as did Theodore Roosevelt, that a World War would cost the West its world dominance.

Because World War I was unnecessary, so was World War II, which was really a resumption of World War I. Buchanan goes further and argues that had Britain and France not offered a wildly imprudent guarantee to Poland in the spring of 1939, there would have been no war in the West. Hitler wanted to fight Stalin, not the Western powers. That too is true, but Buchanan makes one assumption I am not so sure of, which is that Germany would have defeated the USSR. As it was, World War II was fought mostly in the east, and it was the Red Army, not the comparatively small British and American armies, that defeated the Wehrmacht. Could Stalin have done it alone? Maybe.

In both World Wars, the U.S. came out a winner because it left most of the fighting to others. In World War I, Germany was defeated by the illegal starvation blockade. The French army bore the brunt of the war in the west. Buchanan's debunking of Churchill is thorough and valuable. Churchill was brilliant, forceful, imprudent, and often wrong. A howler for war both in 1914 and 1939, he may not have sought to preside over the dissolution of the British Empire, but it was his own fault that he did. Prudence, which means evaluating prospective actions in terms of their probable long-term effects, is the first political principle of conservatism, and the debacles created by Churchill illustrate why. At heart, he was far more Whig than Tory. Burke would have loathed him.

Buchanan's historical revisionism is welcome on several counts. The neocons have elevated an unhistorical Churchill into the patron of interventionism, selling him in Washington and elsewhere like saints' bones. It is a snare for the simple, with George W. Bush numbered among them.

Debunking comic-book history and replacing it with the real thing

is vital if America is to avoid the dual trap of cultural Marxism and Brave New World. As ideologues and totalitarians everywhere have long known, if you can cut a people off from their past, you can do whatever you want with them. We need a similar debunking of the comic book history of the Civil War now fed to Americans, in which it was all about slavery.

Buchanan's relevance comes from the sad fact that America is now duplicating Churchill's central error, imprudence. We have entered into two wars with little thought for their long-term consequences. Washington hands out guarantees, similar to Britain's to Poland, all over the world like penny candy, with no consideration of where they may lead. We give less thought to the potential future consequences of our actions than the average Mayfly. All that matters is receiving the applause of dunces.

Britain did the same thing twice, in 1914 and 1939. It is perhaps not too much to infer that Little England will be followed by Little America.

*July 3, 2008*

# Viva Columbia!

The war between the Colombian state and the Marxist FARC is not a 4th Generation conflict, because it is fought within the framework of the state. The Colombian government seeks to maintain control of the state, while the FARC want to replace it. It's all about who runs the state, not offering alternatives to the state.

Nonetheless, some lessons for 4th Generation wars may be drawn, because the way in which the war is fought — a guerilla-style insurgency — similar to many 4th Generation conflicts. The recent successful rescue of hostages long held by the FARC is a case in point. It was a brilliant victory for the Colombian government and armed forces, on all levels, including the moral level. What might the U.S. Armed Forces learn from it that they could apply in Iraq, Afghanistan, and elsewhere?

First, it illustrated the advantage mental cleverness has over brute firepower. The Colombians' previous foray, the aerial bombing of a FARC camp in Ecuador, blew up in their face. In contrast, the hostage rescue made the Colombians look both brave and smart and the FARC appear to be the Three Stooges. The FARC was not bombed or blown up, it was outsmarted. It has no martyrs to off the public or its supporters, just its clownish face covered in pie. The FARC was made a laughingstock, which is the worst blow that can be inflicted upon any political organization.

Second, the combination of outsmarting the FARC with the fact that no one on either side was hurt, much less killed, allows this action to count as an unmixed victory, a rarity in this kind of war. Usually, a victory at the physical level generates blowback on the mental and moral level. Not here. It was a real triple-play. The fact that the

testimony of the rescued hostages made the FARC, not the government forces, into the bully adds to the score.

Third, the operation was a strategic success because it was a Colombian, not an American, operation. Had American forces gone in and done exactly the same thing, the action would have made the Colombian government look weak, not strong. It would have undermined rather than strengthened its legitimacy. Most Latin Americans would have seen the rescue as one more humiliation of fellow Hispanics by the North Americans, and they would have identified with the FARC rather than laughing at it.

The reason the FARC now seems to be on the ropes and, one hopes, going down for the count is that it is fighting a Colombian enemy, not an American enemy. As several observers have noted, while almost no foreign occupiers have defeated insurgencies, the local state has sometimes won.

I am sure the United States played some role in the Colombian hostage rescue, but for once we seem to have been smart enough to keep our mouth shut about it. Whoever is running the show there for us — I think it is an admiral — seems to understand the value of a small footprint. We had another admiral who knew his business running the show for a while in the Persian Gulf, Admiral Fallon. The Bush White House fired him for the mortal sin of committing truth, a sin his successor is not likely to repeat.

All of these points relate directly to the 4th Generation wars we are enmeshed in, in Iraq and Afghanistan. Outsmarting and embarrassing our opponents, holding them up to ridicule by the locals, is far more effective than killing them. But only locals can do the outsmarting and humiliating, with some discreet help from us behind the scenes. If we do it openly, we're still Goliath and our local opponents remain David, which means they win morally. The local government can only gain legitimacy from its own successes, not from victories won on its behalf by foreign invaders and occupiers. Such "victories" diminish rather



than enhance its legitimacy, the currency in which gain or loss in 4GW is measured.

I think it is safe to say that if several American divisions were today fighting the FARC in Colombia, the FARC would be gaining strength, not withering away. (It will soon be time, if it is not time already, for the Colombian government to offer the FARC a very generous peace, the all-necessary “golden bridge.”) It follows that so long as the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan are American wars, we will continue to lose them. Dare we hope the next American president realizes that “victory” in both places requires not mindless “staying the course” but American withdrawal?

*July 14, 2008*

# Running the Narrows

In war as in life, the secret to success is having a wide range of options. That was the basis of von Moltke's approach to operational art, as opposed to the Schlieffen school's myopic focus on one option. The list of commanders and nations whose single option failed is a long one.

Regrettably, whoever takes over as America's President and Commander in Chief next January will face a rapidly narrowing range of options. With the fall of Communism and the dissolution of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s, America was given an almost limitless range of options. A series of bad decisions since that time have reduced that range to a paltry few, none of them particularly attractive. Running the narrows with a ship of state is a perilous enterprise.

In foreign affairs, most of the rest of the world is now hoping to see America take a fall. We have alienated the Russians, irritated the Chinese and dragged the Europeans into a "war against terror" that finds little support outside ruling elites. Virtually every European public would vote to pull out of Afghanistan tomorrow if given the chance. The elites go along only because of a residual fear of "losing the Americans," much as Berlin feared "losing the Austrians" if she did not support Vienna in 1914. Both were allied to a corpse, which at some point even the wizened moles who govern Europe may discern.

Militarily, the US has managed the contortionist's feat of getting various body parts stuck in different pits of quicksand. Washington counts on Iraq gaining stability, but the absence of a state means it can go unstable again overnight. The Afghan war is going the way Afghan wars do, as the Pashtun slowly get their act together to push the occupier out. Spillover from the war in Afghanistan is de-stabilizing

Pakistan, with Washington accelerating the process by putting impossible demands on that country's leaders. Finally, the likelihood of an attack on Iran by the US or by Israel acting as a proxy grows, which would in turn pitch Iraq back into chaos as all the Shi'ite militias ganged up on us.

More, the money is about to run out. We seem to have forgotten that no activity the state can undertake is more expensive than war. If a tanking economy cuts off the money flow, what comes next? The Sunday, July 12 *Cleveland Plain Dealer* quotes a local investment advisor saying, "A year ago, I would have discounted the scenario of the next depression. After what I've seen this year, I don't discount anything anymore." The Fed is trying to head off a full-scale financial panic by turning itself into a pawnshop, but no one knows how long that trick will work. The whole Ponzi scheme that is the current US economy still depends on an inflow of \$2 billion in foreign, money daily. What happens if, or when, that flow ceases?

Were American politics as sensible as the average flock of turkeys in a thunderstorm, the public would be asking those running for President just how they expected to steer through this narrows filled with rocks and shoals. Instead, all the public wants are more nostrums, more empty promises that somehow Big Brother will enable them to party on. Senator Obama and Senator McCain vie in proposing programs that cost more billions, to come from ... where? Why, from the printing presses of course. Those presses are churning out dollars so fast already that we can feel the rumble all the way across the country — and the world.

The bottom line reached by printing-press money is always the same: runaway inflation. Inflation is almost always one of the consequences of war, and it can be the worst, worse even than losing. If it impoverishes the middle class, the country has little if any base from which to recover.

For America to run the narrows successfully, it needs to act boldly,

not to find the one course through, but to widen its range of options while it still can. That means getting out of at least a few of the quicksand pits — certainly not entering any new ones — while lowering our foreign policy ambitions, cutting government spending until the budget is in surplus, improving our balance of trade to bolster the dollar and getting unhooked for foreign oil. It will hurt, but not nearly so badly as a combination of defeat, depression and hyperinflation.

Would anyone happen to know Count Witte's home number?

*July 15, 2008*

# Evidence

Two recent news stories added important evidence to issues raised in my columns. The first concerns a 4th Generation war taking place on America's doorstep, that between the Mexican state and drug gangs. The July 14 *Financial Times*, one of the world's best newspapers, reported that the head of Mexico's intelligence agency

*Told a small group of foreign media recently: "Drug traffickers have become the principal threat because they are trying to take over the power of the state."*

*Mr. Valdes said the gangs...had co-opted many members of local police forces, the judiciary, and government entities....*

*Those efforts, he said, could now also be targeting federal institutions such as Congress itself. "Congress is not exempt...we do not rule out the possibility that drug money is involved in the campaigns of some legislators," Mr. Valdes said.*

The news here is not the "possibility" that some Mexican legislators are on drug traffickers' payrolls. The news is that a prominent Mexican official, one whose position gives him a good look at what is going on, was willing to go public about the threat to the state itself. The fact that he took that risk suggests the cancer is far advanced. For intelligence officers, going public is usually an act of desperation.

From the perspective of 4GW theory, it is beginning to look as if the drug traffickers/Hezbollah model may be more sophisticated and more successful than the al-Qaeda model. al-Qaeda seemingly is on the ropes in Iraq, not because of the "surge" but because of its own

blunders. To at least some extent those blunders proceed from its strategy, which faces the state with a life-or-death struggle. In contrast, all Hezbollah and the Mexican drug gangs demand is a deal with the state: we'll leave you alone if you leave us alone. The state's real sovereignty bleeds away, but the structures remain, allowing the politicians to do what they want, i.e. continue to line their own pockets.

The Lebanese state recently cut a deal with Hamas along exactly these lines, and the Mexican state will have to do the same at some point. The *Financial Times* reports that under the Merida Initiative, the U.S. will give Mexico \$400 million this year for counter-narcotics operations, but the Mexican state is already too deeply suborned to use such aid effectively. Mexican politicians, cops, and military officers will happily accept the U.S. money with their right hands while their left hands take the drug gangs' payoffs. If the Mexican state wants to restore order, it will have to offer the gangs a "live and let live" deal.

The other story moves from tragedy to farce. It seems Iraq's pretend Prime Minister, Mr. al-Maliki, gave an interview to *Der Spiegel* in which he said Obama's timetable for pulling U.S. troops out of Iraq is about the right one. Not surprisingly, the Bush White House went ballistic. I suspect Iraqi officials had not heard the f-word used so many times in one sentence since they last had to pass a roadblock manned by Marine lance corporals.

Here the Bush administration is hoist on its own petard. On the one hand, it wants freedom in Iraq. On the other hand, it wants to keep U.S. troops there indefinitely, using Iraq as a base from which the U.S. can dominate the region. But the Iraqi people want the American troops to go home, so freedom leads to an American withdrawal at Iraq's demand. Squaring that circle would take a Bismarck, and Miss Rice isn't even a Holstein.

Poor Mr. al-Maliki, whose only goal is survival, is left twisting in the wind, an awkward position for a marionette. He remains dependent upon American support, without which he would be either an exile or

dead in 48 hours. But he must also grasp at such shreds of legitimacy as he can, which requires setting a date by which the Americans will leave. The two requirements contradict each other fatally. Meanwhile, Muqtada al-Sadr, whose demand for an American withdrawal is unambiguous, follows Iraq's "government" like Captain Hook's crocodile. I suspect that if he survives, he will in time enjoy his dinner.

One man could cut the knot and free both Iraq and America from its entanglements. Were Ayatollah Sistani to say what Mr. Maliki said, that Obama's timetable for withdrawal is about right, no one could gainsay him. The Shi'ite Iraqi government dare not contradict him, nor could George W. Bush (or John McCain) without risking all-out war between American troops in Iraq and the Shi'ites. For the sake of both countries, let's hope he is listening.

*July 24, 2008*

# Why McCain Is Wrong

Senator John McCain's position on the situation in Iraq is wrong on two counts, which means his criticism of Senator Obama is also wrong. The twin pillars of McCain's assessment of the war are a) the surge worked and b) because the surge worked we are now winning. Neither of those views is based in fact.

The first represents the long-recognized logical fallacy known as *post hoc ergo propter hoc*, i.e., because one event occurred after another, it was a consequence of the first event. Because the cock crows before sunrise, he thinks he makes the sun come up. Because violence in Iraq dropped after the surge, McCain claims the surge caused the reduction in violence. He is quick to add that he supported the surge at the time, which Obama did not. In the real world, neither rooster nor Senator has quite so much reason to strut upon his dunghill.

The reduction in violence in Iraq, which is likely to prove temporary, has four causes, the least of which is the surge.

In order of importance, they are:

1. al-Qaeda's alienation of much of its Sunni base, a consequence of its attempt to impose its Puritanical version of Islam before it won the war and consolidated power. This is a common error of revolutionary movements. The smart ones back off and take a "broad front" strategy until the war is won, at which point they cut their "moderate" allies' throats. al-Qaeda's non-hierarchical structure, coupled with the message it employs to recruit, may prevent it from adopting a broad front strategy. If so, that may prove a fatal weakness.
2. A change in policy by the U.S. Marines in Anbar Province whereby they stopped attacking the Sunni population and started



paying it instead. As the FMFM 1-A argues, in 4GW, cash is your most important supporting arm. The Marines' new policy, which has now spread to the U.S. Army and beyond Anbar, enabled the locals to turn on al-Qaeda and its brutally enforced Puritanism.

3. General Petraeus's decision to move U.S. troops off their FOB's and into populated areas where they could protect the population instead of merely protecting themselves.
4. Last and not least, the surge, which made more troops available for #3. Absent the other three developments, the surge would have achieved nothing.

In his first assertion, Senator McCain is claiming credit where credit is not due. In his second, that we are winning in Iraq, he fails to understand what "winning" means in a 4th Generation conflict.

The current reduction in violence in Iraq does not mean we are winning. Nor does al-Qaeda's incipient defeat mean we are winning. We win only if a state re-emerges, the state we destroyed by our invasion. A reduction in violence and the defeat of al-Qaeda are necessary preconditions for the re-emergence of a state, but they are not sufficient to ensure it.

A state will be re-established in Iraq only if and when authority comes from a person's position in the state hierarchy, e.g., governor, minister, mayor, army or police commander, functionary, etc. Services must also come from the state. At present, as best as I can determine, this is happening seldom. If at all. Rather, authority derives from non-state bases such as relationship to a tribe, clan or militia, and services are provided by the U.S. military, NGOs, and Iraqi militias or religious organizations. An Iraqi who holds a nominal state office may have authority, but his authority is not a product of his state office. A local Iraqi government may provide some services, but the government in Baghdad is seldom the source of the resources or authority to provide those services.

In fact, the relative peace now prevailing in Iraq is largely the

product of deals the U.S. military has made with real non-state Iraqi authority figures. These deals were both necessary and prudent, but they represent de facto acceptance of the reality that there is no state.

So McCain is wrong on both counts. The fact that a Presidential candidate is fundamentally wrong on so important a subject as the war in Iraq is disturbing. More disturbing is the nature of the errors. Both represent carryovers of Bush administration practices. The first, stating that the surge is the cause of reduced violence, represents the Bush White House's cynical practice of assuming the American people are too stupid to understand anything even slightly complex. The second, claiming we are winning the Iraq war, represents President Bush's policy of making statements that are blatantly at odds with reality and figuring that if the truth catches up with them, it will do so too late to alter the course of events. It was the latter practice that got us into the Iraq war in the first place.

Together, the twin pillars of McCain's Iraq assessment, both built of sand, give substance to the Democrats' charge that a McCain Presidency would represent a third term for George Bush. They also raise the question of whether they are honest mistakes or, like the arguments the Bush White House used to sell the Iraq conflict, simply lies. One would hate to think that McCain's "straight talk" comes from a forked tongue, but the parallels with Bush administration practices are too obvious to overlook.

*July 30, 2008*

## Changing Horses in Mid-Stream

As the neocons celebrate a "victory" in Iraq that has yet to be won, they also proclaim the downfall of Muqtada al-Sadr, leader of the Mahdj Army militia and staunch opponent of the American occupation. The headline of the August 5 *Wall Street Journal* announced, "Radical Iraq Cleric in Retreat."

Well, maybe. But I think something else is happening to the Mahdj Army, and it is a development of more than passing interest to those concerned with 4GW theory. I think Muqtada al-Sadr is attempting to transition from leading a 4GW, non-state entity, the Mahdj Army, to taking over a state.

Like all changes of horses in mid-stream, the operation is delicate and can easily go awry. But Mr. Sadr so far seems to be making all the right moves. As the *Wall Street Journal* piece reports:

*Mr. Sadr began moving away from military operations when he ordered a cease-fire last August after Mahdj Army members clashed with government forces in the southern city of Karbala during a Shi'ite religious holiday. The fighting represented growing rivalry between Sadr followers and supporters of the main Shi'ite parties in government.... In February Mr. Sadr extended the cease-fire for an additional six months.*

If Muqtada al-Sadr wants to rule Iraq, he cannot let himself and his organization be drawn into Shi'ite-on-Shi'ite violence. That would narrow his base when he needs to broaden it, and would also alienate the large majority of Iraqis who want order and security, not more war. The cease-fire and its extension were wise.

The *Journal* quotes from a new brochure issued by the Mahdj Army leadership that lays out Sadr's next move:

*(The) brochure ... states that the Mahdj Army will now be guided by Shi'ite spirituality instead of anti-American militancy. The group will focus on education, religion and social justice.... The brochure also states that it "is not allowed to use arms at all."*

Here, the Mahdj Army is clearly taking a page out of Hezbollah's book. Hezbollah's strength comes from its effectiveness and honesty in delivering services to the community that the state cannot provide. The *Journal* quotes Kenneth Pollack of Brookings as saying, "If the government fails to deliver on basic services and other needs of the Iraqis, Sadr followers could use their new organization to tell people they should look to them as the voices of change." Precisely so. This is a key element of the struggle for legitimacy, which Mr. Sadr seems to understand will be decisive in determining who controls post-occupation Iraq.

Mr. Sadr has promised that small, well-trained elements of the Mahdj Army will continue to attack the Americans, but so far he has held off launching such attacks. That too is wise. He can maintain his anti-American credentials, another key to legitimacy, with less risk by working politically for the Obama-al-Maliki plan, under which the American occupation troops would leave Iraq by 2010. If I were in Sadr's position, I would be organizing massive street demonstrations to demand withdrawal by 2010 be the basis of any new status of forces agreement with the Americans. That is a win-win position. If the Iraqi government demands American withdrawal on that timetable, Sadr can claim the credit, and if al-Maliki crumbles under American pressure and allows the occupation to continue indefinitely, al-Maliki loses his only chance to gain some legitimacy.

The Mahdi Army will retain its ability to go to war with the Americans if it has to. But that capability is most useful as a "fleet in

being," maintained as a threat but not employed. The threat gives Mr. Sadr more leverage than armed action would buy him, because the Mahdi Army is not strong enough to force the Americans out and it could suffer a military defeat. More, war with the Americans would bring more chaos and suffering to the Iraqi people, for which they might blame Sadr.

Sadr's change of horses in mid-stream may of course fail. His movement could come apart under the strain, as militant elements that want to fight the Americans split off. His failure is not in America's best interest, not only because it would mean more American casualties but also because it would undermine the chance for a new state to arise in Iraq. I continue to think Muqtada al-Sadr represents that best available leader for a new Iraqi state, because only someone who has opposed the occupation can have legitimacy. America only wins in Iraq if and when a new state emerges there, a real state, not a fig-leaf to cover the reality of continued American control.

From the standpoint of 4th Generation War theory, the Mahdi Army's attempt to move from its status as a 4GW, non-state entity to an organization that can create and control a new Iraqi state is a hopeful sign. If it succeeds, other 4GW entities may be tempted to do the same. That brings them back within the state framework, a positive development in terms of the interests of the international state system. It is the success and continuation of that system that is America's most vital interest in the face of 4th Generation War. Not all 4GW entities will take that track, nor would it be in their interest to do so. But if even some can be drawn back into the framework of the state, the 4GW threat will diminish. Washington will never see it this way, because Washington cannot think strategically. But those who can should pray that Muqtada al-Sadr continues to make all the right moves.

*August 13, 2008*

# George, Stay Out of Georgia

What interests does the United States have at stake in the war between Russia and Georgia? Only one: that we remain out of it.

It almost passes belief to think that the Bush administration, bogged down in two wars and planning a third (with Iran), might move toward a confrontation with Russia. Yet that is what the White House appears to be doing. The August 11 *Cleveland Plain Dealer* reported that

*President Bush called the violence unacceptable and Vice President Dick Cheney...said Russia's actions in Georgia "must not go unanswered"...*

*Asked to explain Cheney's comment, White House spokesman Gordon Johndroe said, "It means it must not stand."*

That phrase should send cold chills down the back of every American. It precisely echoes President George H.W. Bush's statement in response to Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, a statement that led to war. The White House cannot be unaware of the parallel, which means it is threatening war with Russia.

Have these people gone utterly mad? It is doubtful we should risk nuclear war for Alabama, much less Georgia.

A few facts are in order here. First, the current conflict was started not by Russia but by Georgia, which foolishly attacked the Russian dependency of South Ossetia. Did Georgia make this suicidal move with prior assurance of American backing? If so, Washington provoked the conflict, which would be as great a crime as the Bush administration lying us into war with Iraq.

Second, Georgia clearly lies inside Russia's sphere of influence and as far outside America's as it is possible to get.

Third, there is nothing America can do to defend Georgia except threaten nuclear war. We could send in a small "tripwire" force of a battalion or two — God help us if we do — and dare the Russians to attack it. But if they called the bluff — and I think they would — what then? It is impossible for the United States to wage conventional war with Russia in her own backyard. We would have to go nuclear, or back down and accept defeat. It is all too easy to guess which alternative the Bush administration would select.

President Bush has used Georgia to taunt and humiliate Russia, even putting Georgia up for NATO membership, which the Europeans were wise enough to block. This folly was part of a larger strategic blunder, going back to the Clinton administration, of treating Russia as an opponent despite the fall of Communism.

That blunder is now blowing up in our face, as Russia in turn uses war with Georgia to teach America a lesson about the dangers of overextension and the price to be paid for humiliating a Great Power. Prudence suggests we swallow our medicine and profit by it, tempering our ambitions and our arrogance with a dose of reality.

But under the King of Misrule, folly remains the order of the day. The Bush White House tells itself American power knows no limits. All that is required is that they show sufficient "will," and the rest of the world will buckle.

Not this time. Russia has taken all it is going to take.

It beggars the imagination to think that America could find itself in a nuclear confrontation with a post-Soviet Russia. But if the White House acts in accordance with its rhetoric, the next few weeks or even days may witness just such a strategic catastrophe.

*August 19, 2008*



# A Deeper Global Crisis

Despite the recent drop in the price of oil, the world economy is still sailing into troubled waters. The U.S. credit crisis is intensifying and spreading to Britain. Europe is moving toward recession. The international financial system continues to depend on mountains of debt. If the financial panic the Federal Reserve Bank has thus far managed to stave off materializes, we could witness a meltdown of historic proportions.

What does all this portend for 4th Generation warfare? Regrettably, it means the omens are favorable for some non-state entities, especially those which compete with the state in the delivery of vital social services.

Here we must remind ourselves that the root and origin of 4th Generation war is a crisis of legitimacy of the state. One of the functions the state is now expected to perform, in free market as well as socialist countries, is to ensure that the economy functions as well. A world-wide financial panic followed by a world recession or depression would mean the state was failing in one of its core functions. That in turn would further diminish the legitimacy of the state.

Wilsonians and other freedom hucksters think that a state's legitimacy is a function of elections. Even in established democracies such as the United States, those elections are becoming empty forms, political kabuki in which citizens are not given an opportunity to vote against the New Class. In most of the world elections do not even determine which collection of thieves will next get to plunder the treasury. The game is blatantly rigged.

In poor countries, the state's legitimacy is more a function of its ability to provide vital services than the election of ju-ju. Often, those

services include allowing people to eat. Most people's diets depend on subsidized state rations, such as the bread ration in Egypt. Recent riots there when the issue of cheap bread was disrupted showed the potential power of hungry mobs.

A world-wide depression would cause hardship in rich countries. In poor countries, it would quickly lead to widespread starvation. The state would no longer be able to provide the subsidized rations millions of its citizens rely on. The rise in world food prices already underway would put states in a double squeeze: the state's revenues would be falling at the same time that the difference between market and subsidized prices was growing. Add in global financial panic where credit dries up and we will see the number of failed states rise rapidly.

In the Great Depression of the 1930s, states' economic failure brought governments and even systems of government, including democracy, into question. In both Europe and the United States, Communism and Fascism gained certain popularity because in the Soviet Union, Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany, everyone had a job. But the state itself was not challenged, because there was no alternative to the state.

Now, there is. Intelligent 4th Generation entities, ranging from some drug gangs through organizations such as Hezbollah, are competing directly with the state for people's primary loyalty. If those 4th Generation entities can provide basic services, including food, when the state can no longer do so, they will gain the legitimacy that state is losing. In 4th Generation war, that is a bigger win than any potential military victory.

In terms of 4GW theory, the lessons here are two. First, a global economic crisis is likely to lead to a much deeper crisis, a widespread existential crisis of the state itself. Second, the 4th Generation entities that benefit from this crisis will be those that provide basic services more effectively than can the state. Once again, just as from a military perspective, we see that the "Hezbollah model" is the most promising

model for 4th Generation, non-state organizations. That model includes a highly competent military that can defeat state armed forces. But it employs its military capability sparingly, fighting only when attacked or when a low-risk, high-payoff military opportunity presents itself, which will be seldom. For 4GW entities as for states, the outcome of wars will remain unpredictable. Instead, the Hezbollah model focuses day-to-day on providing services to the people, building its legitimacy vis-à-vis the state and gaining the population's primary loyalty. At some point, that loyalty will become so strong that not even military defeat by a state's armed forces will destroy it.

Note: Do not assume the war between Russia and Georgia is over. So long as Mr. Saakashvili remains Georgia's President, he will continue to challenge and taunt Russia. As the last week has made plain, he will be encouraged to do so by the Bush White House, his partner in folly. If Russia does not force his removal from office now, it will have to come back and finish the job.

*August 22, 2008*

# Defending the Baltics

I recently returned from Estonia and the Baltic Defence College, where the Russian counter-attack on Georgia had left a residual case of nerves. They have little to fear in the short run, unless they duplicate Georgia's folly and attack Russia. But the question of how the Baltics might be defended is worth considering, both in itself and in terms of what it means for defending other small countries.

The worst option, which Georgia took, is to create a toy army. A handful of modern jet fighters, a battalion or two of tanks, a frigate for the navy, all add up to nothing. Against a Great Power, a toy army goes down to defeat in days if not hours. More, even a few modern jet fighters or tanks cost so much there is no money left for a real defense. Unless the Baltic states want to fight each other, they should leave military toys to children.

Second, the Baltics could try to ally with other near-by Powers strong enough to balance Russia. But this option exists only in theory. Germany could fill the role but has lost all Great Power ambitions, while Sweden has been out the game for two centuries. There could be benefit for all concerned in a union of the Baltic states and Finland under the Swedish crown, all retaining complete domestic autonomy but united for defense and foreign policy, but it is probably only historians who can see the potential.

A third option is to ally with distant Great Powers in order to balance the threat from a local Great Power. That is what the Baltic States have done through their membership in NATO. Unfortunately, while central European states have attempted this over and over again for centuries, it never works. It may involve Western Powers in war with Russia, or in the past with Germany, but it does nothing to protect

the country in question. Poland is a recent example: Britain and France went to war with Germany in 1939 over Poland, but Poland remained an occupied country for 50 years.

NATO membership also increases the pressure to build a toy army, or to specialize in "niche" capabilities like water purification that serve NATO but not home defense. Both are roads to military irrelevance.

There is a model that would work for the Baltic states and other small countries: the Iraqi model. Instead of creating a toy army, they should plan an Iraq-style insurgency against any occupier. This requires a universal militia like Switzerland's, where every male citizen knows how to shoot and how to build and emplace IEDs and where weapons and explosives are cached all over the country. In the Baltics, this would be a rural rather than an urban defense: Russia could take the cities but not the countryside. The "Forest Brothers" kept up just such a resistance to the Soviet presence well into the 1950s.

An Iraqi-model defense would not make it impossible for Russia to conquer the Baltic states. It could only make such a venture expensive for Russia, hopefully too expensive.

For long-term security, the Baltic states must approach the problem not just at the military but at the grand strategic level. What that means is that, like all small countries bordering Great Powers, they must accommodate the Great Power's interests. The model here is Finland during the Cold War. Finland maintained complete sovereignty in her domestic affairs, but she was careful to accommodate the Soviet Union in her foreign and defense policies. She was a good neighbor to Russia, as the Baltic states should strive to be good neighbors to Russia now. Their goal should be to create a situation where it is more in Russia's interests for the Baltics to remain independent than to reincorporate them into the Russian empire.

I realize this advice is unpalatable to the Baltic peoples. Half a century of Soviet occupation has left a residue of hatred for all things

Russian. But grand strategy must be based on facts and reason, not emotion. The most important fact is geography. Geography dictates that the Baltic states must accommodate Russian interests, whether they want to or not. If they refuse, then the recent example of Georgia may have more relevance than anyone would wish.

*September 9, 2008*

# Why Obama Is Wrong

A few weeks ago I wrote a column explaining why Senator John McCain is wrong on Iraq. In contrast, Senator Barack Obama is largely right on Iraq. Whether he would follow through on his plan for withdrawing U.S. troops is another question. The Democratic foreign policy establishment is no less Wilsonian than its Republican counterpart, and once it has used anti-war voters to gain power it will want to show them the door as soon as it dares.

But if Obama is right on Iraq, he is wrong on Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran. His prescriptions for each are so close to the policies of the Bush administration that if McCain is McBush, Obama appears to be O'Bush. It seems many voters' desire to climb up out of the Bush league altogether is doomed to frustration.

On Afghanistan, Obama wants to send in more troops and win the war. But more troops doing what U.S. troops now do — fighting the Pashtun and calling in airstrikes on anything that moves — guarantee we will lose the war. As was the case in Iraq, the first necessary step is to change what our troops are doing. From what I have seen, Obama has said nothing on that score, probably because his position on Afghanistan is mere posturing intended to show he will be "tough on terrorism."

Obama's position on Pakistan is even more dangerous. In August of 2007, Obama called for direct U.S. military action in Pakistan, with or without Pakistani approval. Speaking to the Woodrow Wilson Center, he said, "If we have actionable intelligence about high-value terrorist targets and President Musharraf won't act, we will." President Bush took Senator Obama's recommendation this past July, authorizing such actions.

This is an example of the classic strategic error of sacrificing a more important goal to one of lesser importance. Not even outright defeat in Afghanistan would do America's interests as much damage as would the disintegration of the Pakistani state and the transformation of Pakistan into another stateless region. The state of Pakistan is already dangerously fragile, and actions such as cross-border raids by American troops will diminish its legitimacy further. No government that cannot defend its sovereignty will last. Ironically, if Pakistan collapses, so does our position in Afghanistan, because our main logistics line will be cut. In effect, Obama wants to hand al-Qaeda and the Taliban a double victory.

In June of this year, Obama spoke to the annual AIPAC conference. What he said there about Iran put him once again firmly in the Bush camp:

*As President, I will use all elements of American power to pressure Iran. I will do everything in my power to prevent Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon....*

*There should be no doubt: I will always keep the threat of military action to defend our security and our ally Israel. Do not be confused.*

*Sometimes there are no alternatives to confrontation. If we must use military force, we are more likely to succeed and have more support at home and abroad if we have exhausted our diplomatic options. That is the change we need in our policy.*

In other words, the change we need in our policy is to offer a bit more diplomatic kabuki before we attack Iran.

As I have said repeatedly and will keep on saying, an attack on Iran could cost us the whole army we have in Iraq. It could set the region on fire, from Afghanistan to the Nile. It could create an oil crisis with severe economic consequences at a time when the world economy is



tottering. It is, in short, madness. But it is also what Obama promised AIPAC.

Here we see the central reality of American politics shining through the smoke and mirrors. America has a one-party system. That party is the Establishment Party, and its internal disagreements are minor. Both McCain and Obama are Establishment Party candidates. They agree America must be a world-controlling empire. Both men are Wilsonians, believing we must re-make other countries and cultures in our own image. Neither man conceives any real limits, political, financial, military or moral, on American power. McCain and Obama vie only in determining which can drink more deeply from the poisoned well of hubris, around which, unremarked, lie the bones of every previous world power.

Such is the "choice" the American people get in November. As a monarchist, it is sometimes hard to keep from smiling.

*September 18, 2008*

## Van Creveld Writes Another Big Book

All of Martin van Creveld's books are worth reading, but a few are "big books," books so important that anyone interested in war must read them. To date, his big books include *The Transformation of War*, *The Rise and Decline of the State* and *Fighting Power*. Van Creveld's latest book has just come out, and it is a very big book indeed. Titled *The Culture of War*, it targets, hits and obliterates Clausewitz's assertion that war is merely the continuation of politics by other means.

Like John Boyd, van Creveld has engaged in a running feud with Clausewitz. I happen to think Clausewitz still offers much of value, as do many things Prussian. But as Boyd often said, we have learned a few things since Clausewitz's day.

*The Culture of War* offers one of the most important lessons. War exists not to serve the interests of states, it argues, or anything else. Rather, it is a fundamental part of human nature and culture. No human culture is imaginable that excludes war. At the same time, war and those who fight it develop their own cultures, cultures which shape how war is carried on far more powerfully than do rational calculations of military effectiveness.

It is impossible to summarize a book this rich in a column. Rather than try, let me give two examples from it, both from German military history. The first illustrates the danger of military culture divorcing itself from actual war, the second the consequences of trying to separate military institutions from *The Culture of War*.

After the end of the Seven Years War in 1763, the Prussian army routinized itself to the point where complex and largely useless drills came to be everything. Creveld writes:

*Many were especially devised for the king's benefit; the most spectacular, if not the most useful, movement of all was turning a battalion on its own axis, like a top...*

*However, the extent to which The Culture of War had taken over from war itself is nicely illustrated by two contemporary stories. One had (General) von Saldern earnestly debating the pros and cons of increasing the regulation marching speed of seventy-five paces a minute to seventy-six; according to the other, when he went to heaven and explained his system of maneuvers to Gustavus Adolphus, the king answered that he was not aware that in the years since his death the earth had been made flat. Briefly, a thousand details-"pedantries" as Field Marshal Gebhard von Blücher was to call them later-that had originally served a useful purpose now became detached from reality, so to speak. They continued to float about solely as parts of a highly developed culture, one that no longer made sense in any terms except its own.*

The result was an army so brittle that, when faced in 1806 with Napoleon, it shattered.

Creveld's second example is today's German military, the Bundeswehr. Germany's politicians have demanded the Bundeswehr be stripped of all German military traditions, not just those of the Nazi period. Creveld notes that

*At first, only the years 1933-1945 were exorcised. From 1968 on, however, there was a growing tendency to extend the shadows until they covered previous periods. Not only the Panzer leader Heinz Guderian, not only the desert fox Erwin Rommel, but Hans von Seeckt, Paul von Hindenburg, Erich Ludendorff, Alfred von Schieffen, and Helmut von Moltke disappeared. From heroes who had served their country, they were turned into "militarist," "reactionary," and "imperialist" villains; in today's casernes, it is in vain that one looks for their names or their portraits...*

*In comparison with similar institutions in other countries, German military academies, staff colleges, and other educational institutions have an empty, bare, functional, and soulless appearance. The relics of the “wars of liberation” apart, almost the only items on display pertain to the Bundeswehr’s own history. However, since the Bundeswehr has never gone to war, the ability of those items to excite and inspire is limited...*

*Given the terrible historical background, all this is perfectly understandable. On the other hand, it is indisputable that an armed force, if its members are to fight and die for their country, must have a culture of war...*

*One does not have to be a “militarist” or a right-wing extremist to note the peculiar smell that prevails throughout the Bundeswehr. That smell is made up of impersonal bureaucratic procedures, political correctness, and the obsequiousness that results when people worry lest speaking up will lead to bad consequences.*

Both of these extremes hold lessons for today’s U.S. military. The inward-focused culture of the 2nd Generation that dominates the American armed forces has generated an ever-widening disconnect with the nature of the modern battlefield. That contradiction lies at the heart of the American failures in Iraq and Afghanistan. At the same time, like the Bundeswehr, the U.S. armed forces are under political assault by forces that care nothing for preserving the necessary culture of war. The forced insertion of large numbers of women into the American military is one example. If the next administration opens the combat arms to women and also demands the recruitment of homosexuals, the damage to *The Culture of War* may be vast. The kind of men who fight often join the military to validate their manhood. They cannot do that in armed services heavily peopled with women and homosexuals.

Just as van Creveld's book *The Transformation of War* warns that war is changing, *The Culture of War* cautions that some things do not change. *The Culture of War* must contain certain elements, elements common to successful militaries throughout history. If ideologies or other political or social forces outlaw some of those elements, the consequence will not be the end of war. War will be carried on by other means, by gangs, militias, tribes and terrorists who are not subject to political correctness and can embody in full *The Culture of War*. From that perspective, Creveld's *The Transformation of War* and *The Culture of War* are two volumes of the same work.

*September 24, 2008*

## War on Two Fronts, Without Railways

One way to look at the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan is to see them as one war with two fronts. Germany fought two-front wars twice in the 20th century, and it was almost able to prevail because it had the advantage of interior lines. The German Army could quickly shift divisions and corps from the Eastern to the Western front or *vice versa*, using the superb German rail system. Unfortunately, the U.S. lacks the advantage of interior lines in its ongoing two-front war. No railways run from Baghdad to Kabul.

U.S. commanders in Afghanistan have reportedly requested an additional 10,000 troops. Secretary of Defense Robert Gates was recently quoted in the *Washington Post* as telling the Senate Armed Services Committee, "I believe we will be able to meet that commanders' requirement, but in the spring and summer of 2009...we do not have the forces to send three additional brigades to Afghanistan at this point."

The only source for additional troops for Afghanistan is Iraq. The September 2008 issue of *Army* magazine quotes Joint Chiefs Chairman Admiral Michael Mullen as saying, "I don't have troops I can reach for, brigades I can reach, to send into Afghanistan until I have a reduced requirement in Iraq."

Without railways running on interior lines, we cannot move three brigades from Iraq to Afghanistan this week, then move them back to Iraq again a few weeks later if the situation there demands them. That means any shift of forces requires long-term stability in Iraq. neocon voices in Washington are now claiming "victory" in Iraq, which, if it were true, would release American forces stationed there for redeployment. This appears to be what Secretary Gates is counting on

when he says we should be able to meet the commanders' request for 10,000 more troops in Afghanistan next spring or summer.

But I fear this represents a falsely optimistic reading of the situation in Iraq. In my view, the current relative quiet in Iraq is merely a pause as the parties there regroup and reorient for the next phase of the war. Unless we have the good sense to get out of Iraq now, while the going is good, we will be stuck there when that next phase starts. We will not then be in a position to shift forces from Iraq to Afghanistan, because without interior lines, any such shift must be long-term.

While most of the stuff on the internet is junk, the junk pile does hold an occasional diamond. One such is a daily report called "NightWatch," written by a retired DIA analyst, John McCreary. As quoted in the *Washington Post's* "Tom Rick's Inbox," "NightWatch" for September 11, 2008 said that

*The U.S., as the most powerful faction (in Iraq), imposed power sharing on the Kurds, the Arab Sunnis and the Arab Shi'ites...Power sharing is deceptive because it always features reduced violence. It looks like victory, but is not....*

*Power sharing can last a long time, but it is not a permanent condition and does not signify one faction's triumph over the others. It is never an end state, but rather a transitional period during which the participants prepare for the next phase of the struggle....*

Thus, power sharing is always a prelude to violence.

If the next phase of Iraq's civil war breaks out before spring 2009, Secretary Gates's promise of more troops for Afghanistan will go unfulfilled. Both the Army's and the Marine Corps' cupboards are bare. We will in effect face enemy offensives on both fronts simultaneously, with no reserves.

Even with the advantages of interior lines and excellent railways connecting both fronts, Germany was not able to deal with such a situation from the summer of 1944 onward. Lacking those advantages, our predicament will be worse. We will find ourselves face-to-face with failure both in Iraq and Afghanistan, with few if any options. If an attack on Iran has meanwhile brought that country into the war against us, we will face a third front. Events in Pakistan could create a fourth. It is the nature of long wars that they tend to spread.

Whoever the next President is, he is likely to find himself living in interesting times.

*October 2, 2008*



## **Pas d'Argent, Pas de Suisse**

The old saying, "No money, no Swiss," dates to the early days of the state, but it is no less relevant today than it was 500 years ago. Money is the lifeblood of militaries now just as it was then. In case anyone hasn't noticed, the United States is running out of it.

The Panic of '08 is in full swing, and whether it will end in recession or depression no one knows. Either way DOD will find it is no longer at the head of the line at the federal soup kitchen. Bailing out the economy will take precedence over fighting foreign bogeyman, not to speak of spending hundreds of billions preparing to battle some hypothetical "peer competitor." DOD's trough won't run dry, but it should expect thinner swill and less of it.

How might the U.S. best meet the challenge of less money for defense? To start with, we must impose the right priorities on the Pentagon. I say impose, because left to its own devices the building will cut combat units first and programs last. A new administration must demand the opposite: as resources diminish, combat units, especially in the land forces, must be retained while programs, contractors, headquarters and service bureaucracies are quietly garroted. Note: this would mean a very small Air Force.

Next, we must reduce commitments. That starts with getting out of both of the wars we are now fighting, in Iraq and Afghanistan. No activity of the state is more expensive than war, much less two. All over the world, we need to pull back troops and our long nose, the one meddling in someone else's business. Reducing distant commitments may enable us to afford to meet the one situation we must face, that on our southern border. The disintegration of the Mexican state is starting to spill over the frontier, and if we do not man the walls we will soon

face widespread 4GW in the American southwest.

In the face of falling defense budgets, the work of the military reformers of the 1970s and 1980s may prove useful. They argued that by putting people and ideas over hardware, we could have more effective forces at a lower cost. Military reform was scuppered by the vast tide of money that flowed into DOD starting in 1980. But with that tide now receding, the work of people such as John Boyd and Chuck Spinney may re-emerge from the muck. Secretary Gates has been voicing views that have a strong similarity to what the reformers were saying twenty and more years ago, including a suggestion that cheaper, simpler weapons that actually work in combat may be more useful than rococo *objet d'art* such as the F-22 and the Future Contract System. *Putti* are more comfortable on chapel ceilings than in foxholes.

Fortunately, a few people have kept the reformers' ideas alive and updated them, waiting for the financial crisis that has now come. Winslow Wheeler and the Strauss Military Reform Project have published several books on the subject, with a new volume soon going to press. A seminar of field grade officers did a lengthy paper on the subject which I gave to Vice President Cheney early in the current administration, obviously to no effect. And the 4th Generation seminar I lead at Quantico continues to write new doctrine, which is posted on d-n-i. With some official interest and support, these efforts could make a difference. At the very least, they mean we do not have to start at square one in the quest for new directions. The spade work has been done.

The key to bringing America's armed forces through the Panic of '08 and the following recession or depression is to act quickly. If we continue to overextend our commitments while pouring hundreds of billions of dollars into legacy forces and systems, we will bring about a general collapse. Historically, this has usually taken the form of irredeemable military and foreign policy defeats coupled with runaway inflation: think 17th-century Spain. Avoiding Spain's fate requires the

next administration to make some major decisions, and set a very different course, right at the beginning. In most administrations, that is the only time large course corrections are possible, before the usual interests have established a stranglehold.

In ordinary times, the chance any of this would happen would be zero. But the Crash of 2008 means we are not living in ordinary times.

*October 9, 2008*

# The Afghan Advantage

As the military situation in Afghanistan deteriorates, there may be at least the possibility of better news on the political front. NightWatch for October 7 reported that

*Multiple news services have reported meetings hosted by Saudi Arabian King Abdallah between representatives of the Kabul government and the Taliban. Both Taliban and Afghan government spokesmen have denied that the talks were official. Both have acknowledged that talks occurred...Mediated talks between enemies accompanied by denials always signify the first step toward power sharing.*

Intervening powers seldom if ever win 4th Generation wars militarily, though they may lose them militarily. Rather, if they win, which means they witness the re-emergence of a state, they do so politically.

Here we see what might be called the “Afghan Advantage.” Unlike most 4th Generation situations, including Iraq in Afghanistan we face one predominant enemy, the Taliban. That means we have someone to negotiate with who can actually deliver, and can do so on a country-wide scale.

Usually, any “deal” in a 4GW environment can only be local. The local sheik, clan leader, gang leader or militia captain can deliver only in his own back yard. Foreign occupiers must try to assemble, then maintain, a fragile, endlessly complex network of local deals, most of which tend to unravel. Ceasing to juggle leads not to stability but to the collapse of all deals and a return to chaos. That is one reason why occupiers find they cannot get out.

The situation in Afghanistan is more favorable. If we can make a deal with the Taliban, they can enforce it throughout most of the country. They can speak for the Pashtun, the people with whom we are at war. We can get out without Afghanistan falling back into chaos. The Taliban have shown they can govern, even to the point of shutting down the opium trade.

The action of the Saudi government in sponsoring talks between Mr. Karzai's regime and the Taliban is something the U.S. and NATO should welcome and support. As quickly as we can without upsetting the applecart, the U.S. should also start to talk with the Taliban.

As NightWatch has indicated, the obvious direction of the talks should be toward some sort of power-sharing. That will only be a temporary arrangement; the Pashtun, Uzbeks and Tajiks will sort out their differences in the usual way, by fighting.

But an Afghan coalition government that includes the Taliban could give the U.S. and NATO what they need, an opportunity to get out. It is not too difficult to envision how such a government might be put together. The Taliban would get some seats in the cabinet in Kabul and control over the provinces they regard as their homeland. They would promise not to invite al-Qaeda to set up new bases in Afghanistan. al-Qaeda now has no need for Afghan bases, since it has better ones in Pakistan, the country which is its current strategic focus. Mr. Karzai would go, much to his own relief, no doubt, perhaps to be replaced by a restored monarchy. The monarchy was popular in Afghanistan, and would be accepted by most Afghans as a legitimate government.

Pipe dreams of a democratic, secular, modern Afghanistan would vanish, as pipe dreams always do. The U.S. and NATO would have gotten out of Afghanistan without suffering an obvious defeat. In the history of Afghan wars, that is the best outcome an invader can hope for.

As Churchill said, “Better “jaw, jaw” than “war, war.”

*October 15, 2008*

## Confirmation

I have suggested in previous columns that the al-Qaeda model of 4GW may be failing for inherent reasons, i.e. for reasons it cannot fix. "Tom Rick's Inbox" in the October 19 *Washington Post* offers some confirmation of that assessment. Ricks writes:

*Where did al-Qaeda in Iraq go wrong? In a paper prepared for the recent annual meeting of the American Political Science Association, the Australian political scientist Andrew Phillips argues persuasively that, by their nature, al-Qaeda affiliates tend to alienate their hosts....*

He then quotes Phillips at some length:

*In successive conflicts ranging from Bosnia to Chechnya to Kashmir, the jihad jet-set has rapidly worn out its welcome among local host populations as a result of its ideological inflexibility and high-handedness, as well as its readiness to resort to indiscriminate violence against locals at the first signs of challenge.... That this pattern has so frequently been repeated suggests that the underlying causes of al-Qaeda's defeat in Iraq may transcend the specific circumstances of that conflict. Baldly stated, the causes of al-Qaeda's defeat in Iraq can be located in its ideological DNA.*

In my view, the "DNA" to which Phillips refers is the type of people drawn to al-Qaeda and other 4th Generation entities modeled on al-Qaeda. They are mostly religious fanatics of the most extreme varieties, similar to the Levellers and Diggers of the English Civil War. Regardless of what their organization's leadership may enjoin, they will

treat any locals they regard as religiously "lax" with severity. They cannot do otherwise without becoming "impure" themselves. It is useful to remind ourselves where the word "Puritan" comes from.

A failure of the al-Qaeda model, while welcome, does not imply any weakening of the impulse toward 4th Generation war. On the contrary, it represents its evolution. 4GW is something new in the post-Westphalian world, and it is likely to go through many cycles of innovation, failure, learning and adaptation as it evolves. I expect that evolution to play out over the course of the 21st century and beyond.

What does the prospective failure of the al-Qaeda model mean for other current models? The Taliban model would seem to share al-Qaeda's DNA. When they were in power in Afghanistan, the Taliban also imposed a Puritanism that overrode local cultural norms and thereby alienated much of the population. However, the Taliban also left power with several assets on its balance sheet, assets it continues to draw on. It represented Pashtun dominance of Afghanistan, something all Pashtun regard as natural and necessary (the Karzai regime's origins are Uzbek and Tajik). Like a state, it brought order. It reduced corruption, now out of control, to locally acceptable levels. And while actually a creation of Pakistan's ISI, the Taliban successfully presented themselves as something home-grown, which the Karzai government will never be able to do. In terms of the all-important quality of legitimacy, Robespierre always trumps Vichy.

Beyond Afghanistan, the 4th Generation future belongs neither to al-Qaeda nor to the Taliban but to two more sophisticated models, Hezbollah and the Latin American drug gangs. Both can fight, but fighting is not primarily what they are about. Rather, both are about benefiting their members with money, services, community, identity, and, strange as it may sound, what passes locally for good government. Even the drug gangs' governance is often less corrupt than that of the local state.

Both of these 4GW models can fall into the fatal error of alienating



the local population, but the tendency is not inherent. While Hezbollah is religiously defined, it seems to appeal well beyond the Puritans, which means it can give orders Puritans will not obey. The drug gangs' principal faith is in making money, and few faiths are more broadly latitudinarian.

Andrew Phillips adds to his analysis the prudent warning that "al-Qaeda may have lost Iraq, but this in no way implies that America and its allies have won." In Iraq as elsewhere, the fading of the al-Qaeda model is being balanced not by the rise of a new state but by the adoption of other models of 4GW. So far, as best I can determine, no foreign intervention in a 4th Generation conflict has succeeded in recreating a real state (you can add Ethiopia in Somalia to the long list of failures).

Do intervening foreign forces, like al-Qaeda, have DNA that preordains failure? The answer, while not final, seems to be pointing toward the affirmative.

*October 22, 2008*

## The Other Election

While the world's eyes are fixed on the American election coming up soon, another election with equal importance for America's future crawled onto the calendar over the past weekend (don't expect a monarchist to think highly of elections). Israeli Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni gave up her efforts to form a new Israeli government and called for elections. Her move may be a last negotiating gambit. If not, Israel will probably face national elections in February 2009.

At present, some polls suggest the Likud party will win. If that happens, it will mean as much for America as for Israel. Why? Because America's Middle Eastern policy is effectively the tail on Likud's dog. Many American neocons, those great guys who gave us the war in Iraq, are *de facto* members of Likud. Several leading American neocons wrote Likud's strategy for Israel, which calls for someone — guess who? — to destroy every Middle Eastern country that could be a threat to Israel. The American invasion of Iraq represented in part that strategy being put into effect.

Those who imagine an Obama victory will see the neocons shown the door are in for an unpleasant surprise. Under the guise of neo-libs, they are no less influential in the Democratic establishment than in the Republican. The only way Likud could get shut out of a Democratic administration is if Obama bypasses the whole establishment in choosing his foreign and defense policy appointments. While that is fervently to be wished, it is probably not going to happen. Like figures on a medieval clock, the Republican and Democratic establishments succeed each other in an unbroken chain of policy failure.

A Likud government in Israel come next spring would make two wars virtually certain: a war between Israel and Hezbollah and another

between Israel and Iran. The Israeli military leadership recently announced that in the event of another war with Hezbollah, Israel would destroy Lebanon's civilian infrastructure throughout the country. Since the neo-libs will make certain America backs Israel to the hilt, world-wide Islamic anger over the unnecessary destruction of a small, helpless Middle Eastern country (at least a third of whose people are Christians) will focus as much on America as on Israel. Islamic 4GW organizations will get a huge boost to their recruiting and fundraising, while the legitimacy of Islamic states with ties to America will be further weakened.

An Israeli attack on Iran, in turn, could bring about the loss of the army America has in Iraq. If I sound like Cato in repeating this warning endlessly, I do so with reason. The destruction of an entire American army would mark an historic turning point, America's Syracuse Expedition, which is what the Iraq war has resembled from the start. Our strategic position in Iraq hangs by a thread, its long, thin supply line coming up through the Persian Gulf and Kuwait. If Iran and its allied Iraqi Shi'ite militias cut that line, the best outcome we can hope for is a *saue que peut* withdrawal of U.S. forces north into Kurdistan.

To this happy picture a Likud government in Israel might add a war with Syria and an open U.S. break with Pakistan, driven by Pakistani popular anger at America for its alliance with a Likud-led Israel. That would cut our main supply line for the war in Afghanistan, again forcing a withdrawal.

All of this would occur against a background of a world economic depression, a depression wars in the Middle East would intensify. The price of oil, now artificially depressed by a fire sale of commodities held by hedge funds, would soar to unprecedented heights. Those countries still exporting oil might dump the dollar and demand payment in gold. The American defense budget could skyrocket at a time when the U.S. faced an urgent need to cut federal spending, leading to printing-press dollars and hyperinflation.

It may be that elections in Israel hold more meaning for the United States than does America's own coming vote. One writer quoted in the *Washington Post* said that if McCain wins, history will pay America a visit, "the shroud, the scythe and all Four Horsemen." That may be no less true if Obama wins, unless he improbably finds the wisdom and courage to break with the Democratic Party's foreign policy establishment. That establishment is as tied to Israel as Russia's foreign policy establishment was tied to Serbia in 1914. Past, I suspect, is prologue.

*October 30, 2008*

## A Useful Culminating Point?

In standard military theory, a culminating point is where an offensive runs out of gas. The troops are exhausted; vehicles urgently require maintenance; fuel, ammo and rations are all short. No matter how alluring the potential results of continuing the offensive, the attacker has to take a break. Often, a culminating point will mark the high-water line of an attack. Afterwards, the initiative shifts to the defender.

Not surprisingly, culminating points are seen as something to be avoided. But a report in *NightWatch* for October 29 suggests that 4GW may offer a new variety of culminating point, one that is useful to an invader more than it is harmful. According to *NightWatch*

*The Pakistani daily The News reported today that a new "anti-coalition force" party has been formed in Afghanistan which would resist the activities of US-led coalition forces in Afghanistan. This new party is composed of those who detest the Taliban and Mullah Omar and who also are unhappy about the presence of Coalition forces in Afghanistan and considered them a compromise of Afghan sovereignty.*

How large and how effective this new anti-coalition, anti-Taliban faction might become is impossible to say. Should it become a significant player, it would represent a new type of culminating point. It would represent the point at which an invader's presence pushes the vital "middle" in an occupied country into resistance, without simultaneously pushing it into an alliance with the invader's sworn enemies.

Why is this a culminating point in 4GW? Because it represents

both the point at which the invader is doing himself more harm than good by staying and the point beyond which he does not need to stay. If the political middle can fight the invader and more extreme 4GW elements at the same time, it is probably strong enough to defeat the latter. We have seen this happen in Sunni-controlled regions in Iraq. Once American forces stopped fighting the nationalist Sunni resistance, those Sunni fighters wiped out al-Qaeda.

At the same time, it is almost inevitable that the presence of occupying foreign troops will eventually alienate most of the population. When the alienation reaches a degree where it leads the political center to start fighting the occupier, the latter has reached a strategic culminating point (defined in time rather than in space). The longer he remains in country after reaching that point, the weaker his position will become.

If we put these two aspects of our new 4GW culminating point together, we see it marks the moment in time when an occupier both can leave and should leave. Unlike traditional culminating points, this new variety is useful rather than harmful. It helps an invader answer one of the most difficult questions in 4GW, when to leave. Timing a strategic withdrawal is always challenging, but in 4GW it is critical to winning the war. If timed too early, the occupier may open the door to victory by inherently hostile 4GW elements. If timed too late, he risks uniting most of the people against him, which can cost him an army as well as a hostile post-war relationship with the country he invaded. A culminating point that tells him the best moment to withdraw is something a wise occupier will welcome rather than seek to avoid.

What might our new, useful culminating point tell us about the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq? If the new anti-coalition, anti-Taliban grouping in Afghanistan proves real and gains significant strength, it tells the U.S. and NATO it's time to go. The new centrist grouping would have legitimacy, unlike the Karzai puppet regime; if it can fight the Taliban effectively, it would probably represent the best chance of

re-creating an Afghan state.

We may be on the cusp of a similar development in Iraq. The former Sunni insurgents now allied with U.S. forces as "the Awakening" have been rejected by the Shi'ite al-Maliki government, and at some point they will start fighting that government. If Washington reacts stupidly (as it usually does) and orders the U.S. military to fight the Sunnis, the latter will be fighting us and al-Qaeda at the same time. Muqtada al-Sadr's militia is preparing for another round with the Americans, this time on the Hezbollah model which relies on small, well-trained units instead of armed mobs. As Shi'ites, they will be equally hostile to us and to al-Qaeda. Once we find ourselves fighting Sunnis and Shi'ites simultaneously we will have hit the 4GW culminating point.

If the U.S. government and the American armed forces understand the new culminating point, which is doubtful, they will withdraw from Iraq when they see it coming but before they actually hit it. They would thereby avoid a new round of fighting, which they would lose, and avoid a fighting withdrawal, which is always perilous. In other words, the time to get out of Iraq is now, while the going is good.

The American military will probably ignore all this, as it ignores military theory generally. But the Europeans may pay some attention. European militaries do pay attention to military theory, in part because they know they cannot solve problems by throwing money at them and in part because the 20th Century taught them the perils of Great Power hubris. Europe can do little to affect the war in Iraq, but if the Europeans were to decide that the moment to leave Afghanistan had arrived, the U.S. government would have to listen.

So here's to the new Afghan centrists: may they prove strong enough to defeat the Taliban and save the U.S. and NATO from themselves.

*November 5, 2008*



# Obama's First Test

President Obama's first test in the national security arena is likely to come not from al-Qaeda or Iran or the Taliban but from within his own Democratic Party. Powerful constituencies in that party, the Feminists and the gays, will demand that he open the ground combat arms to women and allow acknowledged homosexuals to serve in the U.S. armed forces. If he agrees to either of these demands, or both, he will begin his Presidency by doing immense damage to the fighting ability of the America military.

Both demands are ideological in nature. They reflect the cultural Marxism of the Frankfurt School, commonly known as "Political Correctness." Cultural Marxism sees Feminist women and gays as the equivalent of economic Marxism's proletariat, i.e., "good," and white males as an equivalent of the bourgeoisie, i.e., "bad." The former are therefore to be "privileged" over the latter, in what Roger Kimball calls "experiments against reality." We must pretend that there are no meaningful differences between men and women, even on a battlefield, and that gays and normal men and women can mix without serious friction, even in very close quarters. Anyone who refuses to play "let's pretend" is to find himself in trouble.

The military reformers rightly argued that for winning in combat, people are most important, ideas come second and hardware is only third. Allowing women into the ground combat arms and open homosexuals into the armed services will impact critically important "human factors" in strongly negative ways. They will strike directly at why men fight.

It is a mistake to think that if you call a group of people an army, give them uniforms and hand them some weapons, they will fight.

Throughout history, some armies have fought a lot harder than others. The specific reasons vary widely, but one way or another they all come down to human factors.

One of the most basic human factors is that men fight to prove they are real men. They join fighting organizations, whether the U.S. Army or U.S. Marine Corps or MS-13, because those organizations are made up of fighting men. Their membership is a badge of honor that says, "We're not sissies or pansies. We are men who fight, serving alongside other men who fight." That tells others and themselves they are real men.

If ideologically-driven policies deprive fighting organizations of their ability to convey that message, men who want to prove they are real men will not join. Instead of men who want to fight and will fight, they will end up recruiting men who join for good pay, or education benefits, or because they can't get a civilian job. Armies like that may fight when they have no other choice, but if they come up against opponents who want to fight, they will be in trouble.

No two actions would more powerfully undermine the ability of the U.S. armed forces to recruit the kind of men who want to fight than allowing women into the ground combat arms and open gays into the military. How can a man prove his manhood by serving with women and gays? The recruitment of women into the U.S. military has already gone far beyond what military effectiveness would counsel. Martin van Creveld has written a whole book, *Men, Women and War*, arguing that women have essentially no place in a military. President Obama would do well to read it before making any hasty decisions.

President Obama's first national security test will in fact be a test of his honesty. Will he govern as the centrist he presented himself as being during the campaign? If so, he will allow present policies on women and gays in the military to remain in place. Or, will he reveal himself as a cultural Marxist who deceived the American public in order to get elected and will govern from the left, not the center? If so,

we will witness many experiments against reality, with the U.S. armed forces early victims. Our next President would do well to remember history's verdict on such experiments, a verdict illustrated by the fate of the 20th century's ideological regimes. In the end, reality always wins.

*November 13, 2008*

# The Russian Imperative

The arriving Obama administration will be handed not merely a can of worms but a bucket of asps. Somewhere, I suspect the ghost of Herbert Hoover is smiling. The inherited foreign policy problems are no less daunting than the economic mess. But on the latter front, there is at least one piece of good news. It may be possible to set the U.S. – Russian relationship on a new course.

America's failure to reintegrate post-Communist Russia into the concert of powers was a strategic blunder of the first order. The threat from the global south, manifested most powerfully by invasion by immigration but also evident in many other ways, can only be met by a united global north. Russia holds the West's vast eastern flank, which stretches all the way from the Black Sea to Vladivostok. Were that flank to collapse, as Russia came close to doing in the early 1990s, the West's geo-strategic position would become well-nigh hopeless.

Despite this strategic reality, evident to anyone who can read a map, Republican and Democratic administrations have vied to determine which could more effectively humiliate and alienate Russia. The Clinton administration probably won that contest with its inane war on Serbia, Russia's historic ally. Bush II's subsequent efforts to enlarge NATO and insistence on locating anti-missile defenses in eastern Europe were additional sticks in the Kremlin's eye. The only reason for any of it was great power hubris, of the sort which littered the 20th century with wreckage. Regrettably, the Washington Establishment is as prideful as it is short-sighted.

Until last week, I would have said that the U.S. had damaged the prospects for an American-Russian entente beyond repair. But to the West's potential good fortune, Russian president Dmitry Medvedev has

now signaled otherwise. According to the November 14 *Financial Times*, speaking shortly before his trip to Washington to a group of Russian and European business leaders, President Medvedev said that Russia could develop “neighborly and partnership-based relations with the U.S.” In Washington for the Group of 20 meeting, he repeated the message. The November 16 Washington Post quoted him as saying, “I think we can create in principle a new framework...a partnership between the U.S. and Russia.”

Responding to a question before the Council on Foreign Relations, Medvedev sent the message yet again. According to the *Post*, he said, “In my state of the nation address, I mentioned that Russia has no anti-Americanism, but there are some difficulties in understanding each other. We would like to overcome this with the new administration.”

It is imperative that the Obama administration respond positively to this diplomatic opening. After eight years of alienating friends and making more enemies, America is in dire need of fewer enemies and more friends. Russia could be a valuable friend indeed, diplomatically, militarily and economically.

Medvedev offered tantalizing hints about how the issue of missile defense might be handled. Again quoting the *Post*, he said, “But to my mind we have good opportunities to solve this problem ... to agree either on a global system of protection against rogue states ... or to find ways out in terms of programs existing already.” Russian anti-aircraft and anti-missile defense technology is at least as good as our own, maybe better. If the Obama administration is serious about missile defense for Europe, it can be provided far better by working with Russia than by threatening Russia.

Even more significantly, when Medvedev was asked before the CFR about the possibility of Russia joining NATO, he said, “There is a good phrase – never say never.” Since the fall of Communism, NATO has had no real reason to exist. But if Russia joined NATO, NATO would become what the West needs most, an alliance of the global

north. This is a lead both the Obama administration and the European members of NATO should pursue avidly.

With all the old Clintonistas moving straight into the new Obama administration, there is not much hope for change. But perhaps even they can see that America is not wise to turn all the world into its enemy. That was Germany's fatal blunder in both world wars. The Russians have opened the door to at least a normal relationship, perhaps much more. This time, let's not slam it in their face.

*November 17, 2008*

# What Happened in Mumbai

Applying operational art in 4th Generation war is so difficult it is hard to point to many successful examples of it. The recent assaults in Bombay are among the few and also among the best, bordering on brilliant. We may regret brilliance on the part of our opponents, but that should not prevent us from acknowledging it.

The operational logic is evident:

1. The United States wants Pakistan to focus on fighting al-Qaeda and the Taliban.
2. To be able to do so, Pakistan must shift its focus away from the Indian threat, which requires a détente with India. A piece by Jane Perlez of the *New York Times* which ran in the November 28 *Cleveland Plain Dealer* reported that

*Reconciliation between India and Pakistan has emerged as a basic tenet in the approaches to foreign policy of President-elect Barack Obama, and the new leader of Central Command, Gen. David H. Petraeus. The point is to persuade Pakistan to focus less of its military effort on India, and more on the militants in its lawless tribal regions....*

3. Friends of al-Qaeda and the Taliban need to block this shift in focus by Pakistan. To do so, they must ramp up the hostility between India and Pakistan. How could they do that?
4. With a special operation in India's most important city. Remember, a special operation must have operational significance to qualify as "special ops." If its meaning is only tactical, it's just

a bunch of yahoos running around making noise.

5. The special operation was tactically well planned and carried out. To work operationally, India must blame it on Pakistan. Early indications suggest that may happen.
6. If India does blame Pakistan and Pakistan feels the Indian threat is increasing, the American strategy of convincing Pakistan to focus on the Taliban and al-Qaeda will have been defeated. That is operational art at its best.

Meanwhile, in Iraq, an odd combination of events may offer a strategic win-win-win opportunity for all parties: the U.S., the al-Maliki government and al-Qaeda. Last week, the Iraqi parliament passed the new status of forces agreement that would keep American troops in Iraq through 2011. Washington regards that as a success, which it is not. What America needs most is to get out of Iraq before the next round in the Iraqi civil war starts.

However, to get Sunni support for the agreement, the al-Maliki government had to agree to submit the deal to a national referendum next year. If the agreement is defeated in that referendum, everyone could win. American troops would have a better chance of getting out while Iraq is still quiet. The al-Maliki government could gain some legitimacy by obeying the expressed will of the Iraqi people and telling the Americans to pack and go. al-Qaeda could claim that, in the end, the Americans were expelled from Iraq rather than leaving on their own preferred timetable, which in fact stretches far beyond 2011.

Here, al-Qaeda has an operational opportunity, and it will be interesting to see if it can grasp it. At present, al-Qaeda in Iraq is on the ropes, largely because its brutality toward the Iraqi population has cost it its political base among the Sunnis. If al-Qaeda can think operationally, it will announce that it is suspending all combat operations until the referendum. That truce would allow it to patch up its relations with its base. Further, al-Qaeda would state that if the status of forces agreement is defeated, it will not resume combat



operations. It would have no need to do so, since it could claim victory. And its pledge would encourage Iraqis, who are tired of seemingly random bombings, to vote no. al-Qaeda in Iraq could recover at the ballot box from the defeat it has inflicted on itself in the field.

A strategic win-win-win would be a strange outcome indeed for this phase of the Iraq war (there is more to come). But such are the vagaries of 4th Generation war. We will see similar oddities in Afghanistan as that war moves toward settlement. The sooner Washington can stop thinking in binary terms and get used to strange outcomes, the better.

*December 4, 2008*

## If Wishes Were Horses

Panglossading through reality, the *New York Times* recently offered the sort of thoughtless sunny picture of the Obama administration's security policy that lulls children to sleep but leaves adults restlessly wakeful. In a front-page story on December 1, "A Handpicked Team for a Foreign Policy Shift" by David Sanger, the *Times* reported that the new administration's key national security policy appointees were selected in large part because they have embraced a sweeping shift of resources in the national security arena.

The shift, which would come partly out of the military's huge budget, would create a greatly expanded corps of diplomats and aid workers that, in the vision of the coming Obama administration, would be engaged in projects around the world aimed at preventing conflicts and rebuilding failed states.

Whether they can make the change..."will be the great foreign policy experiment of the Obama presidency," one of his senior advisors said recently.

In the best Christmas spirit of my old friend Mr. Scrooge, I will spoil the story by spilling the ending up front. The "great foreign policy experiment" will fail.

It will fail for two reasons, one practical and one theoretical. The practical reason is that, no matter how much money you give them, our State Department and other civilian agencies cannot produce a product.

Over the years, I have heard one ambassador after another say, "I had to turn to the military because they are the only people who can get anything done." If you give the U.S. military an order, something usually happens. It may happen late, clumsily, and expensively, but

still, something happens.

In contrast, with State and other agencies, most of the time nothing happens. That is true even when budgets are ample. Why? Because the internal culture of our civilian agencies is so rigid, bureaucratic, risk-averse and rule-bound that they cannot act.

Often, the people at the working level are quite talented. They want to do the assigned job. But the internal focus of their agency is so strong they cannot, at least without risking their careers. A single broken rule or bent regulation, undotted i or uncrossed t, and they quickly learn to follow the regs and forget about the product. So nothing happens.

The Obama administration may wish this were not the case. Worse, it may pretend it is not the case, and learn only by failure. But if it is serious about its "one great foreign policy experiment," it must start by reforming the internal culture of the State department and all related agencies. That is a long-term and difficult undertaking. As to wishes, well, if wishes were horses, we would all get rich collecting golden road apples.

The second reason the great experiment will fail is that it represents a failure in strategic theory. In effect, it says that the Bush administration's debacle was a result of not of mistaken ends, only of mistaken means.

America will start to endeavor to govern the world, "preventing conflicts and rebuilding failed states." We will insert ourselves everywhere, exporting freedom and "human rights," aka Brave New World. We will re-make other societies in our own image, whether they want us to or not (no one does). This time, it will work, because instead of Marines, we will storm the beaches with brave State Department lads, armored with blue suits and armed with briefing papers and bottles of sherry.

In fact, our offensive grand strategy is itself the root of our failures.

We cannot remake societies in our own image, regardless of the means employed. Attempts to do so are doomed to failure, and so long as we insist on undertaking them, we are doomed to imperial overreach, with its inevitable consequences of decay and decline.

Some so-called "conservatives" may object to the Obama administration's great experiment because it will take money away from the Pentagon. That merely shows the right's usual instinct for the capillaries. We would take half the defense budget, pile it in heaps, set it in fire and roast marshmallows over it and gain no less from it than we do now. The real issue is whether America's grand strategy should be offensive or defensive. From President Washington to Senator Robert A. Taft, conservatives knew it should be the latter. That should be the critique conservatives offer, and it is one to which the Obama administration should pay thoughtful attention.

*December 12, 2008*

# America's Defense Meltdown

*America's Defense Meltdown* is the title of a new book on military reform, edited by Winslow Wheeler and published by the Center for Defense Information. In it, some of the leading figures from the military reform movement of the 1970's and '80's update their work and relate it to today's challenges, including that posed by 4th Generation war.

The book is timely. For years, Chuck Spinney and I have said that there will be no reform until the money simply isn't there anymore. If that day has not yet arrived, it is on the calendar. The combination of a severe recession or depression and vast New Deal-type public works programs means something has to give. As the largest element in the discretionary federal budget, defense spending is an obvious target. More, it is a worthy target, in that much of what we spend buys little or no capability. The problem is not only mismanagement, but outdated and fundamentally wrongheaded approaches to war.

The latter are the focus of *America's Defense Meltdown*, although the book addresses financial and managerial issues. Here, I want to focus on three chapters, the three most innovative (I leave my own two chapters, on the Marine Corps and the Navy, for others to weigh). The first is Chet Richards, "Shattering Illusions: A National Security Strategy for 2009-2017."

In its first incarnation in the 1970's and 1980's, the military reform movement deliberately avoided the subject of strategy. It did so because the Cold War locked the U.S. into worshipping the great clay god NATO, which is to say into a continental strategy. Then as now a maritime strategy made better sense, but anyone who questioned the holiness of NATO was cast into outer darkness. So we bit our tongues

and bided our time.

Now, with the Cold War over and the challenge of 4GW upon us, a debate over strategy is urgent. Chet Richards launches it con brio, arguing that we must determine what state militaries can and cannot do in a 4th Generation world. Then, we must stop asking our armed services to do things that are impossible for them, like turning fly-blown, flea-bitten Third World hellholes into Switzerland. More, we should stop buying forces that are useless or worse for the types of conflicts we are likely to face.

Chet may disagree, but I think that in his chapter he moves closer to what I have advocated for years, namely a defensive rather than an offensive grand strategy. In any event he puts the subject of strategy on the table, which is vitally important. Because a higher level of war dominates a lower, if you don't get your strategy right, no matter what you do at the tactical and operational levels, you lose.

The book's second brilliant chapter is by Pierre Sprey and Bob Dilger, "Reversing the Decay of American Air Power." In it, the authors chop up the idea of "winning through air power," which means through strategic bombing, and flush down it war's *cloaca maxima*.

More, they explain in detail how we can build an air force that can really make a difference in wars' outcomes and do so for less money than we are spending now. The key idea is simple, and well supported by military history: build an air force that works in close union with ground forces.

A personal anecdote: Years ago, I was asked by a thoughtful SAC commander (yes, there was one), "What am I supposed to do with 18 B-2 bombers?" I replied, "Tow them around to county fairs and charge admission."

My favorite chapter in *America's Defense Meltdown* is Bruce Gudmundsson's, "The Army National Guard, the Army Reserve, and the Marine Corps Reserve." Bruce is the highly talented author of

*Stormtroop Tactics*, the history of the development of 3rd Generation war in the German Army in World War I. Here, he shows how to take the classic European reserve system and adapt it to American conditions. Few transplants work “straight,” as direct imports. Adapting them requires great insight and imagination, and Gudmundsson demonstrates both in proposals that would improve the usefulness of our Guard and Reserve forces by orders of magnitude. His chapter alone is easily worth the price of the whole book.

Is anyone listening? Maybe. Interest is growing on Capitol Hill in reviving the Military Reform Caucus. Both Republicans and Democrats see major cuts in the defense budget are coming, and they know that left to its own devices the Defense Department will cut combat forces while preserving the bureaucracy and the money flow to the contractors. I suggested to a Hill staffer last week that the motto of a revived Reform Caucus should be, “Preserve the combat units, cut the bureaucracy.” That slogan could quickly gain bi-partisan support.

*America’s Defense Meltdown* is available in print from CDI and also electronically on the CDI website. Interestingly, the latter is blocked on DOD computers. Why? To quote Bill Buckley, why does baloney reject the grinder?

*December 15, 2008*

# Rundschau

If we look around the world at the prospects for 4th Generation entities, what does the new year reveal? Regrettably, they seem to face a rosy future.

The Israeli assault on Hamas in Gaza will succeed physically, prove a mixed bag mentally and fail on the moral level of war. Hamas is militarily a pushover compared to Hezbollah, which makes the David vs. Goliath nature of the conflict all the more evident. The stronger the contrast, the worse the outcome for Goliath. The fact that the timing if not the event is driven by Israeli electoral politics makes the moral picture even grimmer. Add in that absent a deal Hamas's rocket fire will continue and we see the makings of a debacle for Israel.

Some may see the assault as Israel selecting the "Hama option" van Creveld discusses, but I do not agree. Choosing the Hama option would mean subjecting Gaza to a World War I—style bombardment, with tens of thousands of Palestinians killed and the rest fleeing into Egypt for their lives. Gaza would largely be flattened, as was the Syrian city of Hama. As usual, the reality here is that the state has fallen between the two stools of the Hama option and de-escalation, which guarantees failure.

When the dust settles, I expect Hamas to emerge bloodied but stronger. It will continue to control Gaza, its support on the West Bank will soar (right before elections there) and the Palestinian Authority will look more like a stooge than ever. Strategically, the most important result will be further weakening of the legitimacy of the Egyptian government, which is bad news for America's interests in the region.

On another front, the seeming quiet between India and Pakistan is



deceptive. I expect an out-of-the-blue strike by India on 4GW training camps in Pakistan, a Pakistani defeat and possibly a collapse of the Pakistani government in consequence. How many collapses of governments Pakistan can endure before the state itself crumbles is a key strategic question. The answer, I suspect, is not many more. Pakistan could offer Islamic 4GW forces an earth-shaking victory in 2009.

In Afghanistan, the war continues to go badly for NATO and the U.S. More American troops doing what they are doing now will make the situation worse. The U.S. Army seems incapable of transferring what it learned in Iraq to Afghanistan. It is attacking the population rather than protecting it, which guarantees failure. The one bit of good news is that the Taliban and al-Qaeda are replicating the latter's mistakes in Iraq.

The advent of the new American President changes nothing, because in Washington nothing really changes. One wing of the Establishment leaves government and goes into the think tanks and lobbying firms, another returns from those same places to government. The Obama crowd will not face up to the problem of America's over-extension. It is just as globalist, interventionist and imprudent as Bush's herd of Gadarine swine. Gates may prove the one exception, but in the land of the blind the one-eyed man is hated. Plan on more mad foreign military adventures, despite the fact that we now have to print the money to pay for them. 4GW opponents will end up winning most.

Perhaps the brightest sign on the horizon for 4GW entities of all types, not just those that represent Islamic jihad, is the world economy. If the world recession becomes a world depression, which looks more and more likely, states everywhere will be weakened. For reasons Martin van Creveld lays out in *The Rise and Decline of the State*, citizens now expect their state to take care of them economically. If they have no jobs and face penury, they will be ready if not eager to transfer their primary allegiance from the state to something else. A big

winner here will be gangs of every sort.

This bleak *Rundschau* should not surprise us. We live in a time toward the end of the world of states. A growing number of states will vanish. Still more will become hollow shells, within which 4GW entities thrive while protected by "state sovereignty." As Globalism collapses economically and the global elites are revealed as emperors without clothes, the motto of every state will become "*sauve qui peut*."

If you're lucky enough to have a time machine, set it to "Back" and get aboard.

*January 7, 2009*

## Israel Doesn't Get 4GW

So far, Israel's assault on the Gaza Strip has produced no surprises. On the physical level of war, the IDF is triumphing. The Palestinians are suffering about one hundred people dead for every dead Israeli. To a 2GW military, which is what Israel's formerly 3rd Generation army has become, that is the main measure of victory.

On the moral level, the picture is reversed. Hamas is almost assured of victory. As Martin van Creveld has observed, all it has to do to claim victory is survive, which it will. That claim will not just be propaganda: for Hamas to survive everything a modern state military can throw at it is a legitimate victory. In fact, it will not only survive but be strengthened by a worldwide flood of sympathy, which will translate in part into new recruits and more money.

In the end, if Israel wants to stop Hamas' rockets, it will only be able to do so by making a deal with Hamas. Since that was equally true before the war, the question of why it was fought will soon present itself. The real reason is a tad sordid: the current Israeli government is trying to split the "get tough" vote to prevent Likud from winning the next election. The same motivation lay behind last weekend's "discovery" that Olmert asked the U.S. for permission to attack Iran. The parties in the current Israeli coalition government are in effect saying to Israeli voters, "Why vote for an oaf like Bibi Netanyahu when you can get the same thing from us without the endless embarrassments?"

What all Israeli parties and the IDF seem to share is that they don't get 4GW. They have repeatedly been defeated by 4th Generation forces, but they do not learn.

The problem goes beyond John Boyd's framework of moral-mental-

physical, with the moral the most powerful level of war and the physical the weakest. What Israel cannot grasp is that in the face of 4GW, all states should be seen as allies.

The most dangerous opponent of any 4th Generation entity is a local state. The state must be local: interventions against 4GW forces by outside states are doomed to failure. But local states can sometimes win. It does not matter whether the state in question is a democracy or not. It does not matter whether it is a friend or enemy of Israel. By its inherent nature as a state, it will view 4th Generation forces as threats.

A state may or may not be strong enough to suppress 4GW entities on its soil. It is in Israel's most vital interest that neighboring states be strong enough – morally as well as physically – to do so.

In concrete terms, what does that suggest? First, it means Israel should be very concerned about the strength and solidity of Egypt, Jordan, Syria, and Iraq (Lebanon is a state in name only). The Israeli assault on Gaza has seriously undermined the legitimacy of three of those four, with Syria the only exception. Egypt and Jordan have diplomatic relations with Israel, and Egypt has been an all-too-obvious partner of Israel in besieging Gaza. Iraq's government (still a government without a state) is an American creation, and the U.S. is seen as Israel's main enabler. On the moral level, every Israeli bomb dropped on Gaza has also landed on Cairo, Amman, and Baghdad.

One Israeli party, Likud, is so oblivious to 4GW that its proposed grand strategy for Israel, largely written by American neocons, calls for the destruction of every Arab state. Iraq was the first victim of that strategy, thanks to the neocons' influence on the Bush administration. If Likud wins the coming Israeli elections, there is every reason to think it will put its strategy into practice, pushing Israel into the maelstrom.

Israel's dependence on strong neighboring states is equally true with regard to the Palestinians. That means Israel needs a strong Palestinian state in the West Bank. But the effect of the war in Gaza is

to undermine Fatah in favor of Hamas on the West Bank, which also has elections coming up. So Israel has in effect shot itself in both feet.

What of Gaza itself? Here, Israel should have taken advantage of a blunder by Hamas. By winning an election in Gaza and then defeating Fatah in a short civil war, Hamas became a state. On balance, that was not to its benefit. Israel could and should have dealt with Hamas in Gaza as a state. It should have opened the border crossings, avoided raids (an Israeli raid into Gaza first broke what had been a fairly effective cease-fire), and let Hamas become immersed in all the problems of governance. It should have sought a Hamas state in Gaza that was strong enough to prevent rocket-firings and other acts of "terrorism" by other 4GW groups. As a state, Hamas would have gradually "normalized," even if it did not want to and even though in theory it would have remained devoted to Israel's destruction.

Now, by its invasion, Israel may have reduced Gaza to ungovernable chaos. It may think it can reinstall Fatah as the government there. But if Fatah were so foolish as to try to ride into power on the backs of Israeli tanks, it would destroy its legitimacy both in Gaza and on the West Bank, with no hope of recovery.

Ironically, the best hope Israel now has in Gaza is that when the dust settles, Hamas is still in charge. At that point, if Israel wants to stop the rocket fire, it will have to make a deal with Hamas. That deal should include what Israel ought have done in the first place, namely help Hamas make Gaza a functioning, gradually normalizing state. Again, Israel's most vital interest is that it be bordered by strong states, not the stateless chaos that is 4GW's natural breeding ground.

I visited Israel a few years ago. I liked the country and its people. I wish Israel well. But wishing it well does not mean supporting it in actions that undermine its own security. Until Israel comes to think in 4GW terms, everything it does is likely to undermine its own security, as the assault on Gaza has undermined it.

Can Israel learn? If not, apartment buildings in Miami will prove a great investment.

*January 14, 2009*

## His Majesty's Birthday

This week marks the birthday of my liege lord and reporting senior, Kaiser Wilhelm II. As usual, I placed a call over my 1918 telephone to offer my felicitations and ask how our poor world looks from the heights of Mount Olympus.

This time, my call was routed from Berlin to our naval airship base at Nordholz. His majesty, it seems, has taken to the air.

After congratulating der Allehoechster on the anniversary of his birth, I enquired where he had been flying. To Capri, perhaps?

"Guess again," the Kaiser replied. "I've just led a bombing raid on London, flying in L-70, our finest Zeppelin. We laid our eggs right down Whitehall."

"So we're still bombing England, even in Heaven?", I asked.

"Oh yes, of course. The ordnance has changed. We now bomb with sausages rather than explosives. This time we hit them with echte Goettingen Bratwurst, right at supper time. It was retaliation for a raid on Duesseldorf last week by 100 Handley-Pages, dropping bangers. Just yesterday the French shelled our fortress at Metz with whole fois gras. Every Prussian soldier now looks rather like Max Hoffman."

"A delightful prospect," I replied. "Please save any artillery duels with the Austrians until I get there. In the meantime, may I enquire whether Heaven has any reaction to America electing its first Black President?"

"As Uncle Deng likes to say, we don't care whether a cat is black or white, so long as it catches mice," His Majesty answered.

“And is President Obama likely to prove a good mouser?”, I ventured.

“Judging by most of his appointments, he seems better at catching fleas,” the Kaiser replied. “This democracy business is such a joke. All you get is a different slice from the same sausage. Now, when kings died and their sons took the throne, you saw real change. Just think of the differences between Bertie and my grandmother Queen Victoria. Not a change for the better, let me add.”

“Yet your generation of monarchs also got blindsided by history,” I suggested.

“Yes, we did, as poor mortals always will,” the Kaiser said. “All earthly leaders are time-blinded. We saw backward too clearly and forward hardly at all.”

“My generation of kings and emperors were fixated on the age-old contest between dynasties. Would the houses of Hapsburg and Hohenzollern defeat those of Romanoff and Savoy or the other way around? We could not see the paradigm shift welling up all around us, the onward rush of democracy and equality and socialism and all the rest of that garbage. What we needed was an alliance of all monarchies against democracy. Instead we wiped each other out, putting the levellers in charge everywhere, to the world’s ruin.”

“Does that hold any lessons for our time?”, I asked.

“From Olympus, the picture could not be more clear,” His Majesty replied. “As we were mesmerized by dynastic quarrels, so your politicians cannot see beyond the state. They think only of states in conflict. Will America be threatened by China? Should India go to war with Pakistan? Is Iran a danger to Israel? They cannot see that states are now all in the same, sinking boat, just as all the dynasties were in 1914.”

“What should states then do?”, I enquired.



“Form an alliance of all states against non-state forces, what you call the 4th Generation,” the Kaiser answered. “The hour is late, and the state system itself has grown fragile. That is the lesson of America’s quixotic war in Iraq. You destroyed the state there, and now no one can recreate it. That is what will happen almost everywhere when states fight other states. But none of your leaders can see it, because they, too, are time-blinded. It is the human condition.”

“So is democracy both the culmination of the state and its end?”, I asked.

“Indeed,” Kaiser Wilhelm replied. “If states have a future, it will be monarchy, not democracy. A good monarch is above politics. When governments fail, people do not blame the king, who remains as the symbol of the state. The state obtains some distance from political failure, which helps the state endure such failures. In the times you are about to face, political failures will be common.”

“So our future is ....?”

“Chaos or the return of the king. And now I must go, as the Imperial train is waiting.” His Majesty rang off, leaving me with some interesting words to ponder, along with dreams of 42 cm. Skoda siege guns hurling vast Malakofftorte. War in Heaven, it seems, it is not always hell.

*January 27, 2009*

## Blowback Revisited

Some time ago, I wrote a column warning that our involvement in 4th Generation wars overseas would spur 4GW here at home. One way it would do so is by introducing soldiers to statelessness.

I do not see e-mail, but I was told that column generated lots of it. Many e-diots howled that I had somehow “attacked the troops.”

Well, guess what? It’s starting to happen. A reader sent me a copy of a story from *The Oklahoman* dated December 25, 2008. The title is, “Police Say Vet Made, Sold IEDs to Gangs.” It reads in part:

*Police spent the day searching the house of a decorated, two-tour Iraq war veteran on Tuesday, one day after he was arrested and charged with making explosive devises and attempting to sell them...*

*Steven Andrew Jordal, 24, was an infantry tank (sic) specialist in the U.S. Army from 2002 to 2007. He received the Army’s Good Conduct medal, along with several other medals, badges and ribbons, the military confirmed.*

*Oklahoma City police took interest in Jordal when they received a tip he was selling IEDs to criminals. IEDs have emerged in Iraq as the weapon of choice for insurgents against U.S. forces.*

*For as little as \$100, Jordal was making the same kinds of weapons he saw used against his fellow soldiers in Iraq and selling them on the streets of Oklahoma City to gang members...*

Surprise, surprise. This is not the first such report I have seen. Shortly after my initial column ran, I received a letter from a reader in

Poland with a news story that Polish police were being attacked and killed with IEDs.

If we read these stories merely as accounts of the spread of a technology, IEDs, we read them too narrowly. American and other foreign troops in places such as Iraq and Afghanistan are learning more than how to make IEDs and how effective they can be. They are learning by direct observation how a place works when the state disappears.

To the large majority of American and European soldiers, this is a lesson in horror. They return home thankful they live in a place where the state endures. The last thing they want is to see their native country turn into another Iraq or Afghanistan.

But a minority will learn a different lesson. They will see statelessness as a field of opportunity where people who are clever and ruthless can rise fast and far. They look upon themselves as that kind of people. They will also have learned it is possible to fight the state, and how to do so. The effectiveness of IEDs is part of that lesson; so are the power and rewards that come to members of militias and gangs. In their own minds, and perhaps in reality, they will have found a new world in which they can hope to thrive.

There is a parallel here with what the men who fought in the trenches on the Western Front in World War I learned. For most, it was the worst time in their lives. Their experience is captured by *All Quiet on the Western Front*. But a minority found it the best time of their lives. Their book is Ernst Junger's *Storm of Steel*. It was these men, looking to re-create that tremendous experience, who made up the Brownshirts of the S. A. Their very name, Storm Troopers, originated in what they had done during the war. They came home determined to create a different Germany, and they did.

As I have argued both in these columns and elsewhere, if we want to avoid importing 4GW into the United States, we need to isolate

ourselves from 4GW overseas. We need a defensive, not an offensive, grand strategy. So long as we enmesh ourselves in 4th Generation wars like those in Iraq and Afghanistan – will the Obama administration add Somalia and Sudan to the list? – we will increase the danger we should seek most to avoid, the horror of 4GW on our own soil. That is the 4th Generation's strategic IED, and if it ever goes off in America, we will all get blown up.

*February 3, 2009*

## New 4GW Literature

Beyond the mindlessness of airstrikes in Afghanistan and elections (that decide nothing) in Iraq, the body of thoughtful literature about 4GW continues to expand. The latest offering, and an important one, is Michael Vlahos's new book, *Fighting Identity: Sacred War and World Change*.

Vlahos offers a useful follow-on to Martin van Creveld's last book, *The Culture of War*. Like van Creveld, Vlahos urges us to escape the Clausewitzian trap that sees war merely as an extension of politics, a tool employed by statecraft. That is true in cabinet wars, but 4th Generation entities, having no cabinets, do not fight cabinet wars.

Rather, Vlahos argues, war is a "liturgy" that establishes or expresses identity.

My hypothesis is that harnessed human spirit is the essence of military effectiveness. This spirit represents identity, which itself can be understood as the core power of culture. Military effectiveness is at root always about culture.

While Vlahos does not use the terminology of 4GW theory — what he calls identity I call primary loyalty — he grasps a central fact of 4th Generation war, namely that culture is a great deal more powerful than technology in determining war's outcome. 4GW is a clash between two cultural meta-narratives, one embodied in the state, the other in non-state entities rising up against states. Regrettably, the state meta-narrative is weakened by a turning inward on itself, something Vlahos discusses with special reference to America.

Much of *Fighting Identity* is devoted to considering Globalization as an act of "creative destruction" that generates ever more non-state

elements. Here, Vlahos usefully compares the current period of Globalization with two earlier globalizations, that which occurred in Late Antiquity and the globalization of the High Middle Ages. I think Vlahos is correct in seeing the present as the Third Globalization; it is only the hubris of Moderns that prevents them from recognizing parallels.

He further argues that in the end, those earlier globalizations too created new types of entities, entities which did not entirely fit in pre-existing frameworks. Here the book does present something of a terminological problem, in that Vlahos speaks of “states” and “non-state” entities anachronistically, before states existed. But in substance what he is saying is justified.

I do have one substantive quibble. Vlahos in effect argues that Rome never “fell.” Well, yes, it did, Mike. A city of 1,500,000 people ended up with 5000 inhabitants, while wolves prowled the forum. It is true that elements survived, especially symbols that conveyed legitimacy (which is different from identity). The Holy Roman Empire lasted until 1806. But 90 percent of the literature of the ancient world was lost, and in northern Europe, people forgot even how to make bricks. That’s like Americans forgetting how to make hamburgers, and it suggests some significant events took place. A dying St. Augustine watched from the walls of Hippo as the Vandals burned the villas.

Vlahos puts in context the American narrative and that of America’s Islamic 4GW opponents, by arguing that each supplies context for the other. Of America’s invasion and occupation of Iraq, he writes:

*Thus in looking at them, I came back at last to us. In its 9/11 War the United States embarked on a flamboyant enterprise: the “transformation” of the Muslim world...*

*We staged the grandest opera to remake the world, but also centrally to set up our own transcendence in history.*

*We achieved our apocalyptic goal, but not as we had planned. Our ensuing and intimate relationship with the Muslim world was liberating – at least in forcefully opening that world to new things. But they turned out not to be our things, nor old things, but things still taking form.*

*Fighting Identity* does not offer the last word on culture and 4th Generation war. Its merit lies in the fact that it is one of the first words. There is much work yet to be done. But as we all play the blind men and the elephant, Mike Vlahos has laid hands on some interesting parts of the beast. Those who hope someday to see the elephant would do well to read this book.

*February 10, 2009*

## Two Elections

In many Gilbert and Sullivan operettas, the story line depends on some sort of magic elixir or potion. Similarly, the advocates for Brave New World tell us the comic opera called freedom flows from the magic of elections. Just hold elections and all the wars will vanish. Regrettably, BNW's music is not nearly so entertaining as that of Sir Arthur Sullivan, while its plot is even more absurd than most of Gilbert's.

Two recent elections point to a grimmer reality. The first was in Iraq, for provincial councils. In Iraq as in most of the world, the question is neither whether elections were held nor who won. The question on which social order depends is who accepts the results of an election. If elections are to substitute for war, not only the winners but also the losers must accept their outcome. Losers must give up power, patronage, one of the very few local sources of money (often lots of it), and possibly physical security as well, hoping for better luck next time, if there is a next time.

I suspect the odds of that happening in Iraq are small. The *Washington Post* recently quoted one U.S. officer who served as an adviser to Iraqi army units saying of Iraqi commanders, "When you got to know them and they'd be honest with you, every single one of them thought that the whole notion of democracy and representative government in Iraq was absolutely ludicrous."

That quote was in a piece by Tom Ricks, the *Post's* long-time defense correspondent, in the Sunday February 15 "Outlook" section. Ricks goes on to say:

*I don't think the Iraq war is over yet, and I worry that there is*



*more to come than any of us suspect...*

Many of those closest to the situation in Iraq expect a full-blown civil war to break out there in the coming years. "I don't think the Iraqi civil war has been fought yet," one colonel told me.

In such an environment, elections do not substitute for war but rather prepare the way for it. They exacerbate differences, heighten local conflicts, and lengthen the lists of "injustices" each party uses to justify fighting.

This unfortunate reality points again to what America needs to do in Iraq: get out now, fast, while it can. If we are lucky, history will grant us a "decent interval" between our departure and the next round of 4GW in Iraq. If we dawdle until the fighting ramps up again, we may find it difficult, politically if not militarily, to leave at all.

This brings us to another election, that in Israel. It is not clear what government will emerge from Israel's vote. It is clear the Knesset has shifted to the right. From the standpoint of America's interests, that is a negative outcome.

The danger is not only to prospects of peace between Israel and the Palestinians, which are probably small in any event. The danger is that a new Israeli government in which Likud and voices to Likud's right are stronger is more likely to attack Iran.

As I have said repeatedly in past columns, an attack on Iran by the U.S. or Israel threatens consequences disastrous to America. The worst potential consequence is the possibility of the destruction of the army the U.S. now has in Iraq. As almost no one in Washington seems to realize — thanks, as usual, to hubris — that possibility is all too real. All one need do to see it is look at a map. Iran sits alongside our main line of communications, supply and retreat all the way from Baghdad to the straits of Hormuz. Add in the probability that various Shi'ite militias and perhaps much of the new Iraqi army as well would join

with the Iranians in attacking us, and the possibility of finding 100,000 American troops in an operational *Kessel* is frighteningly evident.

Thus we find that in two overseas elections, the magic elixir has proven poisonous to the United States. The two reinforce one another in their toxic effects, the one threatening to hold us in Iraq, the other to entomb us there. As Tom Ricks concluded his piece in the *Post*, "In other words, the events for which the Iraq war will be remembered probably haven't even happened yet." Thanks to two elections, they may be coming all the faster.

*February 18, 2009*

# The Price of Bad Tactics

For the gazillionth time, the U.S. military in Afghanistan had to announce last week that an American airstrike killed civilians. The incident followed a familiar pattern. We first announced that 15 insurgents were killed, then had to climb down, finding after an official investigation that only three of the dead were fighters, while 13 civilians died.

In Congressional testimony, Secretary of Defense Gates said that unless we stop killing Afghan civilians in airstrikes, “we are lost.” So why do we keep doing airstrikes?

The answer is, because American infantry tactics are bad. They amount to little more than bumping into the enemy and calling for fire. The easiest way to provide the overwhelming firepower our bad infantry tactics depend on is with airstrikes. So to win tactically, we have to lose strategically. At least from the Vietnam War onward, that equation has come to define the American way of war. It is the price of bad tactics.

Why does American infantry continue to employ bad tactics? Superior alternatives are readily available. The “infiltration tactics” used by German infantry in the Kaiserschlacht of 1918 are far superior. Better still are true light infantry or Jaeger tactics, which influenced the development of infiltration tactics. Light infantry tactics rely less on firepower and more on stealth, surprise, ambush and encirclement. Their history is well known, and reaches back as far as the 18th century. The literature on them is extensive.

There are three basic reasons why the U.S. military continues to employ bad infantry tactics when superior alternatives lie ready to hand. The first is the unfortunate combination of hubris and intellectual

sloth which characterizes most of the American officer corps – and infantry officers in particular. Most read nothing about their profession. Of those who do read, most confine their study to doctrinal manuals — the U.S. Army’s are wretched rehashed French stuff, the Marine Corp’s somewhat better — or histories of American victories. The number who really study tactics, learning about infiltration tactics, Jaeger tactics, the infantry tactics of oriental militaries etc. through reading, is tiny.

This ignorance is buttressed by hubris, false pride. The American military spends a great deal of time and effort telling itself how wonderful it is. Gorged on its own baloney, it thinks, “How could we possibly learn anything from anyone else? After all, we’re the greatest.” So there is no need for any study beyond study of ourselves. Hubris justifies the closed system ignorance creates.

The second reason we persist with bad infantry tactics is bad training. Almost all American training is focused on procedures and techniques, taught by rote in canned, scripted exercises where the enemy is a tethered goat. Free-play training, against an active, creative enemy, generates imaginative tactics, because whoever employs such tactics wins. But free-play training is so rare in the American military that most American infantrymen receive none at all. They become expert in techniques for applying fires, but they know nothing else. In effect, many American infantry units have no tactics, they only have techniques.

The third reason American tactics are bad is a bad personnel system. American infantry units are allowed to maintain personnel stability only for short periods, and sometimes not at all. They are always receiving new, largely untrained troops, who have to be taught “the basics,” which is assumed to mean procedures and techniques. Even if they try — and few units do — they cannot get beyond just bumping into the enemy and calling for fire, because that’s all the newbies can possibly manage.

A piece in the February 19 *Washington Post* cited the American commander in Afghanistan, General McKiernan, as saying that the planned increase in American troops could allow for the use of fewer airstrikes. On the contrary, the bad tactics those troops will employ, because they know no others, guarantee that the demand for airstrikes will go up. So will Afghan civilian casualties, and with them the speed with which we will lose the Afghan war.

How many wars does America have to lose before American infantry officers get serious about studying tactics?

*February 23, 2009*

## **A Barometer of Order**

On the surface, the antics of Somali pirates and the comic opera response of the maritime powers is worthy of a re-visit by Gilbert and Sullivan. Despite the presence off Somalia of the largest concentration of international warships since World War II, Somali pirates go on their merry ways, taking ships and holding them for ransoms. While they seldom make their captives walk the plank and most prefer the green flag of Islam to the Jolly Roger, they are pirates in the full sense of the word, owing allegiance to no state. Pirates might be justified in claiming they were the original 4th Generation warriors.

What is comic about the piracy off Somalia is the inability of the maritime powers, most of whom now have warships on station in the region, to do anything about it. Their governments wring their hands and say, "Oh, my, whatever shall we do. Our laws don't seem to cover piracy, so it seems we must do nothing." The warships are left to steam in circles, scream and shout. The British Foreign Office produced a formal legal opinion warning Royal Navy ships not to capture pirates, on the grounds that the pirates might claim asylum in Britain! The Foreign Office, it seems, has become an asylum.

On no question is international law more clear or more ancient than on piracy. Law has recognized pirates as "enemies of all mankind" since the Roman Empire. They are outlaws whom anyone may kill on sight. Common law, which used to count for something in Britain, makes hunting down and killing pirates the duty of all maritime powers. The Royal Navy used to be pretty good at it. Has it perhaps run out of rope?

Cleaning up Somali piracy should take tens days, a fortnight at most. It's not hard. International ships and aircraft hunt down and sink

the pirates' vessels at sea. (As in the 17th and 18th centuries, there are very few pirate "ships;" most pirates operate from open boats, now as then.) Any ship taken by pirates is immediately re-taken by some state's navy or Marines. Captured pirates are hanged from the nearest yardarm, without trial, as common law allows. Ports out of which pirates frequently sail, such as Eyl, are bombarded, and any likely pirate craft are destroyed. This is a script any admiral from the age of sail would know by heart.

Why hasn't it happened? Here is where the subject becomes serious. Piracy is a barometer of two related qualities in the world of states: the state's belief in itself and the state system, and international order. The failure of states to follow ancient law and precedent in dealing with Somali pirates says nothing about the pirates. But it speaks volumes concerning the weakness of the state, in its own eyes. So little do the international elites who now rule all but a handful of states – the administrators of Brave New World – believe in the state that they cannot even hang pirates. They have the souls, not of leaders or governors, but of petty functionaries. When not even states' elites believe in the state anymore, why should anyone else? Piracy not suppressed represents history lifting its leg on the whole state system.

Similarly, piracy is a barometer of order. It has been so since Roman times. When order weakens, pirates flourish. When order returns, pirates are hunted down and hanged. The piracy barometer tells us order is vanishing fast. That should not surprise us, since order in the post-Westphalian world depends on states.

Piracy is only the barometer; the storm will be something else. That storm is coming, and soon, as Brave New World's promise of unending material wealth in return for acceptance of an administered life proves a lie. By the time the storm is over, the elites that fear to hang pirates will be hanging from lampposts themselves.

*March 3, 2009*



## **Rounding Up the Usual Suspects**

President Barack Obama recently announced a bold new initiative to save up to \$40 billion per year by reforming defense procurement. Like the Pentagon, I greeted his proclamation with a yawn.

If there is one game the Pentagon knows how to play, it is “reforming defense procurement.” It has gone through the drill more times than it or I can remember. The script is always the same. A “reform” program is announced with great fanfare. Experts are convened (all from or on their way to defense industry), commissions and panels meet, reports are issued and recommendations are offered. Then it all peters out, and nothing changes. The whole game is just another form of “rounding up the usual suspects.”

How do I know this time won’t be different? By the Obama administration’s defense appointments. With the exception of Secretary of Defense Robert Gates, who seems to have some inclinations toward genuine reform, they are hacks. All either served in Pentagon jobs in the Clinton administration or come from defense industry, or both. They have demonstrated for years that they are custodians of business as usual.

A further clue to the meaninglessness of President Obama’s “reform” initiative is its focus on “waste, fraud and abuse” in defense budgeting. There is no shortage of all three, in the Pentagon as in all government departments. But the only “reforms” this focus will elicit are changes in procedures, which are not the heart of the problem. More “reviews,” more layers of bureaucracy and more powerpoint briefings will do nothing to reduce waste, fraud and abuse. The system will have dozens of work-arounds for any changes that might actually threaten rice bowls. Again, we’ve seen it all before, with virtually every new

administration.

What would real reform of defense procurement entail? First, we would reform what is being procured. Most current and projected major defense programs are buying weapons and other “systems” that are outdated or simply represent a false understanding of war.

We spend tens of billions of dollars on computerized command and control systems that encourage more and more centralization of decision-making. But sound military doctrine calls for decentralized decision-making. The Army’s Future Contract System, the most expensive current Pentagon program, is a Rube Goldbergian, semi-portable Maginot Line that in combat would collapse of its own internal complexity. The J-35 fighter-bomber is another F-111, a flying piano that is useless for the one attack aviation function that really works, supporting ground troops. Only a handful of the ships the Navy wants are useful in coastal waters, where future naval actions are likely to be fought. These and many similar “legacy” systems are military museum pieces, designed for wars with the armies, navies and air forces of other states. Serious defense procurement reform would start by canning all of them.

Once we figured out what to buy for real wars, another reform would help us buy it at reasonable prices. It is a common tool in private business, called “should cost.” Based on marketplace prices for similar systems and components, we would determine what a given system should cost. Bids would not only be compared with each other but with the “should cost” figure. If all the bids were over the “should cost” figure, we would re-bid or decide to do without the system. Prices would soon come down, especially if at the same time we made it easier for companies that now do no defense work to get into the business.

Another simple procurement reform that would turn from state capitalism to the free market is buying off the shelf. When a service identified a need, it would look around the world to see what is

available to fill that need. Then we would build it here, under license if it were a foreign design. At present, DOD buys virtually everything by coming up with a wish list, then finding someone to build it. It is as if when you wanted a new car, you came up with a list of everything you wanted in that car, then went to an automobile company and asked them to build it for you. You can imagine what it would cost.

This is just a small sample of real defense procurement reforms. Among the long-time military reformers are people who have studied defense procurement for decades. They have identified many other similar reforms that would make a genuine difference. Of course, that is why none of the reforms they recommend have ever been enacted.

John Boyd used to say, “It is not true the Pentagon has no strategy. It has a strategy, and once you understand what that strategy is, everything it does makes sense. The strategy is, don’t interrupt the money flow, add to it.” That was true before the Obama administration, it will be true while it is in office, and it will still be true when it ends. The people it has appointed to the Pentagon — again, Secretary Gates excepted — know the strategy, benefit from it and will continue it. They will defend it as if their future incomes depended on it, which, of course, they do.

The one wild card that could change everything is the growing probability of national financial collapse. If that happens – or perhaps when it happens – defense procurement will be on the chopping block along with everything else. At that point, reformers’ slogan should be, “Keep the combat units, cut everything else.” If we have a Secretary of Defense strong enough to do that (the bureaucracy will want to do the opposite), we will find that almost everything above the battalion level was waste, fraud and abuse of one sort or another.

*March 10, 2009*

# Responses

As regular readers of this column know, I usually do not see responses to it because I will not use a computer. (I explain my reasons for that in a forthcoming book, due out in April, *The Next Conservatism*.) A colleague at Zossen recently put together some responses to two recent columns and sent them to me via the Reichspost. I was pleased to find that virtually all were thoughtful, and here I would like to comment on several.

Most related to On War #293, “The Price of Bad Tactics”:

- Boris M. wrote, “I wonder if this is the result of bad tactics or the logical consequences of the zero (American) casualty policy followed by the US since the Vietnam war.” Emery Nelson added, “The question that needs to be asked is, ‘Would you rather win with higher casualties, or lose with few casualties?’” I am not sure adopting Third in place of 2nd Generation infantry tactics would result in higher casualties. It might do so in individual engagements, but it might reduce total friendly casualties in the war. Air strikes serve as one of our opponents’ most effective recruiting tools, both because of the civilians killed and because when you attack someone from an invulnerable position, i.e. 20,000 feet up, you make him want to fight you all the more. If we deprive our opponents of the recruits our airstrikes generate, might not our total casualties go down?
- Bob P. writes, “We call for airstrikes because that’s what you do to equalize combat power when you are outnumbered.” Later he added, “Most AARs in Afghanistan start with a platoon getting ambushed by approximately equivalent forces, then the enemy

forces, through various means (the part I won't discuss) obtain local superiority. Platoon calls in airstrikes..." I find it interesting that our opponents appear better at concentrating forces at the decisive point than we are. I wonder if two 3GW tactical concepts might help us, namely Schwerpunkt and the importance of maintaining a strong reserve (normally at least one-third of available troops). In contrast, 2GW tactics scatter forces in penny-packets and regard troops in reserve as "wasted" because they are not engaging the enemy. Does that describe what we are now doing in Afghanistan?

- Jeffrey R. writes, "I do not agree that our officers are not well read and educated on 'good' tactics. Remember, they have to operate in a 'system' that does not reward innovation and success." That is certainly true of our system. But it is also true that the U.S. military's educational system offers little real education. Mostly, it just trains people in one way to do something. If an American officer wants broad education in alternative tactics, he has to educate himself.
- Sven Ortmann writes, "The light infantry approach doesn't help much in a terrain that doesn't offer enough concealment, though. It's no solution for all problems... Tanks in an assault gun role could handle the problems that plague light infantry in open terrain." This is correct, in that light infantry is terrain dependent. That is why it seldom fights "pure," but mixed with heavy infantry (now motorized/mechanized) units. However, those heavy infantry forces also need 3GW tactics, which are simpler versions of Jaeger tactics. In the 1980s, some military reformers, including John Boyd, asked German General Hermann Balck why so many of the best Panzer commanders in World War II had been light infantry officers in World War I. He replied, "Because it was the same." As to tanks, I would say instead, "infantry guns." These may be tanks, wheeled assault guns or towed pieces, depending on the situation. Their purpose is to provide heavy direct fire, which in many cases could replace airstrikes with less risk of collateral damage.
- Max writes, "Somebody was saying there's no way the current US

force of occupation in Iraq could be seriously imperiled by any force on earth.” That bit of hubris is common in Washington, and it has given me many a bad night. If either the U.S. or Israel attacks Iran, we could lose the whole army we have in Iraq. Such a defeat would be our Adrianople, or, given the degree to which we now resemble Imperial Spain, our Rocroi.

The package from Zossen also included some responses to my message to Kaiser Wilhelm on his birthday.

- R.M. Hitchens wrote, “I’ve always wondered why the very serious Mr. Lind would invoke the spirit of the utterly unserious and notoriously shallow Kaiser Bill...” Martin van Creveld agrees with me that this common view of His Majesty is unfounded. On the contrary, Kaiser Wilhelm was right far more often than were his advisors. He deferred to them too much, it is true, but he explains that in his memoirs on the not unreasonable ground that he was a constitutional monarch. In fact, Kaiser Wilhelm was the most intelligent head of state in Europe in 1914. The greatest fool among the key players in that fateful year was Sir Edward Grey.
- Nimbus 48 wrote, in kindly fashion, “For many years I have profited from Bill Lind’s articles but I can’t help wonder just what the structure of his ideal monarchy would be.” As conservatives know, there is no ideal structure, in the abstract, for any government. A country’s government must be shaped by its own culture and traditions. For Saudi Arabia, that means an absolute monarchy, and for Britain, a constitutional monarchy, although Commons has grown so powerful compared to the Queen and Lords that it has effectively abolished the British constitution. I also suspect Heaven wants two countries to be republics, Switzerland, to show that it can be made to work, and the United States, as a warning to everyone else.

Finally, as the rector of my church in Cleveland (St. James’ Anglican Catholic Church; if you want to see how a high mass should

be done, visit us some Sunday) says, “I am a monarchist because God is.” And I am by choice a subject of Kaiser Wilhelm II because, in all probability, the very last chance Western civilization had of surviving was a victory by the Central Powers in World War I.

*March 17, 2009*

## **An All-State Alliance**

Several weeks ago, a U.S. Navy survey ship, the Impeccable, was harassed by the Chinese in waters off Hainan Island. The Chinese have built a major submarine base on Hainan Island, and the newest classes of Chinese nuclear submarines are based there. The Impeccable's obvious mission was to collect intelligence, including sonic and other "signatures," on the new Chinese submarines.

Legally, there is no doubt or question the Impeccable was in the right and China in the wrong. The ship was in international waters, where it had every right to be. China's claim that it was in her Exclusive Economic Zone is irrelevant. Impeccable was fishing for information, not fish. An EEZ is not the same thing as territorial waters. Beyond the 12-mile limit, every navy can legally spy on any other navy as much as it wishes.

However, to say the U.S. Navy's actions were legal is not the same as saying they were strategically wise. On the contrary, the incident looks like another case of elevating tactics over strategy, on the part of both the U.S. and China.

Tactically, it is easy to understand why the U.S. Navy wants to collect as much information as it can about Chinese submarines, especially boomers [Ed. note: subs that launch ballistic missiles]. In a war between the U.S. and China, that information would greatly facilitate American anti-submarine warfare. Boomers represent the greatest Chinese naval threat to the American homeland, and Chinese attack subs are probably the second most dangerous threat to the ships of the U.S. Navy (I would rank attacks on U.S. Navy aircraft carriers by nuclear-armed ballistic missiles at the top). Information on oceanographic conditions around Hainan Island, for which Impeccable



surely was also trolling, would be critical for any attempt to bottle Chinese submarines up in their base.

I'm sure these arguments were used by the U.S. Navy to sell Impeccable's mission. But whoever bought the sales job forgot about strategy. America's strategic interests dictate that we avoid, rather than prepare for, a war with China. Such a war could end up destroying both countries as powers. More, in a 4th Generation world, America needs China to be a center and source of order. If China lost a war with America, there would be a real danger that China's internal unity might also be lost. If China came apart internally, as she has so many times in her history, she could end up a vast, bubbling cauldron of 4th Generation war. Few outcomes would be worse, from the standpoint of all states.

The U.S. Navy might respond that a Chinese-American war is unlikely to start over harassment of a survey ship, and it would be right. But missions such as Impeccable's send a message that we see China as a likely enemy. Such messages, if repeated often enough, can establish a dynamic that is difficult to reverse. It took almost half a century for just such a dynamic to bring war between the U.S. and Japan — I think the first U.S. Navy "Plan Orange," for war with Japan, dated to 1907 — but eventually it did the trick.

The way Washington works, it would take courage for someone in OSD or the State Department or the White House to tell the U.S. Navy to swallow the tactical disadvantages and avoid missions we know will antagonize China. But that is what sound strategy requires. Anything else elevates tactics over strategy, an elementary blunder that almost always brings unfortunate results.

The same critique applies to the Chinese. Tactically, it is understandable that the Chinese navy wants to give its submarines every possible advantage. Protecting its boomers is important strategically as well as tactically. While China has more submarines than America, its fleet is far inferior qualitatively, in personnel as well

as hardware. In any naval confrontation with the U.S., China is very much the underdog. She needs every advantage she can get.

But the wise and prudent strategy of China's leaders, ever since the end of the disastrous reign of Chairman Mao, has been to avoid military conflicts while building up China's economy. The Chinese leadership has understood that economic power must precede military power if the latter is not to be shallow and brittle. China needs at least 20 to 30 more years of peace and rising prosperity before she dare think about war. From this perspective, the harassment of Impeccable was putting tactics ahead of strategy, the same error the U.S. made by sending the ship on her mission. No less than America, China must avoid establishing a dynamic of conflict between the two powers.

Here again we come to the central requirement dictated by the rise of 4th Generation war. States should avoid conflicts with other states, because the winner will most likely be the non-state forces of the 4th Generation. Rather, states should seek an alliance of all states against non-state elements. The fact that this most basic of all strategic requirements is understood neither in Washington nor in Beijing may not surprise us, but it should trouble everyone who dares hope the 21st century will not see the end of the state system and its replacement by a world of bottomless chaos.

*March 23, 2009*

## Another War Lost

With the usual fanfare, the Obama administration has proclaimed a new strategy for the war in Afghanistan. On the surface, it does not amount to much. But if a story by Bill Gertz in the March 26 *Washington Times* is correct, there is more to it than meets the eye. Gertz reported that

*The Obama administration has conducted a vigorous internal debate over its new strategy for Afghanistan...*

- *According to two U.S. government sources close to the issue, senior policymakers were divided over how comprehensive to make the strategy...*
- *On the one side were Vice President Joseph R. Biden, Jr. and Deputy Secretary of State James B. Steinberg, who argued in closed-door meetings for a minimal strategy of stabilizing Afghanistan...*
- *The goal of these advocates was to limit civilian and other nonmilitary efforts in Afghanistan and focus on a main military objective of denying safe haven to the Taliban and al-Qaeda terrorists.*
- *The other side of the debate was led by Richard C. Holbrooke, the special envoy for the region, who along with U.S. Central Command leader Gen. David H. Petraeus and Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton fought for a major nation-building effort.*
- *The Holbrooke-Petraeus-Clinton faction, according to*

*the sources, prevailed. The result is expected to be a major, long-term military and civilian program to reinvent Afghanistan from one of the most backward, least developed nations to a relatively prosperous democratic state.*

I have not seen similar stories in other papers, so it is possible Gertz is not correct. But if he is, the Obama administration has just made the Afghan war its own, and lost it.

Ironically, the reported decision duplicates the Bush administration's error in Iraq, another lost war (the next phase in Iraq's Sunni-Shi'ite civil war is now ramping up). The error, one that no tactical or operational successes can overcome, is setting unattainable strategic objectives.

Short of divine intervention, nothing can turn Afghanistan into a modern, prosperous, democratic state. Pigs will not only fly, they will win dogfights with F-15s before that happens. The most Afghanistan can ever be is Afghanistan: a poor, backward country, one where the state is weak and local warlords are strong, plagued with a drug-based economy and endemic low-level civil war. That is Afghanistan at its best. Just achieving that would be difficult for an occupying foreign power, whose presence assures that war will not be low-level and that no settlement will be long-term.

In fact, even the minimalist objectives reportedly urged by Vice President Biden are not attainable. We cannot deny safe haven in Afghanistan for the Taliban, because the Taliban are Afghans. They represent a substantial portion of the Pashtun population. The most we can hope to obtain in a settlement of the Afghan war is the exclusion of al-Qaeda. That is a realistic strategic objective, because al-Qaeda is made up of Arabs, i.e. foreigners, whom the Afghans dislike the same way they dislike other foreigners. The Taliban's commitment to al-Qaeda is ideological, and the right combination of incentives can usually break ideological commitments.

Instead of a pragmatic, realistic approach to attaining that limited objective, it seems we are committed to a Quixotic quest for the unattainable. Again, that guarantees we will lose the Afghan war. No means, military or non-military, can obtain the unattainable. The circle cannot be squared.

Here we see how little "change" the Obama administration really represents. The differences between the neo-liberals and the neocons are few. Both are militant believers in Brave New World, a Globalist future in which everyone on earth becomes modern. In the view of these ideologues, the fact that billions of people are willing to fight to the death against modernity is, like the river Pregel, an unimportant military obstacle. We just need to buy more Predators.

Meanwhile, the money is running out. The *ancien regime* syndrome looms ever larger: we not only maintain but increase foolish foreign commitments, at the same time that debt is piling up, those willing to lend become fewer and we are reduced to debasing the currency. Historians have seen it all before, many, many times. It never has a happy ending.

It appears Afghanistan will be the graveyard of yet another empire.

*April 1, 2009*

## Another Vandergriff Book

Don Vandergriff has published another book, which is good news for all who care about the future of the U.S. Army. Titled *Manning the Future Legions of the United States: Finding and Developing Tomorrow's Leaders*, Don's new book brings together many strands of Army reform to create a comprehensive and intelligent reform program.

The book begins by describing the Four Generations of Modern War, which together establish the context in which we can see both where the Army is (in the 2nd Generation) and what it needs to prepare to fight (4th Generation war). Unlike many other descriptions of the Four Generations, Vandergriff's is generally correct, although I would quibble here and there. Most importantly, he does not fall into the common error of saying the U.S. Army is now a 3rd Generation military. On the contrary, much of what the book prescribes is intended to move the Army from the 2nd Generation into the Third, as a necessary step forward facing the Fourth. Cultural change is central to that transformation, and quite properly it is the purpose of much of what Vandergriff proposes.

After a look at the history of manning the U.S. Army, which explains how and why it adopted the Taylorist "industrial age" model, the book makes an important call for "parallel evolution." Parallel evolution, in which many things change at the same time, is essential for bringing the Army's culture from the inward-focused, process-driven 2nd Generation to the outward-focused, result-driven 3rd Generation. In its absence, all you get is specific, unrelated alterations such as the recent move to brigades (while keeping the fifth-wheel division headquarters) that leave the culture untouched. Instead of reforming, the Army merely reorganizes. Vandergriff rightly points to

the reforms of the Prussian Army under Scharnhorst as a model of parallel evolution the U.S. Army might profitably follow (see Charles Edward White's superb book, *The Enlightened Soldier*).

When he discusses the key subject of developing leaders, Vandergriff draws on his earlier work at Georgetown (described in his book *Raising the Bar*), which the Army now calls Adaptive Leader Methodology (ALM). ALM is of central importance to cultural change, because it teaches outward focus. Thanks largely to Don's missionary work, ALM is spreading in the Army, including to important places such as West Point and the Basic Officer Leader Courses at Ft. Benning and Ft. Sill.

*Manning the Future Legions* is optimistic about the future of the U.S. Army, but it also raises the question of how optimistic dare we realistically be? As Vandergriff writes, "Proposed reforms to Army culture still avoid changing the system's legacies, which also serve as the four pillars holding up the (current) cultural structure." He rightly identifies the "four legacy pillars" as:

1. The up-or-out promotion system
2. Quantity-based vs. quality-based officer accessions
3. Centralized control of the evaluation and promotion system, and
4. A top-heavy officers corps and too many headquarters."

As Vandergriff states, "As long as these legacies of today's Army culture remain invulnerable, the service will evolve only slowly, or not at all, and therefore will have trouble in recruiting, developing, and retaining adaptive leaders and soldiers."

My own view of the Army is that, to borrow from an old European bon mot, while the United States Marine Corps's situation is serious but not hopeless, the U.S. Army's condition is hopeless but not serious. I participated as an "outside expert" in one of the Army's "transformation" exercises, and all I saw were the usual games, despite explicit guidance to the contrary from the Army Chief of Staff.

One thing could change that. In Iraq and Afghanistan, Army units from battalion downward have had to develop an outward-focused, 3rd Generation culture in order to succeed in their missions. Officers and soldiers who experienced an outward-focused culture are coming home, where they find still an inward-focused, 2nd Generation Army. Many are responding by getting out. But some will stay, and they will work for reform. They know there is a better way.

Don Vandergriff's pioneering intellectual work, readily available in his books, will give Army combat veterans the ammunition they need to make reform real. Here's hoping they read the books, including this one.

*April 6, 2009*



# Retrospective

The 300th column in this series offers a useful point from which to look back. Events since *On War* #1 have, I think, generally validated the Four Generations framework. Iraq was not a "cakewalk," nor did our initial invasion of Afghanistan "eviscerate" the Taliban. Mullah Omar proved the better prophet; before the first American bomb fell, he said, "We will lose the government and lose Kabul, but it doesn't matter."

What lessons might we draw from the previous 299 *On War* columns and their interplay with the larger world? Three seem to me to be of overriding importance.

1. So long as America pursues an offensive grand strategy, 4th Generation war will ensure her defeat. The reason is Martin van Creveld's concept of the power of weakness and its intimate relationship with legitimacy. In a 4th Generation world, legitimacy is the coin of the realm. At root, 4th Generation war is a contest for legitimacy between the state and a wide variety of non-state primary loyalties. American power lacks legitimacy because, on the physical level, it is so overwhelming. That is the power of weakness: anyone who stands up to the American military becomes a hero. In turn, any state the American military supports loses its legitimacy. The more places America intervenes militarily, the more states lose their legitimacy, to the advantage of 4th Generation, non-state entities. In effect, we have a reverse Midas touch. Only a defensive grand strategy, where we mind our own business and leave other states to mind theirs, can break us out of this downward spiral.
2. 2nd Generation militaries cannot win 4th Generation wars. 2nd Generation armed forces, such as those of the United States, fight

by putting firepower on targets. This wins at the physical level, but as it does so it brings defeat at the moral level, which is decisive in 4GW. The best current example is Pakistan, where the combination of Predator strikes and arm-twisting of the Pakistani government has undermined the legitimacy of the Pakistani state. That state now stands on the verge of disintegration, which would give al-Qaeda and other Islamic 4GW forces the greatest victory they could imagine. The image on Osama's cave wall should be a Predator, with the title, "Our best weapon."

3. There is no chance America will adopt a defensive grand strategy or reform its military to move from the Second to the 3rd Generation — a necessary though not sufficient step in confronting 4GW — so long as the current Washington Establishment remains in power. That Establishment is drunk on hubris, cut off from the world beyond court politics and thoroughly corrupted by Pentagon "business as usual," which knows how to buy whatever political support it needs. Like all establishments, it sees any real change as a threat, to be avoided. So long as it reigns, nothing will change.

What are the implications of these three observations? Militarily, they portend continued failure and defeat. We will fail to get out of Iraq before the next phase of that war begins, or, worse, an Israeli attack on Iran costs us the army we have in Iraq. We will be defeated in Afghanistan, because we will refuse to scale our strategic objectives to what is possible and we will continue to alienate the population with our firepower-intensive way of war. We will push Pakistan over the brink into disintegration, which will be a strategic catastrophe of the first order. We will ignore the disintegration of the state in Mexico, while importing Mexico's disorder through our ineffective border controls. We will not even be able to stop Somali pirates. What does it say about us when the whole nation rejoices because the U.S. Navy, the most powerful navy on earth, defeated four Somali teenagers?

It does not end with this. These foreign policy failures and military

defeats — or even more embarrassing "victories" — become just two of a larger series of crises, including the economic crisis (depression followed by runaway inflation), foreign exchange crisis (collapse of the dollar), political crisis (no one in the Establishment knows what to do, but the Establishment offers the voters no alternative to itself), energy crisis, etc. Together, these discrete crises snowball into a systemic crisis, which is what happens when the outside world demands greater change than the political system permits. At that point, the political system collapses and is replaced by something else. In the old days, it meant a change of dynasty. What might it mean today? My guess is a radical devolution, at the conclusion of which life is once again local.

That would be, on the whole, a happy outcome. But I fear this will be a trip where the journey is not half the fun.

*April 21, 2009*

# Escaping the 2GW Trap

As the U.S. sends thousands more American soldiers to Afghanistan, it risks speeding its own defeat in that graveyard of empires. Why? Because the 2nd Generation practice of the U.S. military reduces tactics to little more than bumping into the enemy and calling for fire. The fire, most often delivered by aircraft that can see and understand little of what is happening on the ground, often kills civilians. Even when it does not, the disproportion of pitting jet fighter-bombers and attack helicopters against guys in bathrobes armed with rusty rifles turns us into Goliath, a monster. Both effects bring about our defeat on the moral level. In effect, the 2nd Generation leaves us in a trap of our own making: to win the engagements we have to lose the war.

How might U.S. forces in Afghanistan escape the 2GW trap? To start with, they should accept and live by a principle laid down by Marine Corps General James Mattis, one of our more successful commanders in Iraq. That principle, taken from medicine, is, “First, do no harm.” When and where fighting is likely to cause civilian casualties, wreck the civilian infrastructure and alienate the population, don’t fight. A withdrawal is better than a combination of tactical victory and strategic loss.

Second, seek to de-escalate. De-escalation is the way state armed forces prevail in 4th Generation wars. De-escalation is the first principle for state forces fighting *4th Generation War*.

Third, use the Grid to evaluate every mission before it is undertaken. The Grid is a simple tool I devised last year in a seminar with Royal Marines who were on their way to Helmand Province. Its purpose is to try and foresee the larger consequences of tactical actions,

or, as one Royal Marine general put it, to predict potential second-order effects.

2nd Generation armed services consider only one of the nine boxes on the Grid, the Tactical/Physical box in the upper left corner. They are subsequently surprised by the results of their action in the eight other boxes. The surprises are seldom pleasant.

The Grid is easy to understand and relatively easy to use, though the questions it poses may require both commanders and intelligence officers to think in ways different from those they are accustomed to. S-2s and G-2s will have to go beyond the rote processes of Intelligence Preparation of the Battlefield (IPB), which in truth is merely intel for dogs.

Before undertaking an action, commanders and their staffs should attempt to fill in every box. Then, they should consider whether the probable results in all the boxes are what they want. If the answer is no, they should probably re-evaluate what they intend to do in the Tactical/Physical box. The process is iterative and Socratic, not mechanical. Of course, no one can know what all the effects of an action will be; certainty is not to be expected in war. But as units gain experience in the theater, the quality of their estimates will improve. Even a “best guess” is preferable to not asking the question.

Together, these three recommendations can help U.S. Army and Marine Corps units in Afghanistan escape the 2nd Generation trap of winning tactically at the expense of losing strategically. They are not a substitute for the reform we really need, namely moving all the U.S. armed forces from the Second to the 3rd Generation, while thinking seriously about the 4th. But as palliatives of a fatal weakness inherent in 2GW, they have value. Especially when time and events are pressing, it is useful to remember the old Russian saying, “Best is the enemy of good enough.”

*April 20, 2009*

# Blinders

At the height of the Cold War, a U.S. army corps commander in Europe asked for information on his Soviet opposite, the commander of the corps facing him across the inter-German border. All the U.S. intelligence agencies, working with classified material, came up with very little. He then took his question to Chris Donnelly, who had a small Soviet military research institute at Sandhurst. That institute worked solely from open source, i.e. unclassified material. It sent the American general a stack of reports six inches high, with articles by his Soviet counterpart, articles about him, descriptions of exercises he had played in, etc.

What was true during the Cold War is even more true now, in the face of 4th Generation war. As we have witnessed in the hunt for Osama, our satellite-photo-addicted intel shops can't tell us much. But there is a vast amount of 4GW material available open-source: websites by and about our opponents, works by civilian academics, material from think-tanks, reports from businessmen who travel in areas we are interested in — the pile is almost bottomless. Every American soldier with access to a computer can find almost anything he needs. Much of it is both more accurate and more useful than what filters down through the military intelligence chain.

Or at least he could. In recent months, more and more American officers have told me that when they attempt to access the websites they need, they find access is blocked on DOD computers. Is al-Qaeda doing this in a dastardly attempt to blind American combat units? Sadly, no. DOD is doing it. Someone in DOD is putting blinders on American troops.

I do not know who is behind this particular bit of idiocy. It may be

the security trolls. They always like to restrict access to information, because doing so increases their bureaucratic power. One argument points to them, namely an assertion that the other side may obtain useful information by seeing what we are looking for. That is like arguing that our troops should be given no ammunition lest muzzle flashes give away their positions in a fire-fight.

But the fact that websites of American organizations whose views differ from DOD's are also blocked points elsewhere. It suggests political involvement. Why, for example, is access to the website of the Center for Defense Information blocked? CDI is located in Washington, not the Hindu Kush. Its work includes the new book on military reform *America's Defense Meltdown*, which has garnered quite a bit of attention at Quantico.

The goal of the website blockers, it seems, is to cut American military men off from any views except those of DOD itself. In other words, the blockaders want to create a closed system. John Boyd had quite a bit to say about closed systems, and it wasn't favorable.

Intel officers supposedly can go all the way to the top of their chain of command with a request to view a blocked website; their petition may or may not be granted. But this just intensifies the problem, because it gives the intel community a monopoly on information. In 4GW, it is essential that everyone do intel, not just a few specialists. Every private has to understand the environment he is operating in. Many websites can help him do that. But if he tries to access them on a DOD computer, he finds them blocked. He is thrown back to pure kinetics, which leads to our defeat.

Never could it be said more truly that we have met the enemy, and he is us. People on our own side are blinding our men. One person in a senior position could put an end to this absurd practice. Secretary Gates? General Petraeus? Jim Jones? Surely you all understand that putting blinders on our own side is less than helpful. Anyone listening out there?



As I said, I don't know where this mindless action originates. Whoever is responsible for it should get the Order of the Black Turban, First Class. They are doing our opponents a great favor.

Rigid control of information through a compartmented, stovepiped process is characteristic of the 2nd Generation. Once again we see why 2nd Generation militaries cannot win 4th Generation wars. Our defeats are less a product of what our enemy does to us than of what we do to ourselves.

*April 29, 2009*

# Rehearsal

Thus far, the great swine flu “pandemic” exists mainly in newspaper headlines. “World Ends Tomorrow” always sells a few extra papers. I’m waiting for the Onion: “Pigs flu.”

If swine flu follows the route of its 1918-1919 predecessor, receding over the summer, then coming back in a more virulent version next winter, it could get serious. But so far, the “pandemic’s” most interesting aspect is as a rehearsal for one of 4GW’s most dangerous threats, the release of a genetically engineered plague.

Genetic engineering is a hideous technology, crafted in Mordor. Honest blunders will be enough to unleash plagues on crops, critters (honeybees may have already been hit), and man. It offers Brave New World its final, almost inescapable control mechanism.

Like every other technology man has invented, it will also be used in war. I have argued for years that a genetically engineered plague, a disease no one ever saw before and against which there are no defenses, could replicate what the Black Death brought to medieval Europe. Such a weapon could kill far more people than a single nuke or even several nukes. Worse, while building nuclear weapons requires vast facilities, genetic engineering is knowledge-based. No non-state entity will be able to build a fission or fusion weapon (they may buy or steal one), but they will be able to genetically engineer deadly diseases, if they can’t already.

Let us imagine, for a moment, that the ongoing swine flu epidemic were a deliberate rehearsal for release of a genetically engineered plague. What would be the lessons so far?

First, the main target, the United States, offers a wonderful

incubator right next door: Mexico. Mexico has densely populated slums; a culture in which life is lived socially, outside the home; and typical Third World standards of public health. Getting a plague started is tricky. It needs to achieve “critical mass” before it is detected. Mexico is just the “Petri dish” a 4GW attacker would need.

An article in the Sunday, May 3 *Washington Post* noted:

*Mexican scientists said the virus has been spreading primarily within families and among co-workers, often in dense, poor neighborhoods of Mexico City...*

*“When you have this huge accumulation with crowded people in a rather small area, you have a greater opportunity to spread the disease,” (Mexican epidemiologist) Lezana said. “Besides, it’s an area – in general – of low income, poor people, urban poor, very crowded, so those might be some of the main explanations...”*

Second, the Washington Establishment will not even attempt to close the United States/Mexican border until it is too late. Spokesmen for the Obama administration said that an epidemic is preferable to the economic damage border closure would create. They would realize, too late, how wrong they were if the disease were a genetically engineered plague. But “too late” means a win for 4GW. The rehearsal shows the border will remain open, with vast movement of people, legally and illegally, between the United States and Mexico. Moving a plague northward, once Mexico has served its “incubator” function, will not be difficult.

Third, Americans, driven by sensation-seeking media, will panic. Panic is a reasonable response to a plague; one of the best ways to survive the Black Death was to get out of town as soon as it appeared. But panic will help a 4GW attacker achieve what might be his main objective, serious damage to the American economy, even if public health measures succeed in containing the plague without major

population loss. Osama himself has said that al-Qaeda's main target is the American economy, since that is what Americas seem to care most about.

Could the swine flu epidemic in fact be a trial run for an attack by a genetically engineered plague? Might the swine flu have been deliberately created for a test? The answer is almost certainly no, although at this point scientists do not know how this version of flu arose.

But "objectively," as a Marxist would say, it is a test nonetheless. We would be wise to regard it as such, and grade our response carefully. To date, we have gotten an F, largely because of the Establishment's refusal to consider closing the U.S./Mexican border. The only effective immediate response to a genetically engineered plague is likely to be quarantine. Quarantines start with border controls. America and other countries used to know that, and they routinely closed borders and quarantined arriving travelers when epidemics were loose.

"Globalist" ideology, which is shared by both political parties, rejects border controls as hostile to its vision of "One World." In a century when genetically engineered plagues will serve as weapons of mass destruction, that ideology may literally be the death of us.

*May 4, 2009*

## Back to the Balkans

A story I read years ago culminated with the protagonist holed up in a cheap hotel in the Balkans, listening unwillingly through the paper-thin wall as the man in the room next door beat his wife. As he pummeled her, she cried again and again, “Balkan! Balkan!” “Balkan,” it seems, may be a term of opprobrium even in the Balkans.

Few episodes in American history have been more Balkan than our late war there. In case the folly of the war in Iraq and the futility of the war in Afghanistan have caused us to forget, the Clinton administration bombed Serbia for almost three months, for reasons no one quite remembers. Somewhere around 5,000 Serbian civilians were killed, and much of an already poor country’s economic infrastructure was wrecked. As usual, the bombing had virtually no effect on military targets.

The Serbs caved when the Russians pulled the rug out from under them and NATO dropped its most extreme demands. NATO could have gotten the same deal with no bombing, had the initial ultimatum to Serbia not been written to make acceptance impossible (Operation Franz Ferdinand?).

The truce, which is the most one can get in Balkan wars, required Serbian forces to evacuate Serbs’ ancestral homeland, Kosovo. That turned Kosovo’s remaining Serbian civilians over to the tender mercies of the Albanians, who promptly ethnically cleansed most of them while NATO forces stood by. Serbia did not renounce its claim to Kosovo; no Serbian government could do that and survive.

Now, it seems, our distinguished Secretary of State, Madame Clinton, wishes to revisit the scene of the crime. Perhaps looking about for something more promising than fighting Pashtuns, she is rumored

to want another round with the Serbs. The demands, this time, are to be Serbian recognition of Kosovo's "independence" (Kosovo is not a country and never has been; there are no Kosovars, only Serbs and Albanians who live in Kosovo) and the destruction of Republika Srpska, the Serbian portion of Bosnia. The effects would be to delegitimize the current moderate Serbian government and drive the remaining Serbs in Kosovo and Bosnia out as refugees.

Only people as shallow and self-absorbed as the Clintons could want to mess around in the Balkans. Talk about smoking in the powder magazine. The potential for disaster is always high, and the effects can spread, as the unpleasantness between 1914 and 1918 might remind us.

In fact, the two previous rounds of Balkan fighting and American and NATO meddling have left unstable situations needing only a spark to erupt. Bosnia is a hot-house creation, a figment of the Globalist elite's imagination. Like Oakland, there is no there there. It is a Croat-Moslem "federation" neither party accepts. The Croats want out, and the Muslims want to cut the Croats' throats. All that keeps the lid on is the money that pours from the foreign troops who occupy the place.

Kosovo remains a festering boil, home to jihadists, drug distribution networks and other 4GW elements of every sort. Serbia won't give it up, and the Albanians will not rest until every Serb is gone or dead and every Serbian church or cultural monument obliterated.

Mrs. Clinton wants to push America's nose back into this beehive, or so the rumor mill in Washington has it. We must pray that adults somewhere in the Obama administration won't let the children again set fire to the house so they can roast marshmallows over the embers. A few folks who, unlike the Clintons, know something of Balkan history are sponsoring a conference on Capitol Hill on May 27 to urge we let sleeping dragons lie. Let's hope that for once someone listens.

*May 12, 2009*

# The Future is Now

For years, I have warned in these columns and elsewhere that the future weapon of mass destruction we should most fear is not a nuke. Rather, it is a genetically engineered plague, a plague no one has ever seen before and against which no one has any immunity. In the time it would take to identify the new disease, develop a vaccine, distribute the vaccine and have it become effective, modern societies could suffer death rates equivalent to those of the Black Death: up to 2/3 of the population.

Regrettably, it appears that dread future has now arrived. The May 12 *Wall Street Journal* carried a front-page story titled “In Attics and Closets, ‘Biohackers’ Discover Their Inner Frankenstein.”

*In Massachusetts, a young woman makes genetically modified E. coli in a closet she converted into a home lab. A part-time DJ in Berkeley, Calif., works in his attic to cultivate viruses extracted from sewage ...*

*These hobbyists represent a growing strain of geekdom known as biohacking, in which do-it-yourselfers tinker with the building blocks of life in the comfort of their own homes.*

Developing nuclear weapons requires vast facilities. Even so significant a country as Iran must strain to its limits to design, build and operate the complex industrial plants required. The costs run in the billions of dollars.

In contrast, the Wall Street Journal writes of the woman in Massachusetts that

*She’s got a DNA “thermocycler” bought on eBay for \$59, and*



*an incubator made by combining a Styrofoam box with a heating device meant for an iguana cage.*

As usual, the Internet plays the role of Sorcerer's Apprentice in this unfolding nightmare:

*The (biohacking) movement has made big strides recently thanks to the commercial availability of synthetic DNA. This genetic material, normally found inside the nucleus of cells, can now easily be purchased online. That provides any amateur with the ingredients for constructing an organism.*

The WSJ reassuringly notes that the government is interested in all this.

*The E. coli manipulator got a phone call from a government security contractor: How did she build that lab? Did she know other people creating new life forms at home?*

*The woman, a Ms. Aull, says the worries are overblown. DIY biologists are trying to "build a slingshot," she says, "and there are people out there talking about, oh, no, what happens if they move on to nuclear weapons?"*

Well, my dear, the fact is that you and your fellow biohackers have moved on to nuclear weapons. Or, as I fear, something even more dangerous than nuclear weapons. One little "oopsie" in a basement lab could inadvertently unleash a plague.

In their collective hubris, modern people seem to have forgotten what the plague did. It brought down a whole civilization, the Middle Ages. So vast and terrible were its effects that children still sing about it:

*Ring around the rosie,*

*Pocket full of posies,  
One, two, three and  
We all fall down.*

The rosie was a rose-shaped, red blotch, often with a ring around it, that was one of the first symptoms showing a person had caught the plague. The posies were sweet-smelling herbs; people thought breathing through them might ward off the disease. One, two, three and we all fall down – dead.

It's nice to know the Feds are paying some attention to what is happening here. But what are jihadi biohackers cooking up? What's brewing in Columbian drug labs? Anything available on the Internet is available everywhere.

A calm, measured, thoughtful response to biohacking would be to run around madly in one's underwear screaming "The sky is falling! The sky is falling!" It is impossible to overstate this threat.

What can we do about it? Probably nothing. Only students of history, who know what the Black Death did to Medieval Europe, will understand what is at stake. Since World War I, and in some ways since the onset of the mis-named Enlightenment, the Modern Age has been folding back on itself, creating self-amplifying feedback loops of ever-greater destructive power. But only Cassandra can see it happening.

One of the few effective defenses the Middle Ages had against the Black Death was immurement: when plague appeared in a household, the house was bricked up, with the inhabitants inside. Some towns saved themselves that way. Should we immure biohackers? Absolutely.

Of course we won't, nor will we do anything until it is too late. One, two, three and we all fall down.

*May 19, 2009*



# A Memo to the President

The recent fire/counterfire between President Obama and former vice president Dick Cheney over Guantánamo, the prisoners held there, and techniques used in their interrogation revealed a distressing ignorance in the White House. Specifically, it revealed that Obama and his advisers are ignorant of military theory.

Cheney won the debate by drawing the usual Republican distinction, that between doing what is necessary for national security and being nice. If Republicans are allowed to frame the issue that way, they will always win. But in fact, theirs is a false position. We do not have to choose between doing what works in the "war on terrorism" and doing what is morally right. The two are the same.

The military theory that allows us to see this is the work of Col. John Boyd, USAF. Boyd argued that war is fought on three levels: the moral, the mental, and the physical. Of the three, the moral level is the most powerful, the physical level is the least powerful, and the mental level lies between the other two.

Cheney argued that we should sacrifice the moral level to the physical. We should engage in torture because it may gain us information that could prevent another attack like 9/11. That could be the case.

But Boyd's theory would respond that the defeat we suffer on the moral level by adopting a policy of torture will outweigh any benefits torture might bring us on the physical level of war. How so? By pumping up the terrorists' will, cohesion, and ability to cooperate while diminishing our own.

In effect, both our enemies and our allies will come to see us as

evil. That enables enemies to recruit, raise money, and generate new operations while we must focus internally on papering over cracks in our coalitions. They gain greater harmony while we face increased friction, Boyd's dread "many non-cooperative centers of gravity." They pull together, we are pulled apart.

For President Obama and other opponents of torture, the important fact here is that, if we understand what Boyd is saying, we no longer face the choice Cheney offered. We need not choose between doing what military necessity commands and acting morally. Military necessity itself demands that we act morally. The real choice is between doing what wins wars and loses wars, with Cheney arguing for the latter. Suddenly, it is the Republicans who are on the wrong side of the "national security" issue.

Let me offer President Obama three pieces of advice, all intended to escape the Republicans' trap:

- First, when this issue comes up again (and it will), go to your NSC director, Gen. Jim Jones, for advice. He is familiar with Boyd's work. Your political people are not.
- Second, apply Boyd's insight about the three levels of war not only to the question of torture but to everything we do in places like Iraq and Afghanistan. At present, we are sacrificing the moral level to the physical in lots of ways, which is to say we are defeating ourselves. A good start would be a presidential order forbidding air strikes on populated areas and demanding they be restricted elsewhere to situations where our troops would otherwise be overrun.
- Three, solve the issue of detainees at Guantánamo and elsewhere by designating all of them as what they are, namely prisoners of war. International law specifies how POWs must be cared for. POW camps on American soil are nothing new; we have had them in every war. POWs may be exchanged or held until the war is over. This is what the Bush administration should have done from

the outset, a point Democrats can make. The current mess was created by Republicans.

Politicians usually roll their eyes when military theory is mentioned, deeming it too esoteric for "the real world." As President Obama's inability to answer Cheney effectively shows, nothing could be further from the truth. The Bush administration led America into two quagmires, in Iraq and Afghanistan, because of its ignorance of the theory of 4th Generation war. If the Obama White House continues to be as ignorant as its predecessor, it will set the country up for fresh disasters. A wise president will prefer to learn from theory than from failure.

*June 4, 2009*

## Calling President Davis

Secession is in the air. In Texas, a Republican governor has dared breathe the word. Vermont has an active and growing secessionist movement. Oregon, Washington and British Columbia already call themselves Cascadia. Last weekend's *Wall Street Journal* led off with a piece on secession. The author, Paul Starobin, wrote that:

*The present-day American Goliath may turn out to be a freak of a waning age of politics and economics as conducted on a super-sized scale – too large to make any rational sense...*

Is this all mere fancy, another amusing idea with which to wile away the summer? 4th Generation theory suggests there is more to it than that. The crisis of legitimacy of the state has not passed America by. Washington pretends to offer democracy, but both parties are largely one party, the Establishment party. Its game is remaining the Establishment and enjoying the pleasures thereof, not governing the country. The only politics that count are court politics; America outside the beltway exists only as an annoying distraction. As both the economy and the culture crash, the Establishment says, "What is that to us?"

A collapse of the American state is not impossible. But the lines along which most secessionists see it breaking up are overly optimistic. Paul Starobin writes in the *Journal*:

*The most hopeful prospect for the USA, should the decentralization impulse prove irresistible, is for Americans to draw on their natural inventiveness and democratic tradition by patenting a formula for getting the job done in a gradual and*

*cooperative way.*

Fat chance.

Instead of a restored Vermont Republic, Cascadia and perhaps a new Confederacy, if America breaks up it is likely to do so along non-geographic lines. 4th Generation theory suggests that the new primary identities for which people are likely to vote, work and fight will not be geographical. Rather, they will be cultural, religious, racial or ethnic, ideological, etc. Following the sorts of massacres, ethnic cleansings, pogroms and genocides such 4th Generation civil wars usually involve, new geographically defined states may emerge. But their borders will derive from cultural divides more than geographic ones.

The fact that a second American civil war would be nastier than the first — itself no picnic — does not mean it won't happen. That depends on whether the Washington Establishment can recognize it has a legitimacy problem, get its act together and provide competent governance. It is currently failing that test, and I expect it to continue to fail. Any member of the Establishment who dares subordinate court politics to the good of the nation or advocates more than very modest change quickly finds he is no longer a member of the Establishment.

I spent most of last week at the Congress on the New Urbanism, which I have attended for many years. New Urbanism seeks to build new villages, towns and urban neighborhoods as alternatives to suburban sprawl, an essentially conservative endeavor. This time, something new came to the fore: making such communities agriculturally self-sufficient. Why? Because there is growing recognition among New Urbanists and others that only a local food supply may be secure as things fall apart. A few people at the Congress were looking toward the next logical step: giving such communities an ability to defend themselves. If the future brings the end of the empire, how do we get ready for the Dark Ages?

Again, if this sounds fanciful, 4th Generation war theory says it is



not. It is by no means inevitable, but it is one possible outcome of the Establishment's misrule.

My most recent book, *The Next Conservatism*, talks at some length about these matters. In the mid-1990s, I wrote a novel, *Victoria*, about an American 4th Generation civil war and its aftermath. It never found a publisher, perhaps because the idea seemed so outlandish, more likely because it is a face shot at Political Correctness. Political Correctness, which is really the cultural Marxism of the Frankfurt School, has lost none of its ability to intimidate publishers. But the idea of an American break-up is no longer off the charts. It may yet prove time for President Davis to think of returning to Richmond, and for New Urbanists to design some good castles.

*June 17, 2009*

## The Iran Crisis and 4GW

The current crisis in Iran is not 4GW. It is a struggle for control of a state, not an attempt to replace the state with something else. However, it could prove a harbinger of 4GW in Iran, because what is at stake is the legitimacy of current Iranian political system.

In a manner that was cynical, blatant and remarkably stupid, the Khamenei/Ahmadinejad regime in effect toyed with its own legitimacy. Nightwatch for June 19 quotes Iranian Supreme Leader Khamenei as saying in his Friday public sermon, “There is 11 million vote difference. How can one rig 11 million votes?”

The answer is, “Not without people taking notice.” Stalin, whose cynicism was legendary – one of his remarks was, “The death of one man is a tragedy; the death of a million men is a statistic” – also said, “What is important is not who votes. What is important is who counts the votes.” But throughout the history of the Soviet Union, the Communist Party was careful to seem to take elections with the utmost seriousness. It knew the pretence was important for its legitimacy.

In contrast, the Iranian regime in effect laughed as it rigged its election’s outcome, saying to the Iranian people and the world, “Rig the elections? Of course we rigged the elections. What are you going to do about it, sucker?” The fact that the outcome was announced within three hours of the polls closing suggests they did not count the votes at all. The Interior Ministry was just told what numbers to put down on the tally sheets.

Now it has blown up in the regime’s face, in the worst kind of crisis any government can face, a crisis of legitimacy. The Iranian opposition is able to say, “You did not play by the rules you wrote.” That is a powerful rallying cry anywhere in the world.

The Iranian people have rallied, by the millions, to the opposition. Iran is in the midst of the greatest upheaval since the revolution that overthrew the Shah.

Like governments everywhere, Khamenei seems unable to grasp that he faces a crisis not merely of leadership but of legitimacy. Had he grasped that essential fact, he would have professed to be “shocked, shocked” by the electoral fraud, dumped Ahmadinejad and devoted himself to showing Iran’s political system works.

Instead, he has decided to keep himself and Ahmadinejad in power by force. Today’s *Washington Post* quotes the opposition’s leader, Mir Hossein Mousavi, as saying, “Shooting at the people, militarizing the city, scaring the people, provoking them, and displaying power are all the result of the unlawfulness we’re witnessing today.” Force may keep the current regime in power, but it also completes the destruction of its legitimacy.

4th Generation theory warns that when a government loses its legitimacy and attempts to retain power by naked force, it weakens the state itself. Iran has been a relatively stable state. But there is no guarantee it will remain so. Iran includes many different ethnic groups, not just Persians. If the opposition, which is loyal to the Iranian state, is suppressed by force, Iranians may start to transfer their loyalty away from the state.

The current crisis in Iran also reveals a fracture 4th Generation theory sometimes overlooks, a break on urban/rural lines. Ahmadinejad is genuinely popular in much of rural Iran. His rural strength might have allowed him to win an election where the votes were actually counted. The opposition, in turn, appears to be almost entirely urban. Its urban strength is what has allowed it to contest the announced electoral results with mass marches.

Urban/rural splits were common before the state arose. They sometimes led to bloody wars, usually in the form of peasant’s revolts.

Exactly how they might play out in a 4th Generation world is difficult to guess. Iran may offer an interesting test case.

But the larger lesson from events in Iran is one this column has harped on: few if any governments are able to perceive a crisis of legitimacy. Any governing system in time becomes a closed system, into which the question of legitimacy is not allowed to penetrate. To raise it is *lese majesté*. So long as that remains the case, the state system will grow more fragile.

*June 22, 2009*

# Going Nowhere Fast

The advent of General Stanley McChrystal as America's overall commander in Afghanistan appears to be good news. He seems to understand that in this kind of war, the rule must be, "First, do no harm." *Associated Press* recently reported him as saying that his measure of effectiveness will be "the number of Afghans shielded from violence, not the number of militants killed." Unusually, he seems to include American and NATO violence in his calculation, since he has ordered a drastic cutback in airstrikes. Heavy American reliance on airstrikes has probably done more than anything else to win the war for the Taliban.

But history is littered with the failures of promising new generals; "Fighting Joe" Hooker somehow comes to mind. If General McChrystal is to represent any real hope that the U.S. might get out of Afghanistan with some tailfeathers intact, he must confront a host of challenges. Let's look at just four:

- The 2nd Generation American armed forces must learn how to make war by means other than putting firepower on targets. However, that is all they know how to do. A friend who recently graduated from the U.S. Army's Command & Staff College at Ft. Leavenworth told me that virtually the whole course is still about putting fire on targets. *Nightwatch* for May 17 reported that "An Indian criticism of the US effort in Afghanistan and Pakistan is that it does not lack will, it lacks skill." That criticism is valid, and it traces directly to military education and training that remains stuck in the 2nd Generation.
- The U.S. touts its "new" counter-insurgency doctrine, but there is

nothing new about it. It merely represents a recovery of knowledge thrown away after the Vietnam war. However, 4th Generation conflicts are different from the Vietnam war. While some counter-insurgency techniques carry over, the multiplicity of players and objectives in 4GW face counter-insurgents with an entirely different context. The first draft of a counter-insurgency field manual written for 4GW, a product of the 4th Generation seminar, will become available this summer on this web site.

- No doctrine, including the above manual, offers a magic potion for winning 4th Generation wars. As the basic 4GW field manual FMFM-1A warns, even if an invader does everything right, he will still probably lose. Kelly Vlahos cautions in an important piece in the August issue of *The American Conservative*, “One-Sided COIN,” that the neo-libs are pushing counter-insurgency as patent medicine. Just get the dosage right and we can “do” counter-insurgency successfully anywhere. She quotes retired Lt. Col. John Nagl as saying, “The soldiers who will win these wars require an ability not just to dominate land operations, but to change entire societies.” That is hubristic nonsense.
- The Obama administration has decided to continue its predecessor’s Quixotic commitment to unattainable strategic objectives, i.e., changing entire societies. Afghanistan is to be made into a liberal, democratic, secular country with “rights for women” as defined by American Feminists. That is baying for the moon, and it can have no other outcome but failure. Setting unattainable objectives makes doctrine irrelevant, because it guarantees defeat. America could have Alexander the Great as its commander in Afghanistan, with Napoleon and von Moltke as his deputies, and we would still lose.

In sum, General McChrystal faces a full plate. His most difficult challenges are internal, in the form of a flawed military instrument, inadequate doctrine, a neo-liberal Establishment drunk on COIN juju and strategic objectives no commander can attain. Internal challenges are often harder to overcome than those posed by the external

opponent, because potential fixes run into the immovable object of court politics.

As an Army friend put it to me, until these and similar internal challenges can be met, our efforts in Afghanistan are like trying to get somewhere by riding faster on an exercise bicycle.

*June 29, 2009*

# One Step Forward, One Step Back

According to the July 3 *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, President Barack Obama said something very interesting last week. He told the AP that he has “a very narrow definition of success when it comes to our national security interests” in Afghanistan. “And that is that al-Qa’ida and its affiliates cannot set up safe havens from which to attack Americans.”

Well. If his words were reported accurately and he really means them, President Obama may have built the golden bridge we need to get out. That definition of success may be attainable.

But here’s the rub. Adoption of a realistic strategic goal in Afghanistan means reversing a decision the administration reportedly made last March, at Hillary’s insistence. Hillary demanded, and reportedly got, a commitment to the opium dream of a “secular, democratic, peaceful” Afghanistan.

Has President Obama already figured out he was had by the Clintons? Will he dare assert his authority over Hillary? How long will he stick to his guns when the Clintons ramp up a guerilla campaign against him among Democratic activists?

As I said in my last column, problems in court politics are often more difficult than problems on the battlefield. Dumping the Clinton’s dreamy-eyed idealism in foreign policy in favor of realistic strategic objectives promises a battle royal at court. Of course, Obama may have just been musing aloud, in which case Hillary will soon set the record straight. But if the President really meant what he said and sticks to it, it would represent a major step forward.

Unfortunately, the July 4 *Plain Dealer* reported another step back.



In a story on the Marine Corps' "big push" in Helmand province, the paper said that

*The stiffest resistance occurred in the district of Garmser, where Taliban fighters holed up in a walled housing compound engaged in an eight-hour gunbattle with troops from the 2nd Battalion of the 8th Marine Regiment. The Marines eventually requested a Harrier fighter jet to drop a 500-pound bomb on the compound, which was believed to have killed all fighters inside.*

This time, the problem was not Americans failing to understand that in 4GW, airstrikes work to our defeat. The PD continued:

*The commanders directing the huge Marine security operation here had said they hoped not to rely on airstrikes...Officers here noted with pride that they had not used bombs or artillery in the first 24 hours of the mission.*

But they were left with little choice after the insurgents refused to surrender.

It is hard to question the details of a tactical situation from half a world away, based on a press report. There may be reasons I cannot see from here why the airstrike was unavoidable. But from what was reported, it seems to have resulted from an all-too-frequent problem with American infantry, a narrow tactical repertoire that offers few options.

Anybody out there ever hear of a siege? That housing compound might not have had infinite supplies of food or water. Must we be in such a hurry to resolve every situation that sieges are not an option? They are, after all, one of the oldest techniques in war (read the Iliad).

Just how sure are we that the guys we killed were Taliban? Yes, they were shooting at us. But lots of Afghans do that. Local Pashtuns will fight us just because we're there. If we kill locals in an airstrike,

we create a blood feud with all their relatives.

Did anyone try to talk to those guys? A siege opens that opportunity. It also gives us a chance to talk to other locals and try to find out who we are fighting. Remember, the Taliban (if they were Taliban) is not a monolithic organization. Like almost all 4GW forces, it is a militia. Militia will often deal.

Ah, the Marines will reply, we told you they refused to surrender. Should surrender or death be our opponents' only options? Whoever it was we were fighting put up what one Marine commander called "a hell of a fight." No Americans were killed in the process. So why not let them march out with the honors of war? That would tell the Pashtun that we are men of honor who respect other men of honor. Not a bad message to send when going into a new 4GW neighborhood.

I know many Marines will sniff at this, quoting their favorite line, "No better friend, no worse enemy." In response, I suggest a modification for 4GW: we should add the option, "No better enemy." "Better" in this context does not mean "easy." Rather, it means "honorable." Against an opponent such as the Pashtun, whose culture puts a high value on honor, being an honorable enemy may be important when it comes time to talk.

In turn, if Marines are to be seen by the Pashtun as an honorable enemy, we may want to reconsider slaughtering — with weapons such as airstrikes against which they have no defense — those who have fought bravely. "Better enemies" respect their enemies, and themselves, too much to do that sort of thing.

*July 7, 2009*

# Ideas as Weapons

*Ideas as Weapons* is the title of a new book, a collection of essays edited by two Marine Corps officers, G.J. David Jr. and T.R. McKeldin (the publisher is Potomac Books). Subtitled “Influence and Perception in Modern Warfare,” the volume is dedicated to exploring the aspect of war most neglected by the 2nd Generation American military, ideas. The U.S. armed forces have never grasped the centrality of John Boyd’s dictum that for winning wars, people are most important, ideas come second and hardware is only third.

Mostly, the U.S. military reduces ideas to “Information Operations,” or IO, in which some junior officers and NCOs churn out leaflets, films etc. of indifferent quality. The idea, central to 4th Generation war, that Information Operations are what you do, not what you say, is missed entirely. The results of typical IO range from minimal to hilarious. The book recalls one incident during the siege of Fallujah where Marines made and broadcast a film intended to show American troops feeding Iraqi refugees halal rations. It actually showed them feeding Arabs kosher rations, which did not play too well locally.

As with all collections, chapters vary in quality. They are organized in four parts, Geopolitical, Strategic, Operational (it’s nice to see Marines using that word correctly form once) and Tactical. In my view, the best chapter in the Geopolitical section is Ambassador David Passage’s “Reflections on Psychological Operations: The Imperative of Engaging a Conflicted Population.” He argues that “It has long been axiomatic in guerrilla warfare that a defending force (such as a government the United States is associated with) will find itself confronted with almost insuperable odds unless it can enlist the active — not passive — support of its own citizens in countering an insurgency.” Contrasting America’s failure in Vietnam with success in

El Salvador, Ambassador Passage suggests the usual psyops messages are ineffective:

*The modern age has reached the point where, given the babble of conflicting, contradicting, and combative messages, populations are decreasingly likely to simply accept what they are told. In the welter of competing messages and mediums, government-sponsored messages are at a particular disadvantage...*

*A better approach might be to ask questions rather than provide answers...*

*The fundamental message to the people of Iraq and Afghanistan and other countries in conflict needs to be, as the U.S. message was in El Salvador twenty years ago, “This is your country; the kind of country it’s going to be is up to you – not to the United States or any foreign country. What kind of country do you want it to be? Are you willing to help restore order, and law, and civility – or are you going to sit quietly while those who seek to destroy what you have do their work?”*

A strong chapter in the Strategic section is Colonel William M. Darley USA’s “Clausewitz’s Theory of War and Information Operations.” Darley argues that “Contrary to entrenched perceptions, IO is not merely a family of related skill sets or capabilities that in all cases augment “kinetic operation.” Collectively, they are properly understood as a specific purpose and emphasis within an overall plan of action that under some circumstances might be the main effort.” I would add that in 4GW, they are usually the main effort.

Darley offers a Clausewitzian definition of IO, far broader than the current American technical definition. It reflects Clausewitz’s discussion of the power of “moral” factors in what is essentially a political contest. His chapter concludes with a quotation from Clausewitz that strikes to the heart of ongoing American failures in

4GW:

*Political considerations do not determine the posting of guards or the employment of patrols. But they are the more influential in the planning of war, of the campaign, and often even of the battle ... The only question, therefore, is whether, when war is being planned the political point of view should give way to the purely military ... or should the political point of view remain dominant and the military (military force and violence) be subordinated to it?*

The book's Operational segment includes a devastating critique of the U.S. military's whole intelligence system, "Clouding the Issue: Intelligence Collection, Analysis, and Dissemination during Operation Iraqi Freedom," by Army Lt. Col. George J. Stroumpos. Too lengthy to summarize here, it proceeds from the statement that

*Our intelligence apparatus has been our Achilles' heel... the Coalition intelligence apparatus is a hodgepodge pick-up team, conflicting in its organization and lost in a sea of data. This, coupled with the sheer volume and complexity of the environment, is the primary problem...is poor information management and the resulting syntheses that follow from poor technique.*

*Ideas as Weapons'* Tactical segment, which junior-level practitioners will find of particular value, includes a superb chapter, "Tactical Information Operations in West Rashid: An Iraqi National Police Battalion and Its Assigned U.S. Transition Team," by Major E. Lawson Quinn, USMC. This chapter gets at one of the central fallacies of the whole American effort in Iraq (and elsewhere), namely that what local government forces need is American training in techniques. In reality, cultural factors are far more important than technical skills (Saddam's forces, after all, were technically quite capable of maintaining order in Iraq without American training). Major Quinn

gets at the central problem when he writes:

*The Sunni population in West Rashid unquestionably viewed 2/7/2 (an Iraqi National Police battalion) as a sectarian organization that served the interests of the Shi'a majority at the expense of the Sunnis, if not an instrument of or in collusion with the Shi'a militias. The very demographic makeup of 2/7/2, less than ten Sunnis among the four hundred or so Shi'a members of the battalion, precluded overcoming that sectarian perception even if the Shi'a majority and leadership wanted to do so, but their actions clearly did not evince the slightest proclivity toward it.*

*In fact, it was quite clear that at least the battalion leadership understood the value of information operations in reinforcing that perception. Even the casual Western observer...would have understood the message trumpeted by the large Shi'a flag posted at the front of the compound high atop the tallest building.*

*Ideas as Weapons* is a book that should be high on the reading list of every American commander in Iraq and Afghanistan, from the theater level down through company. I stress commanders, not just intelligence officers, because IO properly defined are at the heart of 4th Generation war. Until American commanders at all levels understand that fact, we will continue to rocket and bomb our way to defeat.

*July 21, 2009*

# The Silence of the Sheep

In early July, U.S. Army Col. Timothy Reese committed truth. According to a story by Michael Gordon in the *New York Times* (reprinted in the *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, where I saw it), Col. Reese wrote "an unusually blunt memo [concluding] that Iraqi forces suffer from entrenched deficiencies but are now able to protect the Iraqi government and that it is time 'for the U.S. to declare victory and go home.'"

"As the old saying goes, 'Guests, like fish, begin to smell after three days,'" Reese wrote. "Since the signing of the 2009 Security Agreement, we are guests in Iraq, and after six years in Iraq, we now smell bad to the Iraqi nose."

As usual, committing truth horrified Reese's superiors. Michael Gordon reported:

*"Those (Reese's) conclusions are not shared by the senior U.S. commander in Iraq, Gen. Ray Odierno. ...*

*"A spokeswoman for Odierno said that the memo did not reflect the official stance of the U.S. military and was not intended for a broad audience."*

Truth never is. On the situation in Iraq as on everything else, the American people get the mushroom treatment. That is how Brave New World works.

In fact, Col. Reese's conclusion, that we should leave Iraq as quickly as we can, is so obvious it raises some second-order questions. First, exactly why are we keeping 130,000 men in a horribly exposed position, their main LOC running parallel to a potential enemy's front

for 1,000 miles, surrounded by a slowly accelerating civil war?

The official answer, that "we are there to back up the Iraqi government," doesn't wash. The Iraqi government and its security forces represent the currently dominant Shi'ite faction, nothing more. There is no state. There won't be one until the Iraqis settle their own differences, by fighting. Our presence may delay that conflict, but cannot prevent it.

So, Mr. Obama, what's the real agenda? Under Bush, we knew: an Iraq that had been reduced to an American client state was to provide us with military bases from which we could dominate the region and an unlimited supply of oil. Is the Bush administration's agenda now the Obama administration's agenda? If not, what is? Exactly why are 130,000 U.S. troops hanging out in a bad part of town with a "kick me" sign taped to their backs? Inertia? Indecision? What?

That's one second-order question. Another one is, why is no one in Congress asking the first question? Iraq seems to have vanished off Washington's radar screen, despite the fact that so long as we're there, we are smoking in the powder magazine.

It seems that whatever the Obama administration's agenda in Iraq is, it has gathered virtually unanimous support in Congress. Having worked on the Hill, I know some institutional reasons for that. Congress focuses on whatever the voters are focused on, which at the moment means the economy. But even there, Iraq raises one of its hydra heads. The American occupation of Iraq continues to burn through money at the cyclic rate. So why aren't the Blue Dog Democrats and other deficit hawks howling about our continued stay? All we hear is the silence of the sheep.

There are two possible explanations for the Obama administration's remarkable failure to use its mandate to get out of Iraq while we still can. The first suggests some deep, dark plot, involving money, oil, the SMEC and the SMEC's Washington's agents in the



White House. During the Bush administration, this explanation was plausible. It is still possible, but I think less likely true.

The more likely truth is that the Obama administration is a mile wide and an inch deep. The public is beginning to sense this, as President Obama's falling approval ratings show. But within the Establishment, which includes Congress and most of the press, America's first black president remains immune to criticism because he is America's first black president. Were the current president, say, a Georgia cracker, the Establishment would already have him in the stocks, subject to a barrage of rotten fruit.

But even if President Obama were himself a man of depth and wisdom, an administration is much more than one man. Most of the Obama administration's leading figures are merely second- and third-stringers from the Clinton administration, resurrected as zombies (starting with Hillary herself). I don't know of a single strategist among the lot. Most are playing at government, just as little girls play house.

If there is one among the lot who can think beyond the end of his nose – Jim Jones, has the cat got your tongue? – he would do well to quote Col. Reese's words to the president:

*"We now have an Iraqi government that has gained its balance and thinks it knows how to ride the bike in the race. ... Our hand on the back of the seat is holding them back and causing resentment. We need to let go before we both tumble to the ground."*

With a thud that will be heard around the world.

*August 8, 2009*

## War of Exhaustion or War of Maneuver?

The war in Afghanistan appears to have settled into the category Delbrueck called “wars of exhaustion.” If it remains there, the U.S. cannot win. The American people will become exhausted long before the Pashtun do.

In this respect America’s situation is similar to that Germany faced in World War I. Germany knew she could not win a war of exhaustion. She therefore sought to turn it into a war of maneuver, successfully on the eastern front and almost successfully in the west in the spring of 1918 and also at sea with the U-boat campaign. The ultimate failure of the latter two efforts, an operational failure on land and, worse, a grand strategic failure at sea, meant the war of exhaustion continued. Exhaustion finally caused the home front to collapse in November, 1918.

Past is probably prologue for the U.S. in Afghanistan unless it can succeed where Germany failed. The U.S. must turn a war of exhaustion into as war of maneuver.

At first sight, such a prescription appears pointless. The granular nature of a 4th Generation battlefield, a granularity that encompasses not only the military but also the political and moral aspects of the conflict, would appear to render any military maneuvers above the tactical level irrelevant. Great operational encirclements like those in which the German Army specialized become swords cutting through the air.

The fact that we cannot turn the Afghan war into a war of maneuver on the military level need not, however, be the end of the matter. Instead, it poses a new question: how might we turn this war of exhaustion into a war of maneuver on the political or moral levels? If

we can succeed in doing either, or better both, we may still escape the certainty of defeat a continued war of exhaustion promises.

A short column cannot answer this new question; my purpose here is mainly to pose it. If, as I think it ought, it becomes the intellectual Schwerpunkt of the American high command, then I will have done my duty for one week, anyway.

But to explore a bit further, the very granularity of a 4th Generation conflict that largely precludes maneuver on the military level may open the door to it on other levels. To see what opportunities may exist for maneuver on the political and moral levels, I think we must start by ceasing to define the enemy as “the Taliban.” That definition, while convenient for labeling Afghans we have killed or captured, may lead us astray by causing us to think of our opponents as a single, centrally-controlled entity. In a 4th Generation conflict, the real picture is far more complex. Many Afghans who are fighting us are not doing so because of orders from Mullah Omar.

To draw a military analogy, this is not a war of continuous fronts. There are many gaps on the political and moral levels, gaps through which we may be able to maneuver if we can first identify them. Doing so may require a recasting of the questions the American leadership presents to its intelligence services.

Possibly of equal importance is a reconceptualization of our own “front.” We now appear to define that “front” on both the political and moral levels as the Afghan government. This is a fiction politically because there is a government but no state. Morally it is disastrous because the Afghan government is awash in corruption. The recent election will not affect either reality, regardless of its outcome. We seem unable to grasp the fact that in Afghanistan as in much of the world, election outcomes do not confer legitimacy.

The American senior leadership thus needs to undertake a serious and competent analysis of political and moral surfaces and gaps both in

our opponent's positions and in our own. Neither can be accomplished with blinders on. Both must be brutally honest.

It is just possible that such an analysis might offer a roadmap for political and moral maneuver, which is what we require if we are to escape the war of exhaustion. There is, of course, no guarantee; the complexity of a 4th Generation environment may mean the task is beyond our ability. We may also discover that we can identify some surfaces and gaps yet lack the capability to exploit the gaps. This occurs not frequently in purely military wars of maneuver.

I think nonetheless that this may be the most promising way forward. If it fails to identify political and moral gaps we can exploit with some hope of success, then logically it leads to the conclusion that we cannot escape a war of exhaustion and its inevitable outcome, our defeat. That too is useful, in that it should lead us to cut our losses and withdraw as soon as possible.

Is the American senior leadership, military and political, capable of undertaking an analysis of the Afghan war along these lines? I do not know. But I suspect that offering such a framework for analysis may be the most military theory can do for our forces now fighting a hopeless war of exhaustion.

*August 25, 2009*

## Can He Think Big?

An article in the August 28 *New York Times* described a recent epiphany on the part of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Admiral Mike Mullen. It seems that Admiral Mullen now “gets” a point 4th Generation war theorists have made for years, namely that Information Operations are less what you say than what you do. The *Times* reported that

*The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff has written a searing critique of government efforts at “strategic communications” with the Muslim world, saying that no amount of public relations will establish credibility if American behavior overseas is perceived as arrogant, uncaring or insulting...*

*“To put it simply, we need to worry a lot less about how to communicate our actions and much more about what our actions communicate,” Admiral Mullen wrote in the critique...*

*“I would argue that most strategic communication problems are not communication problems at all,” he wrote. “They are policy and execution problems...”*

Right on. Given Admiral Mullen’s position, this could represent important progress – or not. Its significance depends on whether the JCS Chairman can think big, as should be the case at his level of command. Will the Admiral restrict his thinking to execution problems, or will he have the wisdom and the moral courage to tackle policy problems?

Execution problems are what the current American commander in Afghanistan, General Stanley McChrystal, is focused on. He recognizes

that American troops in Afghanistan must protect the population, not “kill bad guys.” We need to be in the village instead of attacking the village. 4th Generation doctrine suggests that the key to success (where it is possible at all) is de-escalation. I have not seen General McChrystal use that term, but it seems to be his intent.

However, if execution at the battalion and company level becomes the focus for Admiral Mullen, he will have missed his chance to make a difference. As JCS Chairman, his focus should be grand strategy. For future American success in a 4th Generation world, it is at that level that his new understanding of “strategic communications” needs to be applied.

What it means is that America should adopt a defensive rather than an offensive grand strategy. At present, American grand strategy is offensive, or even aggressive. In effect, America says to the rest of the world, “You are going to abandon your traditional culture and embrace our new, “liberated” culture – Feminism, consumerism, hedonism, all labeled “democracy” – whether you want to or not. If we cannot make you do so with ‘soft power,’ then you will face our ‘hard power,’ our bombs, cruise missiles and Predators.” From the jungles of the Amazon to the Hindu Kush, everyone is to become a subject of Brave New World.

As the conservative political philosopher Russell Kirk wrote, the surest way to make someone your enemy is to tell him you are going to remake him in your image for his own good. So long as that is America’s grand strategy, as it now seems to be, we are doomed to defeat at the grand strategic level. That is true no matter how our troops execute a fatally flawed policy.

The policy we need instead, one that communicates a very different message, is a defensive grand strategy. The message a defensive grand strategy sends is simple: If you leave us alone, we will leave you alone. We will not seek to “remake” you in any image. How you live is your business, and yours only.

In the November 22, 2004 issue of *The American Conservative*, I laid out in some detail what a defensive grand strategy for America might look like in a 4th Generation world. It is impossible to summarize that lengthy piece in a column.

My point here is simply that this is the central question – offensive or defensive grand strategy? – a JCS Chairman who “gets it” should focus on. His concern should be policy, not execution. If Admiral Mullen thinks he should now duplicate what General McChrystal is doing, he will effectively leave the office of JCS Chairman vacant.

The Times quoted Admiral Mullen as saying, “That’s the essence of good communication: having the right intent up front and letting our actions speak for themselves.” The question you have raised for yourself, Admiral, is what intent is right at the level of grand strategy? The world awaits an answer.

*September 9, 2009*

# The Taliban's Air Force

The Taliban's air force recently delivered another devastating strike, hitting two fuel tanker trucks that had been captured by local Taliban-affiliated forces in northern Afghanistan. As usual, many civilians were killed, inflaming the local population against NATO forces in an area that had been relatively quiet. The air strike was thus not merely tactical but operational in its effects.

As is always the case with the Taliban's air force, the air strike was a "pseudo-op." A pseudo-op is where one side dresses up in the other side's uniforms or otherwise duplicates his signatures, then does something that works against the goals of the simulated party.

You say you did not know the Taliban had an air force? It has a very powerful air force, not restricted to traditional flying carpets but employing all the latest combat aircraft: F-15s, F-16s, F-18s, Harriers, Tornados, the works. That air force has been one of the main factors in the Taliban's resurgence. Many of the strike missions it has carried out have had positive results (for the Talibs) at the operational and moral levels, if not always at the tactical and physical levels of war.

What has confused many observers is that the Taliban has taken pseudo-ops to a new level in its air operations. It does not merely paint American or NATO symbols on its aircraft for a specific mission. Its aircraft are permanently disguised, not only with appropriate insignia, but with American or NATO pilots, command and control and maintenance. Across the gulf of war, one has to say the Talibs have been brilliant in the air, if not always in other respects. They have actually managed to get their opponents to provide and pay for the air force that is defeating them!

Pseudo-ops can be difficult to detect. However, close analysis



usually reveals a small flaw that, to knowing observers, gives the game away. The flaw in the case of the attack on the two fuel tankers is visible to anyone who knows the NATO mission approval process. For U.S. or other NATO aircraft to launch an air strike in support of European ground forces (German in this case), approvals must be obtained from many levels.

In fact, just one requirement for approval would almost certainly have stopped any genuine NATO airstrike. Everyone in the command chain must know that whenever an accident to a fuel tanker or a pipeline makes free fuel available in a third or Fourth World country, the locals come out with pots and pans and jars to scavenge whatever they can. For most of them, scavenged fuel is the only alternate to no fuel. How often do we read about a leaking pipeline in West Africa killing hundreds of people when it explodes, because it was surrounded by people scavenging fuel?

It is thus impossible that NATO could have launched the strike that destroyed the two fuel tankers, killing dozens of scavenging Afghan civilians in the process. This is the tiny flaw that reveals the Taliban pseudo-op.

The question bedeviling senior NATO and American commanders in Afghanistan is how to stop the Taliban's air force before it wins the war for Mullah Omar. My sources inform me that serious consideration is being given to assigning U.S. or other NATO fighter CAP to all Taliban operations, with orders to shoot down any aircraft launching strikes that would hit Afghan civilians. Marine Air is reportedly comfortable with the idea, but the U.S. Air Force is resisting strongly for fear of fratricide.

Should that option not prove viable, some senior American officials think it may be necessary simply to end all U.S. and NATO air strike missions in Afghanistan. That would shut down the Taliban's air force as well, because pseudo-ops would no longer be possible. Any air strikes launched by Taliban aircraft would be attributed to their real

source.

Meanwhile, the example set by the Taliban's pseudo-ops may be spreading. Some reports suggest the Pakistani Taliban (a separate organization) is now employing its own Predators, carrying out "hits" in internal feuds that get blamed on the Americans. The current leadership thus wins a double victory.

Clearly, the aviation pseudo-op genie is now out of the bottle. It will be interesting to see how the American and NATO leadership in Afghanistan try to tempt it back inside.

*September 14, 2009*

# Last Exit Before Quagmire

The *Washington Post* yesterday made available an unclassified version of General Stanley McChrystal's long-awaited report on the war in Afghanistan. Politically, the report is bold, in that it acknowledges the enemy has the initiative and we have been fighting the war – for eight years – in counterproductive ways. But intellectually, both as analysis and as prescription, it is five pounds of substance in a 50 pound bag.

The report's message can be summarized in one sentence: we need to start doing classic counterinsurgency, and to do so, we need more "resources," i.e. troops. In a narrow, technical sense, that statement is valid. Classic counterinsurgency doctrine says we need hundreds of thousands more troops in Afghanistan.

Past that syllogism, the report's validity becomes questionable. Defects begin with the study's failure to address 4th Generation war's first and most important question: Is there a state in Afghanistan? At times, the report appears to assume a state; elsewhere, it speaks of the Afghan state's weaknesses. It never addresses the main fact, namely that at present there is no state, and under the current Afghan government there is no prospect of creating one.

The failure to acknowledge the absence of a state leads the rest of the report through the looking glass. For example, it puts great emphasis on expanding the Afghan National Security Forces (army and police). But absent a state, there are no state armed forces. The ANSF are militiamen who take a salary paid, through intermediaries, by foreign governments. How many Pashtun do you find in the ANSF?

Similarly, the report laments that Afghanistan's prisons have become recruiting centers for the Taliban. It calls for getting the U.S.

out of the prison business and turning it all over to the Afghan government. But who will then run those “state” prisons? The Taliban, of course, just as they do now.

In a curious passage, the report says, on page 2-20:

*The greater resources (ISAF requires) will not be sufficient to achieve success, but will enable implementation of the new strategy. Conversely, inadequate resources will likely result in failure. However, without a new strategy, the mission should not be resourced.*

Here we encounter the report’s most dangerous failing. It confuses the strategic and the operational levels of war. In fact, the report does not offer a new strategy, but a new operational-level plan. How the war is fought, i.e. by following classic counter-insurgency doctrine, is operational, not strategic.

America must find a new strategy, since the current strategy depends on an Afghan state that does not exist. But the report offers no new strategy. The passage on page 2-20 thus ends up saying, “If you don’t give us more troops, we will fail. But you shouldn’t give us more troops unless we adopt a new strategy, which we don’t have. And even if you do give us the troops we want for the new strategy we haven’t got, they will not be enough to achieve success.” This reveals utter intellectual confusion.

The proper response of the White House, the Pentagon, and Congress to General McChrystal’s report is, “Back to the drawing board, fellas.”

How might 4th Generation theory help us re-write the report? At the operational level, most of what it recommends under the rubric of counterinsurgency is sound. Drawing on the report’s concept of “proper resourcing” that allows for “appropriate and acceptable risk,” we would concentrate our counterinsurgency efforts in a few provinces, such as

Helmand, to show the Taliban we can fight it to a stalemate. We would endeavor to do so while gradually drawing troop levels down, not sending in more troops. The goal of these actions on the operational level would be to buy time both in Afghanistan and on the home front.

We would use that time to implement a genuine new strategy. It would proceed from these facts:

- There is no state in Afghanistan, and none can be created by or for the current Afghan government.
- Our strategic goal, as General McChrystal's report states in its first paragraph, is to prevent al-Qaeda's return to Afghanistan.
- There is currently no evidence of al-Qaeda presence in Afghanistan. One of the best open sources of intelligence, Nightwatch, recently stated this directly, and General McChrystal's report hints at it.

Our strategic goal would be to see the creation of a state in Afghanistan that can and will prevent al-Qaeda's return. Who can do that? The Taliban. We would use the time bought by counterinsurgency operations to negotiate with the Taliban, the Haqqani Network, the Hezb-e Islami Gulbuddin and other Afghan leaders, including some in the current Afghan government, toward a power-sharing arrangement. A government that includes the Taliban can create a state.

The risk is the Taliban's willingness to keep al-Qaeda out. Why should Mullah Omar agree to that? Because al-Qaeda no longer needs Afghan bases. It has far more useful ones in Pakistan. That is why it is not in Afghanistan now.

If President Obama and Congress accept General McChrystal's report and adopt a new operational plan in support of the current strategy, building an Afghan state around the regime now in Kabul, they will guarantee an American defeat. Sending more American troops to Afghanistan will only magnify the defeat. Ironically, what Washington needs to do is follow General McChrystal's own

recommendation and refuse more resources without a new strategy.

Let's hope the politicians realize this is their last exit before a bottomless quagmire.

*September 22, 2009*

## Keeping Our Infantry Alive

The headline of the September 23 *Washington Post* read, “Less Peril for Civilians, but More for Troops.” The theme of the article was that restrictions General Stanley McChrystal has imposed on the use of supporting arms in Afghanistan, with the objective of reducing Afghan civilian casualties, have increased American casualties. The *Post* reported that since General McChrystal issued his directive on July 2, the number of Afghan civilians killed by coalition forces dropped to 19, from 151 for the same period last year. At the same time, U.S. troop deaths rose from 42 to 96. Not surprisingly, Congress is interested: the *Post* quotes Senator Susan Collins of Maine as saying, “I am troubled if we are putting our troops at greater risk in order to go to such extremes to avoid Afghan casualties.”

Congress is unlikely to understand what General McChrystal knows very well, namely that firepower-intensive American tactics, especially heavy use of artillery and airstrikes, will lose us the war. For state armed forces, 4th Generation wars are easy to win tactically and lose strategically. That is, in fact, their normal course.

But what about the question the *Post* and Congress have raised: are the new restrictions on fire support causing more American casualties in Afghanistan? In a word, yes. But that does not have to be the case.

The problem is that virtually all American infantry are trained in 2nd Generation tactics. The 2nd Generation reduces all tactics to one tactic: bump into the enemy and call for fire. The French, who invented the 2nd Generation, summarize it as, “Firepower conquers, the infantry occupies.” The supporting firepower, originally artillery, now most often airstrikes, must be massive. If it is not – as is now the case in Afghanistan, under General McChrystal’s directive – the infantry is in

trouble. Everything it has been taught depends on fire support it no longer has. Inevitably, its casualties will rise, and it will often lose engagements.

Fortunately, the answer to this problem has been known for a long time – several centuries, in fact. It is true light infantry or Jaeger tactics. True light infantry has a broad and varied tactical repertoire. It depends only on its own (modest) firepower. Jaeger tactics were an influence on the development of 3rd Generation tactics, but Jaeger tactics remain a more sophisticated version of those (infiltration) tactics. They are ideally suited to 4th Generation wars, especially in mountain country like Afghanistan's.

If we are to reduce American casualties in the Afghan war while sustaining General McChrystal's absolutely necessary restrictions on supporting arms, we need a crash program to teach U. S. Army and Marine Corps infantry Jaeger tactics. The Marine Corps, which as usual is somewhat ahead of the game, has begun such a program, called "Combat Hunter" (Jaeger is the German word for hunter).

This is not a case where we need to invent anything. The literature on true light infantry tactics is extensive. Works on 18th century light infantry remain instructive; I would recommend Johan Ewald's diary of the American Revolution (Ewald was a Hessian Jaeger company commander) and J.F.C. Fuller's *British Light Infantry in the 18th Century*. More recent works of value include the light infantry field manuals published by the K.u.K. Marine Corps (available on d.n.i. and the Marine Corps' Expeditionary Warfare School website); Dr. Steven Canby's superb *Modern Light Infantry and New Technology* (1983 – done under DOD contract); and John Poole's books. Some of our NATO allies also have Jaeger units from which we could learn.

About twenty years ago, a commander of the Army Infantry School at Ft. Benning, General Burba, attempted to shift the school to teaching light infantry instead of 2nd Generation tactics. He formed a Light Infantry Task Force, which I visited and which was doing excellent



work. The effort died when General Burba left, but some of the officers who participated in it should still be available. The Army could and should find them and their work and put them in charge of an emergency training program.

The Advanced Warfighting Seminar at EWS, which I lead, is continuing to work on this suddenly critical issue. One product in progress is a simple how-to manual showing a company commander how to convert his company to light infantry. Platoon, company and battalion commanders, as well as schools, are welcome to contact the seminar through Major Greg Thiele USMC at [gregory.thiele@usmc.mil](mailto:gregory.thiele@usmc.mil).

Retraining American infantry in true light infantry tactics is not something that can wait. It is the only escape from the dilemma of losing troops and engagements for lack of supporting fires or losing the Afghan war by calling those fires in. The usual DOD years-long, hyper-expensive “program” with its cast of thousands (of contractors) is unacceptable. Commanders of platoons, companies, battalions and schools have a moral obligation to do this now, bottom-up, without waiting for approval from Gosplan. Not a moment must be lost.

*September 30, 2009*

# Operation Albion

Last week I had the pleasure of helping lead a staff ride of Operation Albion for the Baltic Defence College. Especially for people with an interest in amphibious operations, Albion is one of the best case studies history offers.

In Operation Albion, which was carried out in early October, 1917—our staff ride duplicated its timing—Germany took three large Baltic islands, now Estonian, from the Russians. In effect, it was Germany's Gallipoli, though with very different results.

As a case study, Albion offers lessons on many levels. Two are of special importance. First, Albion illustrates a marriage of amphibious operations with the new German stormtroop tactics of late World War I, tactics that when combined with Panzer divisions created the Blitzkrieg. Instead of doing what the U. S. Marine Corps still does and send in landing waves that take a beachhead, then stop and build up combat power for a further advance – the Somme from the sea – the Germans landed multiple thrusts which immediately advanced as far and as fast as they could, without regard for open flanks. Speed was their main weapon, speed made possible because part of the force was equipped with bicycles.

Operation Albion was genuine Operational Maneuver from the Sea, a term U. S. Marines use but seldom understand. While the American model for amphibious operations remains 2nd Generation, Albion, carried out almost 100 years ago, was 3rd Generation.

Second, Operation Albion illustrates a 3rd Generation military's ability to adapt to new situations quickly. The Imperial German Army and Navy put Albion together in a few weeks. They did so despite having no amphibious doctrine, no amphibious experience and no

amphibious Marine Corps (Imperial German Marines were primarily colonial troops). How did they do it? Through the lateral communication and strong spirit of cooperation that characterize 3rd Generation forces.

That lesson is a timely one. In Iraq, the U.S. military took years to adapt to fighting an insurgency. 2nd Generation forces adapt to new situations slowly because most communication is hierarchical and cooperation is nullified by centrally-controlled synchronization. As John Boyd often said, you synchronize watches, not people.

Our two-day staff ride of Albion, on Oesel and Moon islands, benefitted greatly from having Dr. Bruce Gudmundsson along. The author of *Stormtroop Tactics*, the best book on the development of 3rd Generation tactics in the German Army in World War I, Bruce is also a specialist in the case study method of instruction. The Baltic Defence College students appeared new to the case study method, but like all students, they seemed to find it preferable to the usual classroom lectures. With one exception, they seemed to “get it.”

That exception was operational art. Regrettably, they had been taught a mechanical method for determining an operational center of gravity. Like all such methods, it was misleading. No art can be done by set method; the result is paint-by-numbers art, which is to say junk. However, once students have been taught a method, they are loath to give it up. They have “checked the box,” and they do not want to revisit the matter, especially when the (valid) alternative is a way of thinking that cannot be reduced to a formula.

Again, Operation Albion proved the perfect case study. Why? Because for both the Germans and the Russians, the operational center of gravity was not in the area of operations. It lay instead to the north and east, in the Gulf of Finland and the approaches to Kronstadt and Petrograd. The German success in Operation Albion sent powerful messages to the Russian government as to the safety of their capital, messages on the physical, mental and moral levels.

No method could reveal that central fact to the students, which hopefully debunked all methodical approaches to operational art. As General Hermann Balck said, only a few can do it, most can never learn. The world is not full of Raphaels either.

As the Central Powers' representative to the U.S. Marine Corps, I took great pleasure in proving that *Stolz weht die Flagge Schwarz-Weiss-Rot!*

*[CR: Boyd interviewed Gen Balck in the late 1970s, and chart 118 of Patterns of Conflict was one of the results. He was considered one of Germany's finest operational commanders and figures heavily in von Mellenthin's book, Panzer Battles.]*

*October 21, 2009*

## The First Front

An article in the October 23 *Washington Times* points to what I think may be the next important evolution in 4th Generation war. The piece concerns Mexico's third-largest drug gang, La Familia. La Familia is best known for beheading people it does not like. But according to the article, its real claim to fame may be as a pioneer in seizing the mantle of legitimacy previously worn by the state.

La Familia is based in a poor, remote Mexican province, Michoacan, where the Mexican state has long been little more than another gang. Unlike the state, La Familia actually provides services for the province's people. According to the *Washington Times*:

*The group has a strong religious background and proclaims it is doing God's work, passing out money and Bibles to poor people.*

*A DEA agent...said cartel leader Nazario Moreno Gonzales sees his drug dealing as serving the best interests of the people of Michoacan.*

*The agent said Mr. Moreno doesn't want meth users among his people (meth is La Familia's specialty) and will take users off the street and pay for their rehabilitation...*

*La Familia has won the loyalty of the people of Michoacan. According to the DEA, the group...now gives some of the proceeds of its drug trafficking to schools and local officials.*

*All of this has made it very difficult for authorities to go to Michoacan to arrest members of La Familia.*

In effect, it appears La Familia has replaced the Mexican state in Michoacan. The gang provides an export-based economy where locals

actually receive the profits. It tries to protect the local population from the negative environmental effects of its industry, i.e., addiction. It offers a range of social services.

Importantly, it deploys one of the most powerful claims to legitimacy, religion. The fact that the Mexican state is rigidly secular makes the Christian identity La Familia seeks all the more effective. Very few peasants are agnostics.

La Familia's brutal violence may work against or for its quest for legitimacy. If it uses violence carelessly so that the local population must fear being random victims, it will undermine its own legitimacy and push people back toward the state as a source of order. However, if its violence is carefully targeted so as to promote local order and enforce what may be perceived as justice, then even brutality may work in its favor.

Other gangs will undoubtedly figure out what La Familia seems to have grasped, namely that money spent to benefit the surrounding population can buy the best kind of protection, protection by the local people. What has always been true for guerrillas fighting for political goals is true for 4GW entities as well: once the government has to face a population united in support of its enemies, it has already lost.

This model – an illegal but widely profitable local economy + social services + religion – will, I think, spread widely. To succeed, it needs a weak state, one that takes from the local population but provides little or nothing in return. That kind of state is already common in much of the world and will become more so.

The *Washington Times* ran a header above this story that said “Second Front.” In fact, gangs such as La Familia are the first front. What is coming over our southern border is far more important to America's future security than any of our wars in sandboxes half a world away. The story quotes Attorney General Eric Holder as saying, “Indeed, while this cartel may operate from Mexico, the toxic reach of

its operations extends to nearly every state within our own country.”

Real national security is security in our homes, neighborhoods and cities. Unfortunately, the Washington Establishment continues to define “national security” as attaining world dominion. So long as it does so, it will continue to prop open the door for La Familia and other gangs, both imported and home-grown, which understand that what is real is local.

*October 26, 2009*

# **Beware Charybdis!**

My recent trip to the Baltic included a week with the Royal Swedish Navy and the Swedish Marines, the First Amphibious Regiment. The hospitality of both surpassed anything I could have expected, including a chance to conn one of the superb Class 90 patrol craft through the skerries. At 40 knots the boat rode like a Pullman car but also turned like a Fokker DR-1. Any navy interested in controlling green or brown water would be wise to take a look at the Class 90.

As my hosts stressed to me, the Swedish armed forces have a strong 3rd Generation heritage. Historically they had close ties with the German military. While Swedish armies often fought in Germany, Sweden never went to war against Germany. Kaiser Wilhelm II was an honorary admiral in the Royal Swedish Navy.

But Swedish officers also told me that their 3rd Generation heritage is under threat. In part the danger is inherent in any military. In peacetime, the drill field comes to predominate over the battlefield. Techniques, which are done by formula and can therefore seemingly be evaluated “objectively,” become the focus of training. Tactics, which should never be schematic and can only be analyzed subjectively, receive less and less training time until they are subsumed in techniques. In consequence, the 3rd Generation is reduced to maneuver warfare buzzwords while the culture is lost. This happened more than once even in the Prussian/German army. The best counter to it is lots of free-play training.

But the Swedish 3rd Generation heritage faces another threat: us. Sweden is working more with NATO and the U.S. than it did in the past, and in each combined operation the Swedes are forced to conform to the 2nd Generation American model (which is also the NATO



model). Gradually, that model is taking over, because it is the standard expected of everyone who works with the Americans. That is true all over the world. The great sucking sound heard by anyone who cooperates with the Americans or NATO comes from the drain that leads ever downwards, back into the 2nd Generation.

It is easy to counsel, Beware! But what can 3rd Generation armed services actually do to avoid this Charybdis? My advice to the Swedes and others who face the same danger is to learn how to operate the way the 2nd Generation demands, but laugh at it while you do it.

There is precedent for this. The Germans knew they could not operate with many of their allies the way they did at home. General Liman von Sanders did not imagine the Ottoman army could employ *Auftragstaktik*, nor did von Manstein expect it from the Romanians (nor anyone from the Italians). They adapted locally, but among themselves they kept their own superior tradition.

This is made all the easier by the fact that it is mostly staffs that must adopt the 2nd Generation when operating with NATO or the Americans. Swedish combat units can continue to operate as the 3rd Generation suggests, both tactically and culturally, while the staffs run interference for them. Staff officers can know both generations, and understand that they are slumming when they have to work with people who cannot do maneuver warfare. Again, some humor helps; just think of the Americans as today's Ottomans. You can work with them without becoming them.

It is of course a pity that the U.S. armed forces are the Typhoid Mary of military models. Like that deadly Irish girl, we present an attractive appearance. Our vast resources and fancy gear overawe other countries and lead them to want to copy us. Regrettably, like Typhoid fever, the 2nd Generation culture embodied in the U.S. military is a fatal disease. It leaves its victims helpless against Third or 4th Generation opponents.

As Americans, our seemingly hopeless task remains dragging the U.S. military out of the 2nd Generation mire it finds so comfortable. Swedes and others who have moved beyond us have the easier job of avoiding retrogression. Just being aware of the danger does much to avoid it. What good sailor, knowing the location of a whirlpool, sails into it? From what I saw, the Royal Swedish Navy has very good sailors.

A personal note: I spent much of my youth building models of 18th century Swedish warships. The models were scratch-built, not from kits, and they sailed. My visit with the Royal Swedish Navy allowed me to close a circle that dates back 50 years. Thank you, Sweden!

*November 2, 2009*

## 4GW Comes to Ft. Hood

Last week's shootings at Ft. Hood, in which thirteen U. S. Soldiers were killed and 30 people wounded, appear to be a classic example of 4th Generation war. The shooter, U. S. Army Major Nidal Malik Hasan, was a practicing Muslim. He sometimes wore traditional Islamic dress and carried a Koran. He reportedly cried "Allahu Akbar" before he opened fire. Though American-born and a U.S. citizen (and army officer), Major Hasan appears to have transferred his primary loyalty away from the state to something else, Islam. For his new primary loyalty, he was willing to kill. That is what defines 4th Generation war.

This incident should put an end to the misinterpretation of 4GW that defines it as "what Mao did." Mao Tse-tung's wars were not 4GW. They were fought within the framework of the state, for political control of a state. Mao had nothing to do with the "leaderless resistance" last week's shootings represent. Major Hasan's motives transcended the political. According to the November 9 Washington Post, a few hours before he opened fire, Major Hasan said to a neighbor, "I'm going to do good work for God."

The Establishment, which continues to pretend the state (or Globalist super-state) has a monopoly on primary loyalty, predictably proclaimed the shootings the actions of "a madman." That is what old and passing orders always say about the first avatars of the coming order (or disorder). It's how the old order whistles past the graveyard – its own graveyard.

The cultural Marxists, leaping to the defense of "diversity," their favorite poison for Western societies, claim Major Hasan's massacre of his fellow soldiers does not represent Islam. Sorry, but it represents Islam all too well. Islam does not recognize any separation between

church and state. States have no legitimacy in Islam; legitimacy adheres only to the Ummah, the community of all believers. The only legitimate law is Sharia. All Muslims are commanded to wage jihad against all non-Islamics. Loyalty to Islam must be the believer's primary loyalty. Nightwatch for 5 November writes:

*Two years ago, a devout Pakistani cabdriver told Nightwatch that if Allah called him or any devout Muslim to go on jihad and to kill his family and even the riders in his cab, he must do it immediately. He made that statement calmly as a matter of fact, while driving north on US 1.*

This was not the statement of an insane man, but of an educated man with a degree in engineering who was making ends meet; a devoted family man and a good cab driver.

There are of course peaceful Islamics; peace be upon them. But peaceful Islamics are also lax Islamics. The ongoing Islamic revival is converting more and more Muslims, especially young men, to its purer version of Islam. That is happening everywhere, including among Islamics in Europe and America. As Islamic Puritanism spreads, violence will spread with it.

At the same time, it would be an error to think of 4GW threats within Western societies as confined to Islam. The U.S. military has already seen soldiers kill other soldiers as part of gang-related activities. Gangs may be as important an alternate primary loyalty as religion. As the state loses its legitimacy, the variety of new primary loyalties that arise to replace it will be limitless.

As this column has often warned, 4th Generation war is not just something fought "over there." It comes to a theater near you. That includes places like Ft. Hood. Many 4GW entities know that the best way to deal with hostile state security forces, police as well as military, is to take them from within. Last week also saw the killing of five

British soldiers in Afghanistan by an Afghan policeman working with their unit. Many police departments along the southern U.S. border are owned by the drug traffickers.

The Establishment will attempt to label the massacre at Ft. Hood an “isolated incident.” On the contrary, it is just a foretaste of many more such actions to come. How might states reverse that trend? Three things might help:

1. Stay out of 4th Generation wars overseas. Intervening in areas of stateless disorder imports their disorder.
2. Be prepared to outlaw violent alternative primary loyalties, including some religions (which in the case of the U. S. would require Constitutional amendments). To those who argue that religious tolerance must be unlimited, I ask, would we tolerate the re-establishment of the Aztec religion, with its demand for ceaseless human sacrifices, on American soil? Of course not.
3. Strengthen the legitimacy of the state, which in Western societies usually means reducing, not augmenting, the power and intrusiveness of the central government. Nothing undermines the legitimacy of a state more effectively than attempts to “re-make” a society according to some ideology’s demands, as is now happening in the West in the name of cultural Marxism, aka “multiculturalism.” A legitimate government defends its society’s traditional culture, it does not assault that culture.

Ask not for whom the bells at Ft. Hood toll; they toll for the state.

*November 10, 2009*

# What is Political Correctness

In response to the killing of 13 American soldiers at Ft. Hood by an Islamic U. S. Army major, a number of senior officials have expressed their fear, not of Islam, but of a possible threat to “diversity.” “Diversity” is one of the many false gods of “Political Correctness.” But what exactly is Political Correctness?

Political Correctness is cultural Marxism, Marxism translated from economic into cultural terms. Its history goes back not to the 1960s but to World War I. Before 1914, Marxist theory said that if a major war broke out in Europe, the workers of every country would join together in a revolution to overthrow capitalism and replace it with international socialism. But when war came, that did not happen. What had gone wrong?

Two Marxist theorists, Antonio Gramsci in Italy and Georg Lukacs in Hungary, independently came up with the same answer. They said that Western culture and the Christian religion had so “blinded” the working class to its true (Marxist) class interests that Communism was impossible in the West until traditional culture and Christianity were destroyed. When Lukacs became Deputy Commissar for Culture in the short-lived Bela Kun Bolshevik government in Hungary in 1919, one of his first acts was introducing sex education into the Hungarian schools. He knew that destroying traditional sexual morals would be a major step toward destroying Western culture itself.

Lukacs became a major influence on a Marxist think tank established in 1923 at Frankfurt University in Germany, the Institute for Social Research, commonly known as the Frankfurt School. When Max Horkheimer took over as director of the Frankfurt School in 1930, he set about in earnest to do Lukacs’ bidding by translating Marxism

from economic into cultural terms. Other Frankfurt School members devoted to this intellectually difficult task were Theodor Adorno, Eric Fromm, Wilhelm Reich and Herbert Marcuse. Theirs was not the Marxism of the Soviet Union – Moscow considered them heretics – but it was Marxism nonetheless.

The Frankfurt School's key to success was crossing Marx with Freud. They argued that just as under capitalism everyone lived in a state of economic oppression, so under Western culture people lived under psychological repression. From psychology they also drew the technique of psychological conditioning. Want to “normalize” homosexuality? Just show television program after television program where the only normal-seeming white male is homosexual.

In 1933 the Frankfurt School moved from Germany to New York City. There, its products included “critical theory,” which demands constant, destructive criticism of every traditional social institution, starting with the family. It also created a series of “studies in prejudice,” culminating in Adorno's immensely influential book, *The Authoritarian Personality*, which argued that anyone who defends traditional culture is a “fascist” and also mentally ill. That is why anyone who now dares defy “PC” gets sent to “sensitivity training,” which is psychological conditioning designed to produce submission.

In the 1950s and 1960s, Herbert Marcuse translated the abstruse work of the other Frankfurt School thinkers into books college students could understand, such as *Eros and Civilization*, which became the Bible of the New Left in the 1960s. Marcuse injected the Frankfurt School's cultural Marxism into the baby boom generation, to the point where it is now that generation's ideology. We know it as “multiculturalism,” “diversity” or just Political Correctness.

That is the dirty little secret of Political Correctness, folks: it is a form of Marxism. If the average American knew that, I suspect Political Correctness would be in serious trouble.

The Ft. Hood killings raise an interesting question: why would Marxists of any variety come to the support of Islam? After all, if the Islamics took over, they would cut Marxists' throats even before they cut the throats of Christians and Jews. The answer is that cultural Marxism will ally with any force that helps it to achieve its goals, destroying Western culture and Christianity.

Obviously, there is far more to the history of the Frankfurt School and its creation of Political Correctness than I can cover in a short column. This is just a bare-bones outline. For those who want to learn more (and I hope you do), you can find a short book on the subject, which I edited, on the website of the Free Congress Foundation ([www.freecongress.org](http://www.freecongress.org)). Free Congress also produced a short video documentary history of the Frankfurt School, which I'm told is available on Youtube (look under Frankfurt School or under my name). The video is especially valuable because we interviewed the principal American expert on the Frankfurt School, Martin Jay, who was then the chairman of the History Department at Berkeley (and obviously no conservative). He spills the beans.

Most people in the U. S. military hate Political Correctness, but they don't know how to fight it. The way to fight it is to find out what it really is, and make sure all your friends find out too. Political Correctness is cultural Marxism, which is to say intellectual Soylent Green. Here more than in anything else, knowledge is a weapon!

*November 19, 2009*



## Milestone

One of the ongoing themes of this column has been gangs and the role they play in a 4th Generation world. Here in the United States they already serve as an alternative primary loyalty to the state for many urban young men. Gangs will likely be a major player in 4GW because gang members are expected to fight. Those who won't do not remain gang members.

The November 15 *Washington Post* had a story about gangs in Salinas, California, that deserves close attention from 4GW theorists. Salinas is reportedly overrun with Hispanic gangs. The *Post* wrote that its homicide rate is three times that of Los Angeles. It quoted a Salinas police officer, Sgt. Mark Lazzarini, on one of the classic results of state breakdown, chaos:

*“Only half of our gangs are structured; the Norteños,” he said. “The southerners are completely unstructured. Half of our violence is kids who get into a car and go out and hunt. These kids don’t know their victims. How do you stop that? It’s very chaotic.”*

Salinas’s new slogan might be, “Salinas: where even the lettuce has tattoos.”

But what is interesting in the *Post*’s article is not the gangs themselves. It is a new response to the gangs. Salinas has brought in the U.S. military to apply counter-insurgency doctrine to a situation on American soil. The *Post* reports that:

*Since February combat veterans of Iraq and Afghanistan have been advising Salinas police on counterinsurgency doctrine, bringing lessons from the battlefield to the meanest streets in an*

*American city...*

*“It’s a little laboratory,” said retired Col. Hy Rothstein, the former Army career officer in Special Forces who heads the team of 15 faculty members and students (from the Naval Postgraduate School), mostly naval officers. Rothstein...notes the “significant overlap with how you deal with insurgencies and how you deal with cities that are under siege from gangs.”*

From the perspective of 4GW theory, this is an important development. The Naval Postgraduate School is a DOD institution, part of the U.S. government. Its involvement in Salinas marks the federal government’s formal recognition of 4th Generation war on American soil, and the need for a “national model” to counteract it. If we must involve the U.S. military to lead counterinsurgency efforts in American cities, then it is difficult to deny that we face something like insurgencies in those same cities. Again, the significance is that this is now formally admitted by the U.S. government, not merely noted by “outside the beltway” observers of 4GW.

The U.S. military officers advising Salinas on how to wage an anti-gang counterinsurgency are doing so as volunteers, according to the Post, to avoid Constitutional issues. But the camel’s nose is obviously inside the tent. Many wars have begun by sending “volunteers.” If, as likely, the volunteers prove insufficient, regular troops will follow.

As someone who believes in a strictly limited federal government, the government envisioned by our Founders, I find this troubling. But from a 4GW perspective, I also know it is inevitable. As I have said time and again, the main 4th Generation threat we will face will be on our own soil, not halfway around the world, where we are currently pouring our strength out into the sand. We will come to regret that waste bitterly.

Objectively, what the *Washington Post* has reported is a milestone, to be neither praised nor regretted but merely noted. It denotes another

step toward 4GW here at home. It is a step we cannot avoid. As both imported and domestically-generated 4th Generation entities ramp up their warfare on American soil, the U.S. military will be drawn in. As is the case in 4GW overseas, it will probably fail. Old Uncle Karl was right: the state will wither away. But what follows will not be communism. It will be chaos.

*November 23, 2009*

## O=W

“O=W” is a bumper sticker beginning to show up on liberals’ cars. After the President’s speech Tuesday night at West Point, I suspect it will spread rapidly.

For eight years, conservatives endured the agony of watching President George W. Bush attach the label “conservative” to a host of policies that were anti-conservative: Wilsonian wars, American empire, vast budget and trade deficits, increased entitlements, and the subordination of America’s interests to those of foreign powers. Now the shoe is on the other foot, and liberals are bidden to hold their tongues as President Obama makes Bush’s wars his own. The usual Washington sell-out is in gear.

It should not come as a surprise. America is now a one-party state. The one party is the Establishment party, which is also the war party. Unless you are willing to cheer permanent war for permanent peace, you cannot be a member of the Establishment.

What can we say militarily about Obama’s surge? Understand that in Afghanistan, 30,000 troops is a drop in the bucket. The size of the country, the wide extent of Taliban and other anti-occupier action, and the largely mountainous nature of the terrain make Afghanistan a troop sponge. A serious effort would require 300,000 more troops, not 30,000.

Obama’s surge only makes strategic sense if it is intended to strengthen our position politically as a preliminary to negotiating with the Taliban. By holding a few areas in the Taliban’s heartland, we might make such negotiations worthwhile for Mullah Omar. The deal would be a coalition government including the Taliban, to last until we withdrew, coupled with a promise not to invite al-Qaeda back. Is that

the White House's intention? I can only say that I have seen no evidence of it.

On the operational level, we are adopting a fortress strategy: Festung Kandahar. The Taliban's operational countermove is obvious: take the rest of the Pashtun areas, isolate us in our fortresses, then work to sever the supply lines running to the fortresses, including Kabul. The Taliban is already attempting to do this; our concentration should make it all the easier.

Tactically, the Taliban will withdraw from areas where we concentrate rather than trying to defend them: "when the enemy advances, we retreat." Then, they will penetrate those areas with small raids, ambushes, IED-placing parties, and suicide bombers: "When the enemy halts, we harass." We will face a war of the flea inside our fortresses.

If we add all this up, we see that militarily it makes no sense. Of course, that is true of any military option in the Afghan war. We are fighting the Pashtun, and in the end, the Pashtun always win Afghan wars. "This time is different" is, as always, the battle cry of Folly.

So what lies behind President Obama's decision? Domestic political considerations, of course. He has done what politicians always do when faced with difficult choices: he has kicked the can down the road, to a specific date, July, 2011. That is when the President promises we will begin a withdrawal from Afghanistan. The date is meaningless beyond its political meaning, i.e., at that point Obama will again be faced with the same decision he just punted. With a Presidential election looming, he will punt again. Meanwhile, the war's price, in money and casualties, will have risen, making it even harder to walk away from sunk costs.

The real choice Obama faced was not how many troops to send. We do not have enough troops to commit a militarily meaningful number. The real choice was to get out now or get out later. His duty as Chief

Executive, the empty state of America's treasury, concern for the well-being of our troops and their families, and the hopelessness of the situation all dictated he get out now. By punting the decision, he showed America and the world what he is made of.

December 1, 2009, was the date the Obama Presidency failed.

*December 4, 2009*

# How the Taliban Take a Village

*The following is a guest column, written by a reserve NCO with special forces, Mark Sexton. It is based on his personal observations in Afghanistan. It represents his analysis only, not any position taken by DOD, the U.S. Army, or any other agency of the U.S. government. In my opinion, it represents exactly the sort of intelligence analysis we need but seldom get.*

A current method used by Taliban in Afghanistan to gain control of an area deemed of strategic interest to the Taliban leadership operating from safe havens in Pakistan or within Afghanistan is to identify and target villages to subvert. The Taliban have recognized the necessity to operate with the cooperation of local population with the modus operandi being to gain their cooperation through indoctrination (preferred) or coercion (when necessary).

## **VILLAGE NODES OF INFLUENCE**

For a non-Afghan or foreigner to understand how the Taliban can subvert a village, we can use a simple social structure model to identify the key nodes of influence within a typical Afghan village. A village can be divided into three areas that most affect how daily life is lived. These areas generally fall under political and administrative, religious, and security. These three areas can be considered key nodes of influence in every Afghan village. Of the three nodes the one that is the most visible to outsiders is that of the Malik and village elders. The Malik and village elders represent the political aspects of the village. A second key node of influence is the Imam. The Imam represents the

religious node of influence within a village. A third Local node of influence is the individuals and system of security found within a village. Security is traditionally conducted by the men of each individual village. If one of the parts or nodes of influence is controlled by either the Taliban or the Afghan government in each village, then they heavily influence or control villages and the area.

### **TALIBAN CONTROL OF VILLAGE NODES**

The Taliban look for villages and areas which they can operate within and use as a base against US and Afghan forces. Areas with little US presence or Afghan police or army are prime areas the Taliban will initially seek to subvert and hold. The Taliban build networks by getting a fighter, religious leader, or village elder to support them. Whichever one or more are initially used will be exploited by tribal and familial ties. The village politics administered by the elders and represented by an appointed Malik are the most identifiable node of influence of any particular village. The Taliban will attempt to sway those Maliks who are not supportive by discussion and if necessary threats, violence, or death. In villages where the locals say there is no Malik it is usually described as a convenience to the village as “no one wants the position”, or sometimes “the elders cannot agree on a Malik so it is better there is none”. In these cases it is most likely the Taliban have neutralized the desired representative of that village. When locals are pressed for a representative they will give you a name of a person who has come to represent the village. This individual will also most likely be in support of and supported by the Taliban. The Taliban will try to install a Malik or “representative of the village” by coercion or force.

A “sub-commander” will be established in the village to keep those in line who would resist the Taliban or their Malik, who will be supported by limited funding. The sub-commander will generally have 2-5 fighters under his control. The fighters will often be armed only



with small arms and rocket propelled grenades. They may or may not have an IED capability, and if not will coordinate IED activities for the defense and when possible offense against US and Afghan forces. These fighters may stay in the village but preferably are not from the village. Locals can sometimes be pressed into service to fight when needed but the Taliban tend to use fighters from different villages so that when threats or physical violence is utilized it won't be kinsman against kinsman.

The Imam and local mosques of villages are often visited by the Taliban. This is not generally opposed by villagers as it is expected that even the Taliban must be allowed to perform and express their Islamic duties. These mosque visits afford the Taliban opportunities to gage village sentiment and to build and establish contacts within localities. Village religious leaders also serve to educate children in villages where the Taliban have either closed or destroyed the local school. The mosque and Imam serve as an education center for the Taliban while still presenting an opportunity for village children to be "educated." This presents a solution to the unpopular notion of schools being closed. A constant and recognized complaint from the Afghan people is the lack of opportunity because of poor education. The Taliban will supplant the local Imam if needed by supplying their own to a village. A village with no Imam will receive one and the Taliban will establish a mosque. This mosque will serve as a meeting place for Taliban, storage facility, and indoctrination center.

Sympathetic locals are used as auxiliaries to provide food and shelter. One way to do this is for known supporters to place food and blankets outside their living quarters or in guest quarters to be used by Taliban in transit or operating within a village. This gives the resident supporter some cover of deniability. When US or Afghan forces arrive all that is found are the blanket, possibly clothing, footprints and other signs of their visit. The Taliban have blended into the surrounding village.

## **TALIBAN CAN CONTROL WITH FEW FIGHTERS**

The Taliban method requires relatively few of their own personnel. Its strength is in the local subversion of the most basic levels of village organization and life. It is also a decentralized approach. Guidance is given and then carried out with commanders applying their own interpretation of how to proceed. The goal is to control the village, and at the local level the only effective method, which must be used by all commanders, is to control what we have termed the nodes of influence. Form fits function, an Afghan village can only work one way to allow its members to survive a subsistence agrarian lifestyle, and the Taliban know it well.

To control an area the Taliban will identify villages that can be most easily subverted. They will then spread to other villages in the area one at a time, focusing their efforts on whichever node of influence seem most likely to support their effort first. Using this model the Taliban could influence and dominate or control a valley or area with a population of 1,000-2,500—of ten villages with 100-250 people (100-250 compounds)—with only between 20-50 active fighters and ten fighting leaders. The actual numbers may involve a larger population and fewer fighters.

The Taliban will have an elaborate network to support their fighters in areas they control or dominate. They will have safe houses, medical clinics, supply sites, weapons caches, transportation agents, and early warning networks to observe and report. The US and Afghan forces, heavily laden with excessive body armor and equipment, are reluctant to leave their vehicles. They are blown up on the same roads and paths they entered the area on. The Taliban will use feints and lures to draw our forces away from caches and leaders in an attempt to buy them time to relocate, or into a lethal ambush. After the attack the Taliban will disperse and blend into the village. The village will usually sustain civilian casualties and the information or propaganda will be spread of

US and Afghan forces using excessive force. The US and Afghan forces will leave or set up an outpost nearby, but the attacks will continue because the forces are not in the village, do not truly know “who’s who in the zoo”, and aren’t able to effectively engage Taliban personnel or effectively interface with the village nodes of influence to their benefit.

We say one thing but our actions are different. Locals are reluctant to help because to be seen talking with the Americans and Afghan security forces will result in a visit from a Taliban member to determine what they talked about and to whom. The local villagers know the government has no effective plan that can counter the Taliban in their village and will typically only give information on Taliban or criminal elements to settle a blood feud. The Pashtu people are patient to obtain justice and will use what they have to pay pack “blood for blood” even against the Taliban.

## **COUNTERING THE TALIBAN IN THE VILLAGE**

Countering Taliban subversion of the populace is not done effectively with just more troops located at outposts. The troops must coordinate their activities with the local population and establish security through and within the village. When US and Afghan forces do this the fight will typically take on a particularly violent aspect, and involve the population as the Taliban attempt to maintain control.

The US and Afghan forces and Government will need to identify individuals to use lethal and non-lethal targeting. This requires in-depth knowledge of tribal structure, alliances and feuds. Viable alternatives or choices need to be available to village leaders and villagers. Just placing US and Afghan soldiers at an outpost and conducting token presence patrols and occasionally bantering with locals and organizing a shura once a month are not going to work.

Afghan identity is not primarily national, i.e. belonging within a geographic boundary with a centralized national government. Afghan

identity is tribal in nature. Americans view identity as a national government, in the villages Afghans do not. The tribe is most important. The country “Afghanistan” running things from Kabul does not mean very much to the Afghan people in the villages under duress from the Taliban.

US and Afghan forces must be able to infiltrate and shape the village nodes of influence and then target individuals. Right now our military embraces a centralized, top-driven approach that prevents our military and U.S.-trained Afghan counterparts from doing so. Current US procedures and tactics attempt to identify the Taliban without regard to their influence or social role at a village level. Instead we attempt to link individuals to attacks and incomplete network structures through often questionable intelligence. The individuals in nodes of influence must be identified as neutral, pro-, or anti-Afghan government and then dealt with. To target any other way is haphazard at best and does not gain us the initiative.

US and Afghan forces must also devise and utilize tactics to fight outside and inside the village. This requires true light infantry and real counterinsurgency tactics employed by troops on the ground, not read from a “new” COIN manual by leadership in a support base. The tactics must entail lightly equipped and fast-moving COIN forces that go into villages and know how to properly interact with locals and identify Taliban insurgents. They must have the ability to take their time and stay in areas they have identified at the local level as worth trying to take back. Being moved from place to place and using armored vehicles while hardly reengaging local leadership will not work. Targeting identified high value targets will only result in the “whack-a-mole” syndrome. It’s demoralizing for US and Afghan troops, the American public, and the Afghans who just want to live in peace.

A light infantry force conducting specialized reconnaissance in villages, and using proven tactics like trained visual trackers to follow insurgents into and out of villages, proper ambush techniques on foot

outside the village, and knowing the local village situation are the key. Infantry tactics should use also vertical envelopment of Taliban fighters by helicopter and parachute to cut off avenues of escape. Troops should foot patrol into villages at night, talk with and document compounds and inhabitants for later analysis, and have a secure patrol base locally from which to operate. Mega bases or FOBS are only for support and units and tactics should be decentralized.

*November 19, 2009*

# Finis

This will be the last On War column, at least for the foreseeable future. I will retire from Free Congress Foundation, where I have worked for twenty-two years, at the end of this month.

After three hundred and twenty-five columns, what is left to be said? Two points, I think, are worth noting in closing. First, since the Marine Corps Gazette article that first laid out the framework of the Four Generations of Modern War was published in 1989, events have largely followed the course it predicted. That is not to say I was right in all my predictions in these columns. Were my crystal ball that accurate, I would be a rich man. Being rich, as a Rothschild once defined it, is being able to live comfortably on the interest on the interest. But in broad terms, the theory has had predictive value, which is the true test of any theory.

In particular, the theory's definition of 4th Generation war has proven prophetic. Since 1989, the world has witnessed a progressive weakening of the state and rise of alternative, non-state primary loyalties, for which a growing number of men are willing to fight. That is the heart of my definition of 4th Generation war. As Martin van Creveld says, what changes is not how war is fought, but who fights and what they fight for.

Other definitions of 4GW, including defining it as just a new name for insurgency, miss the mark. 4th Generation war is more than a buzzword. It is the biggest change in war since the Peace of Westphalia.

The second point I would close with is that the U.S. military doesn't get it. Some European militaries do get it. Many 4th Generation entities not only get it, they are writing the book. But the U.S. military

is largely an intellectual void. Its two implied and related theories, that wars are decided by comparative levels of technology and by whomever can put the most firepower on targets, have both been proven false. Were they true, we would have won the Iraq and Afghan wars quickly. In fact, the Pentagon was so blinded by its false theories it thought we had won them quickly. Sorry, guys.

While many junior and field grade officers in the U. S. military have found value in the Four Generations framework which observes that American armed forces are not one, but two generations behind, the brass studiously ignores it. “Not invented here” is part of the problem, but the larger part is that our major headquarters think little, if at all, about war. What they think about is money. 4GW does little to justify bigger budgets. On the contrary, it suggests that most big ticket weapons programs are irrelevant to where war is going. That is not what the brass, or the defense companies they plan to work for after retirement, want to hear.

What might change that picture? Nothing will change at the Department of Defense until the money simply isn't there anymore. The news, which is simultaneously good and bad, is that soon the money won't be there. Like every previous imperial power, we are bankrupting ourselves. A trillion dollars here, and a trillion dollars there, and soon it adds up to real money. The twin financing mechanisms of piling up debt and debasing the currency can only go on so long. We can already see the night at the end of the tunnel.

There is no better way to end this series of columns, at least for a while, than to recommend a book. The best book on where America now stands and where it is going is J. H. Elliott's *The Count-Duke of Olivares: A Statesman in an Age of Decline*. Olivares was what we would now call the prime minister of Spain in much of the first half of the 17th century. His era saw Spain go from the only world superpower to a downward plunge that lasted three centuries. Unusually, the more one looks at the details, the more the parallel holds. Then, as now, the

root problem was the same: the court was controlled by interests that lived off the nation's decay.

Consider the book Scrooge's recommendation for a good Christmas reading.

*December 14, 2009*

The End



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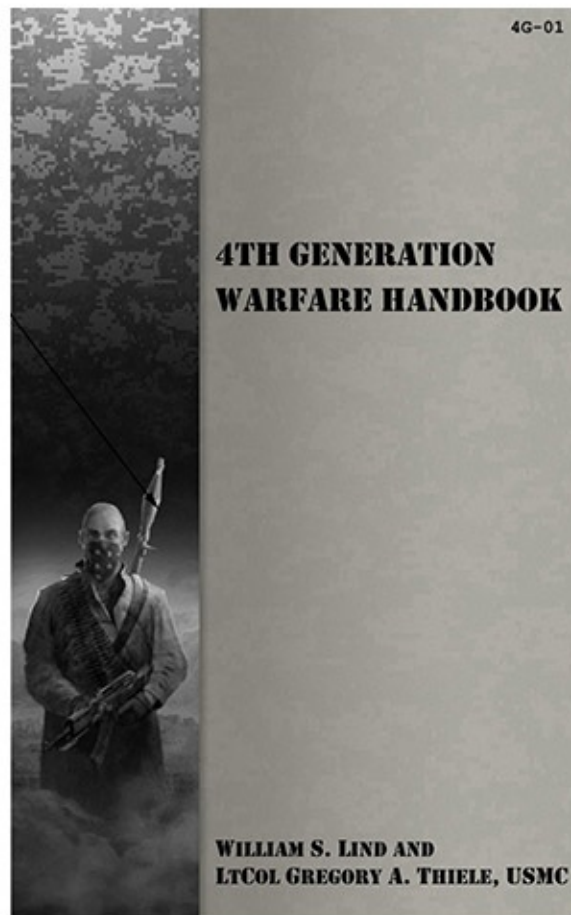
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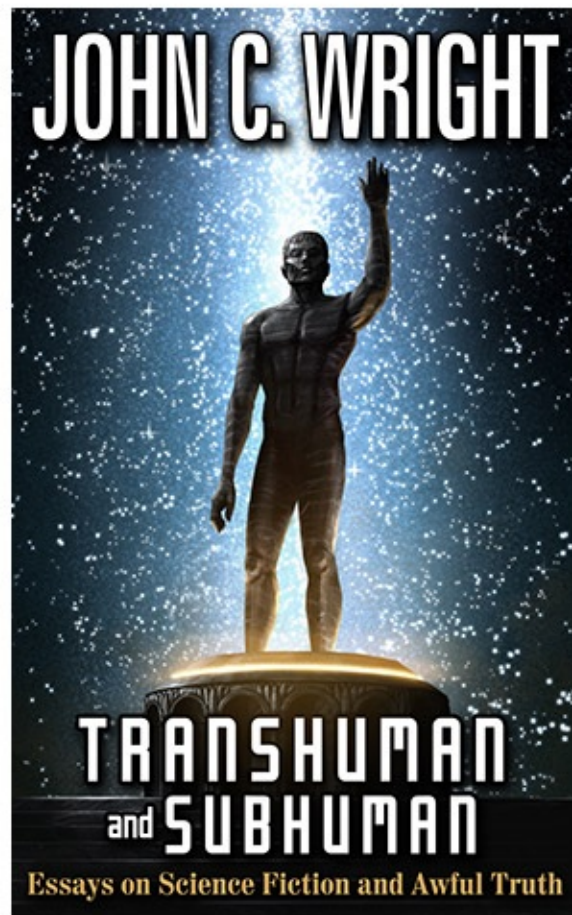






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*Uma Magia Perdida*

*Mantra yang Rusak*

*La Moneta dal Mercenario*

*I Ragazzoni non Piangono*

*QUANTUM MORTIS Тежина Смрти*

*QUANTUM MORTIS Der programmierte Verstand*

*QUANTUM MORTIS Um Homem Desintegrado*

*Grosse Jungs weinen nicht*