

On War Series# 50-1 | 101-51 | 152-102 | 203-153 | 241-204**THE FREE CONGRESS COMMENTARY
BY WILLIAM S. LIND****On War #101
January 25, 2005**

FMFM 1-A

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As regular readers of this column know, the small seminar on Fourth Generation warfare that meets at my house, made up mostly of Marines, is writing its own field manual, FMFM 1-A, *Fourth 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 Fourth Generation."

At present, the FMFM has two long chapters (that may change). The first is "Understanding Fourth Generation War." As the draft says, "Before you can fight Fourth 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 de-escalation. It doesn't offer a 100% solution, but 51% 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 Fourth Generation war. Chapter I is not yet in final form, but it is getting there.

In contrast, Chapter II, "Fighting Fourth 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 Fourth 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 Fourth 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 Fourth Generation war.

William S. Lind, expressing his own personal opinion, is Director for the Center for Cultural Conservatism for the Free Congress Foundation

On War #100
January 21, 2005

[Coming Unglued](#)

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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 Fourth 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 Fourth 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 neo-con gang of adventurers who pushed us into this war is starting to come unglued. Leading neo-cons 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 Fourth 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 Fourth 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.

William S. Lind, expressing his own personal opinion, is Director for the Center for Cultural Conservatism for the Free Congress Foundation

On War #99

January 14, 2005

[The Sorrows Of Old Werther](#)

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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 Fourth 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 Fourth Generation war. That, in turn, leads to another question: just what is Fourth 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 Fourth 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. Fourth 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 Fourth 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 Fourth 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 Fourth 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 Fourth 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.

William S. Lind, expressing his own personal opinion, is Director for the Center for Cultural Conservatism for the Free Congress Foundation

On War #98
January 4, 2005

Jena

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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 Second Generation war to the Third 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.

On War #97
December 21, 2004

[Little Stalingrad](#)

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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 Second 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 Fourth 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 that 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 Second 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 neo-con 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.

On War #96
December 17, 2004

[Election Ju-ju](#)

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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 Fourth 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 Shiite 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 Shiite 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 Shiite rule. Contrary to what the Bush administration suggests, I do not believe the Sunni insurgents want to stop the elections. Why? Because a Shiite victory allows them to say to all Sunni Iraqi Arabs, "Now your only choices are to join the resistance or submit to the Shiite 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 Shiites 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 Shiites; there are a lot more Shiites, 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 Shiite Iraq. That in turn suggests partition of Iraq, with a Shiite 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 Shiite victory over the Sunnis would reverberate throughout the Arab and Islamic worlds. Can the majority Sunnis accept a strategic victory by the despised Shiites, 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 Shiite victory might trigger them.

Also, if the Shiites 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 Fourth 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 Shiite 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 neo-cons' 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.

On War #95
December 7, 2004

[The March of Folly, Continued](#)

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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. Yanukovich, 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 no way 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.

On War #94
December 1, 2004

[4GW On The Home Front](#)

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Focused as we are on Fourth 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, Fourth 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 Fourth Generation wars abroad, he has opened the flood gates to importing Fourth 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 Fourth 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 Fourth 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 Fourth 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.

On War #93
November 24, 2004

[Last Exit Before Gas](#)

[The views expressed in this article are those of Mr. Lind, writing in his personal capacity. They do not reflect the opinions or policy positions of the Free Congress Foundation, its officers, board or employees, or those of Kettle Creek Corporation.]

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 neo-con 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 neo-con has been given his walking papers. So long as they are running the show, substantive change is unlikely.

But what are the neo-cons 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 neo-cons' 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 neo-cons 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 Shiite regions. That might also be Iran's response in Iraq, where it already has Revolutionary Guard troops in Shiite 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 airpower 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 neo-cons 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.

On War #92
November 16, 2004

Tactics of the Crescent Moon

[The views expressed in this article are those of Mr. Lind, writing in his personal capacity. They do not reflect the opinions or policy positions of the Free Congress Foundation, its officers, board or employees, or those of Kettle Creek Corporation.]

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 Fourth 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 Falluja, 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 neo-cons 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 Methods* 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 Fourth 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 Second 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...

William S. Lind, expressing his own personal opinion, is Director for the Center for Cultural Conservatism for the Free Congress Foundation

Buy *Tactics of the Crescent Moon* at <http://members.aol.com/posteritypress/crescent.htm>

On War #91

Germany's Blunder

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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 Fourth 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 Fourth 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 Fourth 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 Fourth 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. Fourth 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 neo-cons, all it can find are many Holsteins.

On War #90

The Sling And The Stone

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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 Fourth Generation warfare (4GW).

In some ways, this is two books in one. One book describes Fourth 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 Fourth 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 Fourth 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 Fourth 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 Fourth Generation war with insurgency. In doing so, he equates the Fourth Generation with how war is fought. It is usually fought guerilla-style, but that misses the point: what changes in the Fourth Generation is who fights and what they fight for. This error leads to others, such as believing that Fourth Generation war focuses on the mental level. Hammes writes, "The fourth 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, Fourth 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 Fourth 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 Fourth Generation theory. For example, his short discussion of a difficult theoretical problem, the role of the OODA loop in Fourth 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-orientation-decision-action [OODA] 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, Fourth 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 Fourth Generation we may see it here as well.

On War #89

Election Day

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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 Fourth Generation enemies, the checklist might look something like this:

- To be able to confront Fourth Generation opponents, our own armed forces must first move from the Second Generation (French-style attrition warfare) to the Third (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 Second Generation state armed forces whom we defeat through superior (meaning more complex) technology. Kerry has said nothing to suggest he knows the Second 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 neo-con. Can we be sure Kerry isn't in fact a neo-con? No.
- Developing a "counter-terrorism" capability that, instead of pretending the whole thing is a law-enforcement problem, mimics the way Fourth 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 First Generation culture of order. Bush and Kerry both seem as clueless on this as Bart Simpson.
- Developing contingency plans for what we do when a Fourth Generation force such as al Qaeda nukes an American city, which is going to 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 Fourth Generation war we need to figure out what it is. The Pentagon is willfully ignorant, because Fourth Generation war doesn't justify hi-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 failed (spectacularly). 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 dog-catcher of Podunk, much less 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.

On War #88

Fallujah And 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 Fourth 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 Fourth 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 (again, covert) help.

Unfortunately, our leaders do not understand the Fourth 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 (as always, we will promise to rebuild it but not do so), 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, 1000 and 2000-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 local as 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, again, is the decisive level in Fourth 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.

On War #87**Keeping Our SA Up**

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 o'clock position (aka "your six"). In Fourth 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 Fourth 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 Fourth Generation motto is, "Back to the future."

These two reports remind all Fourth 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 Fourth Generation threat, you're gonna get hosed.

Let me add two footnotes to this column:

1. 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, when we attacked, the Iraqi guerillas retreated. The victor is not whoever holds Samarra today, but who can keep hold of it for six weeks, six months or six years. My bet is it won't be us.
2. The Fourth Generation seminar met Friday for the first time since last spring, and we have decided to write our own field manual on Fourth Generation war. It will be modeled on the excellent field manuals the U.S. Marine Corps issued when General Al Gray was Commandant. We plan to have it out in the first half of next year; hopefully, some of the websites that carry this column will offer the whole FMFM.

On War #86**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 Fourth 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 Fourth Generation opponents. American training in techniques is often very good. While we are not giving the Iraqis equipment as good as our own (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 Fourth 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 Fourth Generation war: the "state" Iraqi security forces are being told to fight for 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.

On War #85

Destroying The National Guard
By William S. Lind

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, say, 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 moral 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% 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% 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 against 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.

ON WAR #84

Learning Curve

By William S. Lind

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 gotten 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 (the term is a misnomer: 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 Fourth Generation opponents in both lethality and protection, yet we're losing. That suggests there is rather more to Fourth 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 Fourth 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 Second 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 lost victories.

On War #83

Stage Three
By William S. Lind

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 Baath Party, which still operates within the framework of the state, to religious elements which do not.

This is exactly what Fourth Generation theory predicted would happen. The minutes from the January 23, 2004 session of our Fourth 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 Baath Party) and the third was fourth 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 Baath 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 Baath 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 Baath and any other forces that might have been able to re-create an Iraqi state, to non-state, Fourth 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 Baath 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 [Islamic] 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 Baath, 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 Baath – a deal the Baath 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 Baath 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 Baathists do not control the resistance then all bets are indeed now off.

On War #82

Greater Denmark, The Neo-barbs, And The War with Sweden
By William S. Lind

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, at whatever 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" (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 and 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 the neo-barbs' real slogan is, "Four More Wars." The contrast with Bob Taft's foreign policy for 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?

ON WAR #81

The Desert Fox

By William S. Lind

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 Shiite young men who make up the Mahdi Army and any other Shiite 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 Shiite 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 Fourth 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 Shiites, but al-Sadr now has the support of most Shiite fighters, and that is what is likely to count.

Third, al-Sadr may have moved the Shiite areas of Iraq closer to what he seeks, a general uprising against the Americans (with himself as its 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 Shiite 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, one front against the Shiite Mahdi Army, 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 Shiite-dominated Islamic republic of Iraq is to wait for an election, where Shiite 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 Fourth Generation war works, folks.

On War #80

Seeing Through The Other Side's Eyes

By William S. Lind

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 "great" 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 Fourth Generation war (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." Hiring 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.

On War #79

Corruption In The Corps?

By William S. Lind

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 usually 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 naively that our armed forces defined themselves in terms of winning battles, campaigns and wars. Senator Taft 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 Fourth Generation war, the kind of war Marines are fighting in Iraq and Afghanistan – you are neither right nor wrong, you are simply irrelevant. Fourth 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. It is 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.

On War #78

The 9/11 Commission Report: Reorganization, Not Reform

By William S. Lind

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 ("democratic centralism") 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 Fourth 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 freeform. 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% certain.

What about the macro level? Sadly, the picture is equally bleak. Much Fourth 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, Fourth 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.

On War #77

Civil War In Iraq?

By William S. Lind

Observers continue to ask, "Will Iraq 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/Shiite/Kurd fault lines on which we have been lead 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 "government's" goal 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 the Iraqi "government": has 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.

Fourth 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 Shiites appear to be splitting into smaller, mutually hostile elements. There are indications that among the Sunnis, the secularists, who are mostly Baathists, 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. Shiite leader Muqtada al Sadr's recent war with the Americans had less to do with resisting the occupation than with positioning himself within the Shiite community. Fourth Generation theory says that once the fractioning begins in a post-state region, it continues.

The resulting civil war may still have Sunni vs. Shiite 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 Shiite 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.

On War #76

4GW In The Sudan
By William S. Lind

The international goo-goos (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 Fourth 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, they (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 (muzzleloaders? flintlocks?) 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 Fourth Generation that is also a vast Minus One Generation. I have said from the outset that the Fourth 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.

On War #75

The October Surprise?
By William S. Lind

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 neo-cons 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. So long as the neo-cons remain in power, Washington is little more than a suburb of Tel Aviv. And, 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.

The question becomes, how would Iran respond? It might shoot some missiles at Tel Aviv, but absent at least "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 Shiites, 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.

This October could be full of surprises.

On War #74

Spillover

By William S. Lind

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, Fourth 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 Fourth 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 (including, of course, 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; it is all one “battlespace,” to use the U.S. military’s latest buzzword for battlefield (an historical question: do all failing militaries change their terminology frequently?). 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.”

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” (is that diplomatic-speak for terminal cancer?), Islamic militancy rising in Europe, and who-knows-what in the way of terrorist incidents being prepared in the United States itself. All of these play in the Afghan and Iraqi wars, no less than car bombs in Baghdad and ambushes outside Kandahar. It is all one war, one battlefield. State boundaries 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.

On War #73

The Canon, continued
By William S. Lind

This column, the third in a series, concludes a discussion of the canon, the seven books which, read in the order given, will take the reader from the First Generation of modern war through the Fourth. 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 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 Second and Third Generations clash head-on. Why does the Third Generation prevail? Because over and over, at decisive moments the Third Generation Wehrmacht takes initiative (often lead 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 Second and Third 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 Third Generation, maneuver warfare doctrine with a Second 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 Fourth 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 Fourth 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 I am tempted to add, for naval audiences; Andrew Gordon's *The Rules of the Game*. The canon is based on land warfare, but the same elements we see in the First, Second and Third 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 Third Generation war – then loses 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 canon (plus Gordon) offer 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 (on that, see van Creveld's *Technology and War*). But without a framework of some sort, both history 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 canon offers the best framework I know.

ON WAR #72

The Canon
By William S. Lind

The last 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 First Generation through the Second, the Third and on into the Fourth.

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 Third 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 Second 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 Second Generation war wholesale from them (as late as 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 third book, Bruce Gudmundsson's *Stormtroop Tactics*, is the story of the development of Third 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 done 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 Second and Third Generations, distinctions the reader will find useful when looking at the U.S. armed forces today. The British were so firmly attached to the Second Generation – at times, even the First – 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.

I will conclude this discussion of the canon in my next column.

ON WAR #71

The Canon And The Four Generations

By William S. Lind

In my last column, I referenced "the canon," the seven books which, if read in the correct order, take the reader from the First Generation of modern war through the Second and Third Generations and into the Fourth. A number of people responded with requests for a description both of the canon and of the Four Generations, so here goes.

The First 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'état*, with state armies and navies doing the fighting. The First 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 Second and Third Generations represent two different approaches to that problem. Second 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, Second Generation war maintained the First 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. Second Generation armed forces focus inward on methods, processes and procedures, prize obedience over initiative (initiative and synchronization are not compatible) and depend on imposed discipline. The American Army and Marine Corps learned Second Generation war from the French during the First World War and still practice it today, with exceptions based on individual commanders.

Third 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 Third 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 (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 First Generation culture of order.

The new Third 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 Second to the Third Generation. While the Marine Corps formally adopted maneuver warfare as doctrine in the 1990s, most of what the Marine Corps does remains Second Generation. The other American services remain almost wholly Second Generation, to the frustration of many junior officers.

Fourth 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.

The canon, the list of seven books that lay all this out in detail, will be the subject of my next column.

ON WAR #70

Two Marine Corps
By William S. Lind

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 First 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 Second Generation U.S. Army in World War II and the Third Generation Wehrmacht, is one of the seven books of "the canon," the readings that take you from the First Generation into the Fourth. 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, in the end both will disappear. 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 Third Generation armed service.

Maybe Martin van Creveld's next book should be The Rise and Decline of the United States Marine Corps.

ON WAR #69

Psyops In Fourth Generation War

By William S. Lind

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 Fourth 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 Fourth 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? Hello?

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 Shiite 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% support among Shiites while Sistani has slipped to just over 50%. 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.

ON WAR #67

Work For The Grossgeneralstab

By William S. Lind

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 neo-cons 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 after-shocks 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 3000, 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 Second 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 neo-cons 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.

This time, the military may have to play the Kaiser when the Bush administration falls prostrate on the couch.

ON WAR #66

Iraq's WMD Factory

By William S. Lind

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 "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 it's a-- 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 Terrorism," 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 (you get two candidates, but they both represent the same thing.) We are likely to see that interesting time known by historians as "change of dynasty," where a defective and corrupt Establishment is all swept away.

Now that could be fun to watch.

ON WAR #65

Back From The Brink?

By William S. Lind

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 Shiite 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" Kimmit, sounded a bit like old Saddam himself when he said, "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" (*Washington Post*, April 24). 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. Shiites 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*, "U.S. officials made clear last week that the transitional government would have limited powers, with no authority to write new laws and no control over U.S. 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 U.S. 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 neo-con 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.

ON WAR #64

Why We Get It Wrong
By William S. Lind

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 Baath and sending the Iraqi army home to assaulting Fallujah and declaring war on Shiite 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 U.S. 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 Fourth 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 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 (we are now experiencing that vulnerability in Iraq, where 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 Fourth 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.

On War #63

"Your Fish, Sir"

By William S. Lind

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 Baath, 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, Fourth 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 Shiite 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 Shiites, 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 Shiites don’t much like al-Sadr, they like seeing Americans kill fellow Shiites 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 *saufe 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 p--- chute. You cannot get anything you want at Mohammed’s restaurant.

ON WAR #62

The Fourth Generation Seminar, Continued

By William S. Lind

As regular readers of this series know, I periodically report on the results from the Fourth Generation seminar, a small, informal group of military officers – modeled on Scharnhorst’s *Militaerische Gesellschaft* – that meets at my house to work on the problem of Fourth Generation warfare and how American forces might fight it. The seminar is moving toward writing its own field manual on Fourth Generation war, along the lines of the excellent manuals on maneuver warfare produced by the Marine Corps when General Al Gray was Commandant. Our most recent meeting was devoted to discussing what such a manual might say. The

Fourth Generation Seminar, Continued

From the beginning, the seminar has stressed the practical aspects of fighting 4GW over the theoretical. Theory is of course important, but soldiers and Marines in places such as Iraq and Afghanistan need ideas they can put to use.

However, this meeting of the seminar did focus on theory, for a good reason: theory needs to shape the basic outline of the prospective field manual, the outline into which practices will be fit. In such a project as this, getting the outline right is both the hardest and the most important task. Once that is done well, the book almost writes itself.

The seminar's thinking immediately took a radical turn: unlike other field manuals, this one needs to start with a grand strategy. The reason is that if, as is not unlikely in this new form of warfare, the civilian policy makers get the grand strategy wrong at the outset, any efforts the military may make are doomed to failure. The seminar did not contest the fact that civilians will set the grand strategy. But as the minutes from the meeting state, the manual should discuss grand strategy in Fourth Generation war:

in such a way as to give its real audience (military officers) a tool they could take to policy makers and influence their decisions. It would also equip the military to survive in a military-political arena with the politicians. They should be able to tell their political bosses that we can't do A or B for you if C and D are not in line.

Integral to the manual's discussion of grand strategy must be John Boyd's concept that war is fought at three levels, the physical, the moral level and the most powerful. In Fourth Generation war, as historically in guerilla warfare, grand strategy must include the moral dimension – indeed, must make it primary. A major challenge to Fourth Generation theory, one that the manual must address, is the conundrum that what works for you at the tactical and physical levels often works against you at the moral and grand strategic levels. This is one of the lessons from Israel's war against Fourth Generation Islamic forces in Gaza and the West bank.

To quote again from the minutes of the discussion, especially at the moral and grand strategic levels:

Because of the nature of Fourth Generation war everyone must be in accord and "on the same sheet of music." This brings us to the central principle of Third Generation war, which is that we must combine decentralized decision-making with a centralized vision that all participants understand...At the moral level, not only must our own forces understand this vision, but it must also be apparent to the enemy. Further, it must be a moral vision from the standpoint of our opponents just as it is for us.

As the seminar noted, the latter is a tough challenge for America when our number one export is garbage culture.

Finally, the seminar revisited its ongoing discussion of two models, the "escalation model" and the "de-escalation model." It was generally agreed that success in Fourth Generation war comes not from escalation, but from de-escalation. However, the discussion this time led us away from seeing these as opposites to visualizing them as a continuum. In a Fourth Generation war in a place like Afghanistan or Iraq, American forces might simultaneously be de-escalating against some local elements while escalating against others.

The seminar did not by any means finish laying out the theoretical framework for a useful Fourth Generation FMFM, but I think it made some progress. We have delayed the next meeting until late April, in hopes of having some feedback from Marine units recently sent into the Sunni triangle in Iraq. In the meantime, each member of the seminar will work to develop his own outline for the prospective field manual. Contrasting efforts usually yield a better final product than do premature attempts to reach a consensus (that's another of John Boyd's rules).

As the seminar continues its work, I will keep you updated on the results in future columns. We like to think the spirit of Scharnhorst is hovering nearby.

ON WAR #61

The Battle That Wasn't
By William S. Lind

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 Paki 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...

ON WAR #60

Iraq: The Beginning of Phase Three

By William S. Lind

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 War of National Liberation waged by the Baath Party and fought guerilla-style. Phase III, which is likely to prove the decisive phase, is true Fourth 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 Baathist 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 Baathist activity has shrunk to half of its previous size.

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

Welcome to Phase III. The remaining Baathists will of course continue their War of National Liberation, and Fourth Generation elements have been active from the outset. But the situation map in the 1st Armored Division's headquarters reveals the "tipping point:" Fourth 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. Fourth Generation war represents a quantum move away from the state compared to Phase II, where the Baathists 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. Fourth Generation forces, like the Baath, 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 that 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 Fourth 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, "But it is asking too much when a state's integrity must be maintained entirely by others."

ON WAR #59

Successful Strategic Bombing

By William S. Lind

In one of history's shortest and most successful strategic bombing campaigns, Islamic Fourth 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 by bombing 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%. 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, Fourth 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 princes.” The people are involved, and Fourth 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 Fourth 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.

ON WAR #58

Why They Throw Rocks

By William S. Lind

Last week, suicide car bombings left around 200 Shiite 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.

ON WAR #57

Reality 1, Neo-cons 0

By William S. Lind

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 neo-cons' 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 neo-cons' 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 neo-cons' thesis says nothing about reality, it says a great deal about the neo-cons 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 neo-cons 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 neo-con ideology, which has nothing whatsoever to do with conservatism (as Russell Kirk wrote, conservatism is the negation of ideology). The neo-cons 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 neo-cons as fools, lightweights who can dismiss history and culture because they know nothing of history or culture. The first generation of neo-cons 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 (hint: he never wrote one).

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 neo-con 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.

ON WAR #56

The Discreet Charm Of The (Washington) Bourgeoisie

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 Fourth Generation war. The Establishment would prefer not to notice the Fourth Generation, but Fourth 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 Third and Fourth Generation war, and a retired Marine Corps general who served as moderator. One panelist noted the degree to which we remain stuck in the Second Generation, especially in what is taught in the various armed forces schools and staff colleges. Another took the neo-con 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 Fourth 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 etat 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, resués 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 Fourth 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 Fourth 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.

ON WAR #55

The Withering Away Of The State, Continued

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 [fourth 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 ("Would you like those pirogues with or without accordion music?").

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.

ON WAR #54

The January Seminar
By William S. Lind

One of the purposes of this column is to share with readers the results of the monthly seminar I lead on Fourth Generation warfare. The focus is on the tactical and the practical, ideas that might be of use to American troops who have to face Fourth 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 bullsh--, 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 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, Fourth 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% 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 Fourth 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 neo-con'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 "someone" is the Baath? Perhaps it is time to say, "Any old port in a storm." We seem to be taking a Baath 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 get “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 “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 (in gold perhaps) 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.

ON WAR #53

Fifth Generation Warfare?

By William S. Lind

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 Fifth Generation. Some see the Fifth 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 Fourth 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 Fifth 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, “generation” is shorthand for a dialectically qualitative shift. As the originator of the framework, I adopted the word “generation” because I was speaking to and writing for Marines, and “dialectically qualitative shift” has more syllables than the 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 Second Generation French Army of 1940 could not defeat the Third 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 the Four Generations spreads, you can be

sure that the Merchants of Death will claim that whatever they are trying to sell is an absolute necessity for Fourth (or Fifth) Generation war. It will all be poppycock.

From what I have seen thus far, honest attempts to discover a Fifth Generation suggest that their authors have not fully grasped the vast change embodied in the Fourth 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 Fourth Generation means in full and how it will alter – or, in too many cases, end – our lives.

Attempting to visualize a Fifth 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.

ON WAR #52

The Discarded Image

1/27/04

By William S. Lind

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 Fourth 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. Fourth 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 Fourth 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, "globalism," "democratic capitalism" (as the neo-cons define it), etc. 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 free will, because our virtual realities will condition you to think as we want you to. 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 *medievalists* 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 Fourth 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 Fourth 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 better at protecting families. And I do know that answers to the Fourth 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.

ON WAR #51

The Army's "Transformation"

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By William S. Lind

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 (see 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 daylong 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 Fourth Generation of modern war, or at least bring it from the Second Generation (firepower/attrition warfare) into the Third (maneuver warfare)? The answer is at best 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 Second to the Third Generation, headquarters above the brigade level would become both fewer and smaller. Will that happen?

Another example: a Third 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) continues to spend billions making communications explicit, computerizing anything and everything to the point where commanders drown in "information." When Boyd asked 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 Third Generation army.

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

The key issue is not the Army's force structure, but its culture. Does it remain Second Generation, focused inward on process, prizing obedience above initiative and depending on imposed discipline? Or does it transition to the Third Generation, focusing outward on the enemy, the situation and the result the situation requires, prizing initiative over obedience and depending on self-discipline? A Third Generation culture will eventually fix a Second Generation force structure, but no force structure can help a Second 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 Ranger types, 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 Second Generation armies, and of the states defend.