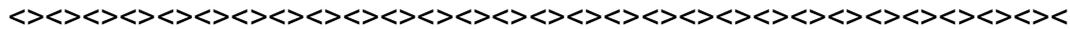


On War by Lind



On War #322: What Is “Political Correctness?”

William S. Lind

18 November 2009

In response to the killing of 13 American soldiers at Ft. Hood by an Islamic U. S. Army major, a number of senior officials have expressed their fear, not of Islam, but of a possible threat to “diversity.” “Diversity” is one of the many false gods of “Political Correctness.” But what exactly is Political Correctness?

Political Correctness is cultural Marxism, Marxism translated from economic into cultural terms. Its history goes back not to the 1960s but to World War I. Before 1914, Marxist theory said that if a major war broke out in Europe, the workers of every country would join together in a revolution to overthrow capitalism and replace it with international socialism. But when war came, that did not happen. What had gone wrong?

Two Marxist theorists, Antonio Gramsci in Italy and Georg Lukacs in Hungary, independently came up with the same answer. They said that Western culture and the Christian religion had so “blinded” the working class to its true (Marxist) class interests that Communism was impossible in the West until traditional culture and Christianity were destroyed. When Lukacs became Deputy Commissar for Culture in the short-lived Bela Kun Bolshevik government in Hungary in 1919, one of his first acts was introducing sex education into the Hungarian schools. He knew that destroying traditional sexual morals would be a major step toward destroying Western culture itself.

Lukacs became a major influence on a Marxist think tank established in 1923 at Frankfurt University in Germany, the Institute for Social Research, commonly known as the Frankfurt School. When Max Horkheimer took over as director of the Frankfurt School in 1930, he set about in earnest to do Lukacs’ bidding by translating Marxism from economic into cultural terms. Other Frankfurt School members devoted to this intellectually difficult task were Theodor Adorno, Eric Fromm, Wilhelm Reich and Herbert Marcuse. Theirs was not the Marxism of the Soviet Union – Moscow considered them heretics – but it was Marxism nonetheless.

The Frankfurt School’s key to success was crossing Marx with Freud. They argued that just as under capitalism everyone lived in a state of economic oppression, so under Western culture people lived under psychological repression. From psychology they also drew the technique of psychological

conditioning. Want to “normalize” homosexuality? Just show television program after television program where the only normal-seeming white male is homosexual.

In 1933 the Frankfurt School moved from Germany to New York City. There, its products included “critical theory,” which demands constant, destructive criticism of every traditional social institution, starting with the family. It also created a series of “studies in prejudice,” culminating in Adorno’s immensely influential book, *The Authoritarian Personality*, which argued that anyone who defends traditional culture is a “fascist” and also mentally ill. That is why anyone who now dares defy “PC” gets sent to “sensitivity training,” which is psychological conditioning designed to produce submission.

In the 1950s and 1960s, Herbert Marcuse translated the abstruse work of the other Frankfurt School thinkers into books college students could understand, such as *Eros and Civilization*, which became the Bible of the New Left in the 1960s. Marcuse injected the Frankfurt School’s cultural Marxism into the baby boom generation, to the point where it is now that generation’s ideology. We know it as “multiculturalism,” “diversity” or just Political Correctness.

That is the dirty little secret of Political Correctness, folks: it is a form of Marxism. If the average American knew that, I suspect Political Correctness would be in serious trouble.

The Ft. Hood killings raise an interesting question: why would Marxists of any variety come to the support of Islam? After all, if the Islamics took over, they would cut Marxists’ throats even before they cut the throats of Christians and Jews. The answer is that cultural Marxism will ally with any force that helps it to achieve its goals, destroying Western culture and Christianity.

Obviously, there is far more to the history of the Frankfurt School and its creation of Political Correctness than I can cover in a short column. This is just a bare-bones outline. For those who want to learn more (and I hope you do), you can find a short book on the subject, which I edited, on the website of the Free Congress Foundation. Free Congress also produced a short video documentary history of the Frankfurt School, which I’m told is available on Youtube (look under Frankfurt School or under my name). The video is especially valuable because we interviewed the principal American expert on the Frankfurt School, Martin Jay, who was then the chairman of the History Department at Berkeley (and obviously no conservative). He spills the beans.

Most people in the U. S. military hate Political Correctness, but they don’t know how to fight it. The way to fight it is to find out what it really is, and make sure all your friends find out too. Political Correctness is cultural Marxism, which is to say intellectual Soylent Green. Here more than in anything else, knowledge is a weapon!

all non-Islamics. Loyalty to Islam must be the believer's primary loyalty. Nightwatch for 5 November writes:

Two years ago, a devout Pakistani cabdriver told Nightwatch that if Allah called him or any devout Muslim to go on jihad and to kill his family and even the riders in his cab, he must do it immediately. He made that statement calmly as a matter of fact, while driving north on US 1.

This was not the statement of an insane man, but of an educated man with a degree in engineering who was making ends meet; a devoted family man and a good cab driver.

There are of course peaceful Islamics; peace be upon them. But peaceful Islamics are also lax Islamics. The ongoing Islamic revival is converting more and more Muslims, especially young men, to its purer version of Islam. That is happening everywhere, including among Islamics in Europe and America. As Islamic Puritanism spreads, violence will spread with it.

At the same time, it would be an error to think of 4GW threats within Western societies as confined to Islam. The U.S. military has already seen soldiers kill other soldiers as part of gang-related activities. Gangs may be as important an alternate primary loyalty as religion. As the state loses its legitimacy, the variety of new primary loyalties that arise to replace it will be limitless.

As this column has often warned, Fourth Generation war is not just something fought "over there." It comes to a theater near you. That includes places like Ft. Hood. Many 4GW entities know that the best way to deal with hostile state security forces, police as well as military, is to take them from within. Last week also saw the killing of five British soldiers in Afghanistan by an Afghan policeman working with their unit. Many police departments along the southern U.S. border are owned by the drug traffickers.

The Establishment will attempt to label the massacre at Ft. Hood an "isolated incident." On the contrary, it is just a foretaste of many more such actions to come. How might states reverse that trend? Three things might help:

1. Stay out of Fourth Generation wars overseas. Intervening in areas of stateless disorder imports their disorder.
2. Be prepared to outlaw violent alternative primary loyalties, including some religions (which in the case of the U. S. would require Constitutional amendments). To those who argue that religious tolerance must be unlimited, I ask, would we tolerate the re-establishment of the Aztec religion, with its demand for ceaseless human sacrifices, on American soil? Of course not.
3. Strengthen the legitimacy of the state, which in Western societies usually means reducing, not augmenting, the power and intrusiveness of the central government. Nothing undermines the legitimacy of a state more effectively than

warfare buzzwords while the culture is lost. This happened more than once even in the Prussian/German army. The best counter to it is lots of free-play training.

But the Swedish Third Generation heritage faces another threat: us. Sweden is working more with NATO and the U.S. than it did in the past, and in each combined operation the Swedes are forced to conform to the Second Generation American model (which is also the NATO model). Gradually, that model is taking over, because it is the standard expected of everyone who works with the Americans. That is true all over the world. The great sucking sound heard by anyone who cooperates with the Americans or NATO comes from the drain that leads ever downwards, back into the Second Generation.

It is easy to counsel, Beware! But what can Third Generation armed services actually do to avoid this Charybdis? My advice to the Swedes and others who face the same danger is to learn how to operate the way the Second Generation demands, but laugh at it while you do it.

There is precedent for this. The Germans knew they could not operate with many of their allies the way they did at home. General Liman von Sanders did not imagine the Ottoman army could employ Auftragstaktik, nor did von Manstein expect it from the Romanians (nor anyone from the Italians). They adapted locally, but among themselves they kept their own superior tradition.

This is made all the easier by the fact that it is mostly staffs that must adopt the Second Generation when operating with NATO or the Americans. Swedish combat units can continue to operate as the Third Generation suggests, both tactically and culturally, while the staffs run interference for them. Staff officers can know both generations, and understand that they are slumming when they have to work with people who cannot do maneuver warfare. Again, some humor helps; just think of the Americans as today's Ottomans. You can work with them without becoming them.

It is of course a pity that the U.S. armed forces are the Typhoid Mary of military models. Like that deadly Irish girl, we present an attractive appearance. Our vast resources and fancy gear overawe other countries and lead them to want to copy us. Regrettably, like Typhoid fever, the Second Generation culture embodied in the U.S. military is a fatal disease. It leaves its victims helpless against Third or Fourth Generation opponents.

As Americans, our seemingly hopeless task remains dragging the U.S. military out of the Second Generation mire it finds so comfortable. Swedes and others who have moved beyond us have the easier job of avoiding retrogression. Just being aware of the danger does much to avoid it. What good sailor, knowing the location of a whirlpool, sails into it? From what I saw, the Royal Swedish Navy has very good sailors.

All of this has made it very difficult for authorities to go to Michoacan to arrest members of La Familia.

In effect, it appears La Familia has replaced the Mexican state in Michoacan. The gang provides an export-based economy where locals actually receive the profits. It tries to protect the local population from the negative environmental effects of its industry, i.e., addiction. It offers a range of social services.

Importantly, it deploys one of the most powerful claims to legitimacy, religion. The fact that the Mexican state is rigidly secular makes the Christian identity La Familia seeks all the more effective. Very few peasants are agnostics.

La Familia's brutal violence may work against or for its quest for legitimacy. If it uses violence carelessly so that the local population must fear being random victims, it will undermine its own legitimacy and push people back toward the state as a source of order. However, if its violence is carefully targeted so as to promote local order and enforce what may be perceived as justice, then even brutality may work in its favor.

Other gangs will undoubtedly figure out what La Familia seems to have grasped, namely that money spent to benefit the surrounding population can buy the best kind of protection, protection by the local people. What has always been true for guerrillas fighting for political goals is true for 4GW entities as well: once the government has to face a population united in support of its enemies, it has already lost.

This model – an illegal but widely profitable local economy + social services + religion – will, I think, spread widely. To succeed, it needs a weak state, one that takes from the local population but provides little or nothing in return. That kind of state is already common in much of the world and will become more so.

The Washington Times ran a header above this story that said "Second Front." In fact, gangs such as La Familia are the first front. What is coming over our southern border is far more important to America's future security than any of our wars in sandboxes half a world away. The story quotes Attorney General Eric Holder as saying, "Indeed, while this cartel may operate from Mexico, the toxic reach of its operations extends to nearly every state within our own country."

Real national security is security in our homes, neighborhoods and cities. Unfortunately, the Washington Establishment continues to define "national security" as attaining world dominion. So long as it does so, it will continue to prop open the door for La Familia and other gangs, both imported and home-grown, which understand that what is real is local.

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Marine Corps still does and send in landing waves that take a beachhead, then stop and build up combat power for a further advance – the Somme from the sea – the Germans landed multiple thrusts which immediately advanced as far and as fast as they could, without regard for open flanks. Speed was their main weapon, speed made possible because part of the force was equipped with bicycles.

Operation Albion was genuine Operational Maneuver from the Sea, a term U. S. Marines use but seldom understand. While the American model for amphibious operations remains Second Generation, Albion, carried out almost 100 years ago, was Third Generation.

Second, Operation Albion illustrates a Third Generation military's ability to adapt to new situations quickly. The Imperial German Army and Navy put Albion together in a few weeks. They did so despite having no amphibious doctrine, no amphibious experience and no amphibious Marine Corps (Imperial German Marines were primarily colonial troops). How did they do it? Through the lateral communication and strong spirit of cooperation that characterize Third Generation forces.

That lesson is a timely one. In Iraq, the U.S. military took years to adapt to fighting an insurgency. Second Generation forces adapt to new situations slowly because most communication is hierarchical and cooperation is nullified by centrally-controlled synchronization. As John Boyd often said, you synchronize watches, not people.

Our two-day staff ride of Albion, on Oesel and Moon islands, benefitted greatly from having Dr. Bruce Gudmundsson along. The author of *Stormtroop Tactics*, the best book on the development of Third Generation tactics in the German Army in World War I, Bruce is also a specialist in the case study method of instruction. The Baltic Defence College students appeared new to the case study method, but like all students, they seemed to find it preferable to the usual classroom lectures. With one exception, they seemed to “get it.”

That exception was operational art. Regrettably, they had been taught a mechanical method for determining an operational center of gravity. Like all such methods, it was misleading. No art can be done by set method; the result is paint-by-numbers art, which is to say junk. However, once students have been taught a method, they are loath to give it up. They have “checked the box,” and they do not want to revisit the matter, especially when the (valid) alternative is a way of thinking that cannot be reduced to a formula.

Again, Operation Albion proved the perfect case study. Why? Because for both the Germans and the Russians, the operational center of gravity was not in the area of operations. It lay instead to the north and east, in the Gulf of Finland and the approaches to Kronstadt and Petrograd. The German success in Operation

wars are easy to win tactically and lose strategically. That is, in fact, their normal course.

But what about the question the Post and Congress have raised: are the new restrictions on fire support causing more American casualties in Afghanistan? In a word, yes. But that does not have to be the case.

The problem is that virtually all American infantry are trained in Second Generation tactics. The Second Generation reduces all tactics to one tactic: bump into the enemy and call for fire. The French, who invented the Second Generation, summarize it as, "Firepower conquers, the infantry occupies." The supporting firepower, originally artillery, now most often airstrikes, must be massive. If it is not – as is now the case in Afghanistan, under General McChrystal's directive – the infantry is in trouble. Everything it has been taught depends on fire support it no longer has. Inevitably, its casualties will rise, and it will often lose engagements.

Fortunately, the answer to this problem has been known for a long time – several centuries, in fact. It is true light infantry or Jaeger tactics. True light infantry has a broad and varied tactical repertoire. It depends only on its own (modest) firepower. Jaeger tactics were an influence on the development of Third Generation tactics, but Jaeger tactics remain a more sophisticated version of those (infiltration) tactics. They are ideally suited to Fourth Generation wars, especially in mountain country like Afghanistan's.

If we are to reduce American casualties in the Afghan war while sustaining General McChrystal's absolutely necessary restrictions on supporting arms, we need a crash program to teach U. S. Army and Marine Corps infantry Jaeger tactics. The Marine Corps, which as usual is somewhat ahead of the game, has begun such a program, called "Combat Hunter" (Jaeger is the German word for hunter).

This is not a case where we need to invent anything. The literature on true light infantry tactics is extensive. Works on 18th century light infantry remain instructive; I would recommend Johan Ewald's diary of the American Revolution (Ewald was a Hessian Jaeger company commander) and J.F.C. Fuller's British Light Infantry in the 18th Century. More recent works of value include the light infantry field manuals published by the K.u.K. Marine Corps (available here on d.n.i. and on the Marine Corps' Expeditionary Warfare School website); Dr. Steven Canby's superb Modern Light Infantry and New Technology (1983 – done under DOD contract); and John Poole's books. Some of our NATO allies also have Jaeger units from which we could learn.

About twenty years ago, a commander of the Army Infantry School at Ft. Benning, General Burba, attempted to shift the school to teaching light infantry instead of Second Generation tactics. He formed a Light Infantry Task Force,

The report's message can be summarized in one sentence: we need to start doing classic counterinsurgency, and to do so, we need more "resources," i.e. troops. In a narrow, technical sense, that statement is valid. Classic counterinsurgency doctrine says we need hundreds of thousands more troops in Afghanistan.

Past that syllogism, the report's validity becomes questionable. Defects begin with the study's failure to address Fourth Generation war's first and most important question: Is there a state in Afghanistan? At times, the report appears to assume a state; elsewhere, it speaks of the Afghan state's weaknesses. It never addresses the main fact, namely that at present there is no state, and under the current Afghan government there is no prospect of creating one.

The failure to acknowledge the absence of a state leads the rest of the report through the looking glass. For example, it puts great emphasis on expanding the Afghan National Security Forces (army and police). But absent a state, there are no state armed forces. The ANSF are militiamen who take a salary paid, through intermediaries, by foreign governments. How many Pashtun do you find in the ANSF?

Similarly, the report laments that Afghanistan's prisons have become recruiting centers for the Taliban. It calls for getting the U.S. out of the prison business and turning it all over to the Afghan government. But who will then run those "state" prisons? The Taliban, of course, just as they do now.

In a curious passage, the report says, on page 2-20,

The greater resources (ISAF requires) will not be sufficient to achieve success, but will enable implementation of the new strategy. Conversely, inadequate resources will likely result in failure. However, without a new strategy, the mission should not be resourced.

Here we encounter the report's most dangerous failing. It confuses the strategic and the operational levels of war. In fact, the report does not offer a new strategy, but a new operational-level plan. How the war is fought, i.e. by following classic counter-insurgency doctrine, is operational, not strategic.

America must find a new strategy, since the current strategy depends on an Afghan state that does not exist. But the report offers no new strategy. The passage on page 2-20 thus ends up saying, "If you don't give us more troops, we will fail. But you shouldn't give us more troops unless we adopt a new strategy, which we don't have. And even if you do give us the troops we want for the new strategy we haven't got, they will not be enough to achieve success." This reveals utter intellectual confusion.

The proper response of the White House, the Pentagon, and Congress to General McChrystal's report is, "Back to the drawing board, fellas."

How might Fourth Generation theory help us re-write the report? At the operational level, most of what it recommends under the rubric of counterinsurgency is sound. Drawing on the report's concept of "proper resourcing" that allows for "appropriate and acceptable risk," we would concentrate our counterinsurgency efforts in a few provinces, such as Helmand, to show the Taliban we can fight it to a stalemate. We would endeavor to do so while gradually drawing troop levels down, not sending in more troops. The goal of these actions on the operational level would be to buy time both in Afghanistan and on the home front.

We would use that time to implement a genuine new strategy. It would proceed from these facts:

- * There is no state in Afghanistan, and none can be created by or for the current Afghan government.
- * Our strategic goal, as General McChrystal's report states in its first paragraph, is to prevent al Qaeda's return to Afghanistan.
- * There is currently no evidence of al Qaeda presence in Afghanistan. One of the best open sources of intelligence, Nightwatch, recently stated this directly, and General McChrystal's report hints at it.

Our strategic goal would be to see the creation of a state in Afghanistan that can and will prevent al Qaeda's return. Who can do that? The Taliban. We would use the time bought by counterinsurgency operations to negotiate with the Taliban, the Haqqani Network, the Hezb-e Islami Gulbuddin and other Afghan leaders, including some in the current Afghan government, toward a power-sharing arrangement. A government that includes the Taliban can create a state.

The risk is the Taliban's willingness to keep al Qaeda out. Why should Mullah Omar agree to that? Because al Qaeda no longer needs Afghan bases. It has far more useful ones in Pakistan. That is why it is not in Afghanistan now.

If President Obama and Congress accept General McChrystal's report and adopt a new operational plan in support of the current strategy, building an Afghan state around the regime now in Kabul, they will guarantee an American defeat. Sending more American troops to Afghanistan will only magnify the defeat. Ironically, what Washington needs to do is follow General McChrystal's own recommendation and refuse more resources without a new strategy.

Let's hope the politicians realize this is their last exit before a bottomless quagmire.

in support of European ground forces (German in this case), approvals must be obtained from many levels.

In fact, just one requirement for approval would almost certainly have stopped any genuine NATO airstrike. Everyone in the command chain must know that whenever an accident to a fuel tanker or a pipeline makes free fuel available in a third or Fourth World country, the locals come out with pots and pans and jars to scavenge whatever they can. For most of them, scavenged fuel is the only alternate to no fuel. How often do we read about a leaking pipeline in West Africa killing hundreds of people when it explodes, because it was surrounded by people scavenging fuel?

It is thus impossible that NATO could have launched the strike that destroyed the two fuel tankers, killing dozens of scavenging Afghan civilians in the process. This is the tiny flaw that reveals the Taliban pseudo-op.

The question bedeviling senior NATO and American commanders in Afghanistan is how to stop the Taliban's air force before it wins the war for Mullah Omar. My sources inform me that serious consideration is being given to assigning U.S. or other NATO fighter CAP to all Taliban operations, with orders to shoot down any aircraft launching strikes that would hit Afghan civilians. Marine Air is reportedly comfortable with the idea, but the U.S. Air Force is resisting strongly for fear of fratricide.

Should that option not prove viable, some senior American officials think it may be necessary simply to end all U.S. and NATO air strike missions in Afghanistan. That would shut down the Taliban's air force as well, because pseudo-ops would no longer be possible. Any air strikes launched by Taliban aircraft would be attributed to their real source.

Meanwhile, the example set by the Taliban's pseudo-ops may be spreading. Some reports suggest the Pakistani Taliban (a separate organization) is now employing its own Predators, carrying out "hits" in internal feuds that get blamed on the Americans. The current leadership thus wins a double victory.

Clearly, the aviation pseudo-op genie is now out of the bottle. It will be interesting to see how the American and NATO leadership in Afghanistan try to tempt it back inside.

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Chairman, his focus should be grand strategy. For future American success in a Fourth Generation world, it is at that level that his new understanding of “strategic communications” needs to be applied.

What it means is that America should adopt a defensive rather than an offensive grand strategy. At present, American grand strategy is offensive, or even aggressive. In effect, America says to the rest of the world, “You are going to abandon your traditional culture and embrace our new, “liberated” culture – Feminism, consumerism, hedonism, all labeled “democracy” – whether you want to or not. If we cannot make you do so with ‘soft power,’ then you will face our ‘hard power,’ our bombs, cruise missiles and Predators.” From the jungles of the Amazon to the Hindu Kush, everyone is to become a subject of Brave New World.

As the conservative political philosopher Russell Kirk wrote, the surest way to make someone your enemy is to tell him you are going to remake him in your image for his own good. So long as that is America’s grand strategy, as it now seems to be, we are doomed to defeat at the grand strategic level. That is true no matter how our troops execute a fatally flawed policy.

The policy we need instead, one that communicates a very different message, is a defensive grand strategy. The message a defensive grand strategy sends is simple: If you leave us alone, we will leave you alone. We will not seek to “remake” you in any image. How you live is your business, and yours only.

In the November 22, 2004 issue of *The American Conservative*, I laid out in some detail what a defensive grand strategy for America might look like in a Fourth Generation world. It is impossible to summarize that lengthy piece in a column.

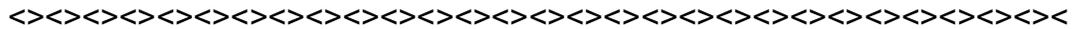
My point here is simply that this is the central question – offensive or defensive grand strategy? – a JCS Chairman who “gets it” should focus on. His concern should be policy, not execution. If Admiral Mullen thinks he should now duplicate what General McChrystal is doing, he will effectively leave the office of JCS Chairman vacant.

The Times quoted Admiral Mullen as saying, “That’s the essence of good communication: having the right intent up front and letting our actions speak for themselves.” The question you have raised for yourself, Admiral, is what intent is right at the level of grand strategy? The world awaits an answer.

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On War # 313: War of Exhaustion or War of Maneuver?

William S. Lind
25 August 2009

The war in Afghanistan appears to have settled into the category Delbrueck called “wars of exhaustion.” If it remains there, the U.S. cannot win. The American people will become exhausted long before the Pashtun do.

In this respect America’s situation is similar to that Germany faced in World War I. Germany knew she could not win a war of exhaustion. She therefore sought to turn it into a war of maneuver, successfully on the eastern front and almost successfully in the west in the spring of 1918 and also at sea with the U-boat campaign. The ultimate failure of the latter two efforts, an operational failure on land and, worse, a grand strategic failure at sea, meant the war of exhaustion continued. Exhaustion finally caused the home front to collapse in November, 1918.

Past is probably prologue for the U.S. in Afghanistan unless it can succeed where Germany failed. The U.S. must turn a war of exhaustion into a war of maneuver.

At first sight, such a prescription appears pointless. The granular nature of a Fourth Generation battlefield, a granularity that encompasses not only the military but also the political and moral aspects of the conflict, would appear to render any military maneuvers above the tactical level irrelevant. Great operational encirclements like those in which the German Army specialized become swords cutting through the air.

The fact that we cannot turn the Afghan war into a war of maneuver on the military level need not, however, be the end of the matter. Instead, it poses a new question: how might we turn this war of exhaustion into a war of maneuver on the political or moral levels? If we can succeed in doing either, or better both, we may still escape the certainty of defeat a continued war of exhaustion promises.

A short column cannot answer this new question; my purpose here is mainly to pose it. If, as I think it ought, it becomes the intellectual Schwerpunkt of the American high command, then I will have done my duty for one week, anyway.

But to explore a bit further, the very granularity of a Fourth Generation conflict that largely precludes maneuver on the military level may open the door to it on

other levels. To see what opportunities may exist for maneuver on the political and moral levels, I think we must start by ceasing to define the enemy as “the Taliban.” That definition, while convenient for labeling Afghans we have killed or captured, may lead us astray by causing us to think of our opponents as a single, centrally-controlled entity. In a Fourth Generation conflict, the real picture is far more complex. Many Afghans who are fighting us are not doing so because of orders from Mullah Omar.

To draw a military analogy, this is not a war of continuous fronts. There are many gaps on the political and moral levels, gaps through which we may be able to maneuver if we can first identify them. Doing so may require a recasting of the questions the American leadership presents to its intelligence services.

Possibly of equal importance is a reconceptualization of our own “front.” We now appear to define that “front” on both the political and moral levels as the Afghan government. This is a fiction politically because there is a government but no state. Morally it is disastrous because the Afghan government is awash in corruption. The recent election will not affect either reality, regardless of its outcome. We seem unable to grasp the fact that in Afghanistan as in much of the world, election outcomes do not confer legitimacy.

The American senior leadership thus needs to undertake a serious and competent analysis of political and moral surfaces and gaps both in our opponent’s positions and in our own. Neither can be accomplished with blinders on. Both must be brutally honest.

It is just possible that such an analysis might offer a roadmap for political and moral maneuver, which is what we require if we are to escape the war of exhaustion. There is, of course, no guarantee; the complexity of a Fourth Generation environment may mean the task is beyond our ability. We may also discover that we can identify some surfaces and gaps yet lack the capability to exploit the gaps. This occurs not infrequently in purely military wars of maneuver.

I think nonetheless that this may be the most promising way forward. If it fails to identify political and moral gaps we can exploit with some hope of success, then logically it leads to the conclusion that we cannot escape a war of exhaustion and its inevitable outcome, our defeat. That too is useful, in that it should lead us to cut our losses and withdraw as soon as possible.

Is the American senior leadership, military and political, capable of undertaking an analysis of the Afghan war along these lines? I do not know. But I suspect that offering such a framework for analysis may be the most military theory can do for our forces now fighting a hopeless war of exhaustion.

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the Iraqis settle their own differences, by fighting. Our presence may delay that conflict, but cannot prevent it.

So, Mr. Obama, what's the real agenda? Under Bush, we knew: an Iraq that had been reduced to an American client state was to provide us with military bases from which we could dominate the region and an unlimited supply of oil. Is the Bush administration's agenda now the Obama administration's agenda? If not, what is? Exactly why are 130,000 U.S. troops hanging out in a bad part of town with a "kick me" sign taped to their backs? Inertia? Indecision? What?

That's one second-order question. Another one is, why is no one in Congress asking the first question? Iraq seems to have vanished off Washington's radar screen, despite the fact that so long as we're there, we are smoking in the powder magazine.

It seems that whatever the Obama administration's agenda in Iraq is, it has gathered virtually unanimous support in Congress. Having worked on the Hill, I know some institutional reasons for that. Congress focuses on whatever the voters are focused on, which at the moment means the economy. But even there, Iraq raises one of its hydra heads. The American occupation of Iraq continues to burn through money at the cyclic rate. So why aren't the Blue Dog Democrats and other deficit hawks howling about our continued stay? All we hear is the silence of the sheep.

There are two possible explanations for the Obama administration's remarkable failure to use its mandate to get out of Iraq while we still can. The first suggests some deep, dark plot, involving money, oil, the SMEC and the SMEC's Washington's agents in the White House. During the Bush administration, this explanation was plausible. It is still possible, but I think less likely true.

The more likely truth is that the Obama administration is a mile wide and an inch deep. The public is beginning to sense this, as President Obama's falling approval ratings show. But within the Establishment, which includes Congress and most of the press, America's first black President remains immune to criticism because he is America's first black President. Were the current President, say, a Georgia cracker, the Establishment would already have him in the stocks, subject to a barrage of rotten fruit.

But even if President Obama were himself a man of depth and wisdom, an administration is much more than one man. Most of the Obama administration's leading figures are merely second and third-stringers from the Clinton administration, resurrected as zombies (starting with Hillary herself). I don't know of a single strategist among the lot. Most are playing at government, just as little girls play house.

Equally important to realize is that we aren't making the GOI and the ISF better in any significant ways with our current approach. Remaining in Iraq through the end of December 2011 will yield little in the way of improving the abilities of the ISF or the functioning of the GOI. Furthermore, in light of the GOI's current interpretation of the limitations imposed by the 30 June milestones of the 2008 Security Agreement, the security of US forces are at risk. Iraq is not a country with a history of treating even its welcomed guests well. This is not to say we can be defeated, only that the danger of a violent incident that will rupture the current partnership has greatly increased since 30 June. Such a rupture would force an unplanned early departure that would harm our long term interests in Iraq and potentially unraveling the great good that has been done since 2003. The use of the military instrument of national power in its current form has accomplished all that can be expected. In the next section I will present and admittedly one sided view of the evidence in support of this view. This information is drawn solely from the MND-B area of operations in Baghdad Province. My reading of reports from the other provinces suggests the same situation exists there.

The general lack of progress in essential services and good governance is now so broad that it ought to be clear that we no longer are moving the Iraqis "forward." Below is an outline of the information on which I base this assessment:

1. The ineffectiveness and corruption of GOI Ministries is the stuff of legend.
2. The anti-corruption drive is little more than a campaign tool for Maliki
3. The GOI is failing to take rational steps to improve its electrical infrastructure and to improve their oil exploration, production and exports.
4. There is no progress towards resolving the Kirkuk situation.
5. Sunni Reconciliation is at best at a standstill and probably going backwards.
6. Sons of Iraq (SOI) or Sahwa transition to ISF and GOI civil service is not happening, and SOI monthly paydays continue to fall further behind.
7. The Kurdish situation continues to fester.
8. Political violence and intimidation is rampant in the civilian community as well as military and legal institutions.
9. The Vice President received a rather cool reception this past weekend and was publicly told that the internal affairs of Iraq are none of the US's business.

The rate of improvement of the ISF is far slower than it should be given the amount of effort and resources being provided by the US. The US has made tremendous progress in building the ISF. Our initial efforts in 2003 to mid-2004

were only marginally successful. From 2004 to 2006 the US built the ISF into a fighting force. Since the start of the surge in 2007 we have again expanded and improved the ISF. They are now at the point where they have defeated the organized insurgency against the GOI and are marginally self-sustaining. This is a remarkable tale for which many can be justifiably proud. We have reached the point of diminishing returns, however, and need to find a new set of tools. The massive partnering efforts of US combat forces with ISF isn't yielding benefits commensurate with the effort and is now generating its own opposition. Again, some touch points for this assessment are:

1. If there ever was a window where the seeds of a professional military culture could have been implanted, it is now long past. US combat forces will not be here long enough or with sufficient influence to change it.

2. The military culture of the Baathist-Soviet model under Saddam Hussein remains entrenched and will not change. The senior leadership of the ISF is incapable of change in the current environment.

a) Corruption among officers is widespread

b) Neglect and mistreatment of enlisted men is the norm

c) The unwillingness to accept a role for the NCO corps continues

d) Cronyism and nepotism are rampant in the assignment and promotion system

e) Laziness is endemic

f) Extreme centralization of C2 is the norm

g) Lack of initiative is legion

h) Unwillingness to change, do anything new blocks progress

i) Near total ineffectiveness of the Iraq Army and National Police institutional organizations and systems prevents the ISF from becoming self-sustaining

j) For every positive story about a good ISF junior officer with initiative, or an ISF commander who conducts a rehearsal or an after action review or some individual MOS training event, there are ten examples of the most basic lack of military understanding despite the massive partnership efforts by our combat forces and advisory efforts by MiTT and NPTT teams.

3. For all the fawning praise we bestow on the Baghdad Operations Command (BOC) and Ministry of Defense (MoD) leadership for their effectiveness since the

start of the surge, they are flawed in serious ways. Below are some salient examples:

- a) They are unable to plan ahead, unable to secure the PM's approval for their actions
- b) They are unable to stand up to Shiite political parties
- c) They were and are unable to conduct an public relations effort in support of the SA and now they are afraid of the ignorant masses as a result
- d) They unable to instill discipline among their officers and units for the most basic military standards
- e) They are unable to stop the nepotism and cronyism
- f) They are unable to take basic steps to manage the force development process
- g) They are unable to stick to their deals with US leaders

It is clear that the 30 Jun milestone does not represent one small step in a long series of gradual steps on the path the US withdrawal, but as Maliki has termed it, a "great victory" over the Americans and fundamental change in our relationship. The recent impact of this mentality on military operations is evident:

1. Iraqi Ground Forces Command (IGFC) unilateral restrictions on US forces that violate the most basic aspects of the SA
2. BOC unilateral restrictions that violate the most basic aspects of the SA
3. International Zone incidents in the last week where ISF forces have resorted to shows of force to get their way at Entry Control Points (ECP) including the forcible takeover of ECP 1 on 4 July
4. Sudden coolness to advisors and CDRs, lack of invitations to meetings,
5. Widespread partnership problems reported in other areas such as ISF confronting US forces at TCPs in the city of Baghdad and other major cities in Iraq.
6. ISF units are far less likely to want to conduct combined combat operations with US forces, to go after targets the US considers high value, etc.
7. The Iraqi legal system in the Rusafa side of Baghdad has demonstrated a recent willingness to release individuals originally detained by the US for attacks on the US.

Yet despite all their grievous shortcomings noted above, ISF military capability is sufficient to handle the current level of threats from Sunni and Shiite violent groups. Our combat forces' presence here on the streets and in the rural areas adds only marginally to their capability while exposing us to attacks to which we cannot effectively respond.

The GOI and the ISF will not be toppled by the violence as they might have been between 2006 and 2008. Though two weeks does not make a trend, the near cessation of attacks since 30 June speaks volumes about how easily Shiite violence can be controlled and speaks to the utter weakness of AQI. The extent of AQ influence in Iraq is so limited as to be insignificant, only when they get lucky with a mass casualty attack are they relevant. Shiite groups are working with the PM and his political allies, or plotting to work against him in the upcoming elections. We are merely convenient targets for delivering a message against Maliki by certain groups, and perhaps by Maliki when he wants us to be targeted. Extremist violence from all groups is directed towards affecting their political standing within the existing power structures of Iraq. There is no longer any coherent insurgency or serious threat to the stability of the GOI posed by violent groups.

Our combat operations are currently the victim of circular logic. We conduct operations to kill or capture violent extremists of all types to protect the Iraqi people and support the GOI. The violent extremists attack us because we are still here conducting military operations. Furthermore, their attacks on us are no longer an organized campaign to defeat our will to stay; the attacks which kill and maim US combat troops are signals or messages sent by various groups as part of the political struggle for power in Iraq. The exception to this is AQI which continues its globalist terror campaign. Our operations are in support of an Iraqi government that no longer relishes our help while at the same time our operations generate the extremist opposition to us as various groups jockey for power in post-occupation Iraq.

The GOI and ISF will continue to squeeze the US for all the "goodies" that we can provide between now and December 2011, while eliminating our role in providing security and resisting our efforts to change the institutional problems prevent the ISF from getting better. They will tolerate us as long as they can suckle at Uncle Sam's bounteous mammary glands. Meanwhile the level of resistance to US freedom of movement and operations will grow. The potential for Iraqi on US violence is high now and will grow by the day. Resentment on both sides will build and reinforce itself until a violent incident breaks out into the open. If that were to happen the violence will remain tactically isolated, but it will wreck our strategic relationships and force our withdrawal under very unfavorable circumstances.

For a long time the preferred US approach has been to “work it at the lowest level of partnership” as a means to stay out of the political fray and with the hope that good work at the tactical level will compensate for and slowly improve the strategic picture. From platoon to brigade, US Soldiers and Marines continue to work incredibly hard and in almost all cases they achieve positive results. This approach has achieved impressive results in the past, but today it is failing. The strategic dysfunctions of the GOI and ISF have now reached down to the tactical level degrading good work there and sundering hitherto strong partnerships. As one astute political observer has stated “We have lost all strategic influence with the GOI and trying to influence events and people from the tactical/operational level is courting disaster, wasting lives, and merely postponing the inevitable.”

The reality of Iraq in July 2009 has rendered the assumptions underlying the 2008 Security Agreement (SA) overcome by events — mostly good events actually. The SA outlines a series of gradual steps towards military withdrawal, analogous to a father teaching his kid to ride a bike without training wheels. If the GOI at the time the SA was signed thought it needed a long, gradual period of weaning. But the GOI now has left the nest (while continuing to breast feed as noted above). The strategic and tactical realities have changed far quicker than the provisions and timeline of the SA can accommodate. We now have an Iraqi government that has gained its balance and thinks it knows how to ride the bike in the race. And in fact they probably do know how to ride, at least well enough for the road they are on against their current competitors. Our hand on the back of the seat is holding them back and causing resentment. We need to let go before we both tumble to the ground.

Therefore, we should declare our intentions to withdraw all US military forces from Iraq by August 2010. This would not be a strategic paradigm shift, but an acceleration of existing US plans by some 15 months. We should end our combat operations now, save those for our own force protection, narrowly defined, as we withdraw. We should revise the force flow into Iraq accordingly. The emphasis should shift towards advising only and advising the ISF to prepare for our withdrawal. Advisors should probably be limited to Iraqi division level or higher. Our train and equip functions should begin the transition to Foreign Military Sales and related training programs. During the withdrawal period the USG and GOI should develop a new strategic framework agreement that would include some lasting military presence at 1-3 large training bases, airbases, or key headquarters locations. But it should not include the presence of any combat forces save those for force protection needs or the occasional exercise. These changes would not only align our actions with the reality of Iraq in 2009, it will remove the causes of increasing friction and reduce the cost of OIF in blood and treasure. Finally, it will set the conditions for a new relationship between the US and Iraq without the complications of the residual effects of the US invasion and occupation.

A better approach might be to ask questions rather than provide answers...

The fundamental message to the people of Iraq and Afghanistan and other countries in conflict needs to be, as the U.S. message was in El Salvador twenty years ago, "This is your country; the kind of country it's going to be is up to you – not to the United States or any foreign country. What kind of country do you want it to be? Are you willing to help restore order, and law, and civility – or are you going to sit quietly while those who seek to destroy what you have do their work?"

A strong chapter in the Strategic section is Colonel William M. Darley USA's "Clausewitz's Theory of War and Information Operations." Darley argues that "Contrary to entrenched perceptions, IO is not merely a family of related skill sets or capabilities that in all cases augment "kinetic operation." Collectively, they are properly understood as a specific purpose and emphasis within an overall plan of action that under some circumstances might be the main effort." I would add that in 4GW, they are usually the main effort.

Darley offers a Clausewitzian definition of IO, far broader than the current American technical definition. It reflects Clausewitz's discussion of the power of "moral" factors in what is essentially a political contest. His chapter concludes with a quotation from Clausewitz that strikes to the heart of ongoing American failures in 4GW:

Political considerations do not determine the posting of guards or the employment of patrols. But they are the more influential in the planning of war, of the campaign, and often even of the battle ... The only question, therefore, is whether, when war is being planned the political point of view should give way to the purely military ... or should the political point of view remain dominant and the military (military force and violence) be subordinated to it?

The book's Operational segment includes a devastating critique of the U.S. military's whole intelligence system, "Clouding the Issue: Intelligence Collection, Analysis, and Dissemination during Operation Iraqi Freedom," by Army Lt. Col. George J. Stroumpos. Too lengthy to summarize here, it proceeds from the statement that

Our intelligence apparatus has been our Achilles' heel... the Coalition intelligence apparatus is a hodgepodge pick-up team, conflicting in its organization and lost in a sea of data. This, coupled with the sheer volume and complexity of the environment, is the primary problem...is poor information management and the resulting syntheses that follow from poor technique.

Ideas as Weapons' Tactical segment, which junior-level practitioners will find of particular value, includes a superb chapter, "Tactical Information Operations in West Rashid: An Iraqi National Police Battalion and Its Assigned U.S. Transition

Afghanistan. "And that is that al-Qa'ida and its affiliates cannot set up safe havens from which to attack Americans."

Well. If his words were reported accurately and he really means them, President Obama may have built the golden bridge we need to get out. That definition of success may be attainable.

But here's the rub. Adoption of a realistic strategic goal in Afghanistan means reversing a decision the administration reportedly made last March, at Hillary's insistence. Hillary demanded, and reportedly got, a commitment to the opium dream of a "secular, democratic, peaceful" Afghanistan.

Has President Obama already figured out he was had by the Clintons? Will he dare assert his authority over Hillary? How long will he stick to his guns when the Clintons ramp up a guerilla campaign against him among Democratic activists?

As I said in my last column, problems in court politics are often more difficult than problems on the battlefield. Dumping the Clinton's dreamy-eyed idealism in foreign policy in favor of realistic strategic objectives promises a battle royal at court. Of course, Obama may have just been musing aloud, in which case Hillary will soon set the record straight. But if the President really meant what he said and sticks to it, it would represent a major step forward.

Unfortunately, the July 4 Plain Dealer reported another step back. In a story on the Marine Corps' "big push" in Helmand province, the paper said that

The stiffest resistance occurred in the district of Garmser, where Taliban fighters holed up in a walled housing compound engaged in an eight-hour gunbattle with troops from the 2nd Battalion of the 8th Marine Regiment. The Marines eventually requested a Harrier fighter jet to drop a 500-pound bomb on the compound, which was believed to have killed all fighters inside.

This time, the problem was not Americans failing to understand that in 4GW, airstrikes work to our defeat. The PD continued,

The commanders directing the huge Marine security operation here had said they hoped not to rely on airstrikes...Officers here noted with pride that they had not used bombs or artillery in the first 24 hours of the mission.

But they were left with little choice after the insurgents refused to surrender.

It is hard to question the details of a tactical situation from half a world away, based on a press report. There may be reasons I cannot see from here why the airstrike was unavoidable. But from what was reported, it seems to have resulted from an all-too-frequent problem with American infantry, a narrow tactical repertoire that offers few options.

William S. Lind
29 June 2009

The advent of General Stanley McChrystal as America's overall commander in Afghanistan appears to be good news. He seems to understand that in this kind of war, the rule must be, "First, do no harm." Associated Press recently reported him as saying that his measure of effectiveness will be "the number of Afghans shielded from violence, not the number of militants killed." Unusually, he seems to include American and NATO violence in his calculation, since he has ordered a drastic cutback in airstrikes. Heavy American reliance on airstrikes has probably done more than anything else to win the war for the Taliban.

But history is littered with the failures of promising new generals; "Fighting Joe" Hooker somehow comes to mind. If General McChrystal is to represent any real hope that the U.S. might get out of Afghanistan with some tailfeathers intact, he must confront a host of challenges. Let's look at just four:

- * The Second Generation American armed forces must learn how to make war by means other than putting firepower on targets. However, that is all they know how to do. A friend who recently graduated from the U.S. Army's Command & Staff College at Ft. Leavenworth told me that virtually the whole course is still about putting fire on targets. Nightwatch for May 17 reported that "An Indian criticism of the US effort in Afghanistan and Pakistan is that it does not lack will, it lacks skill." That criticism is valid, and it traces directly to military education and training that remains stuck in the Second Generation.

- * The U.S. touts its "new" counter-insurgency doctrine, but there is nothing new about it. It merely represents a recovery of knowledge thrown away after the Vietnam war. However, Fourth Generation conflicts are different from the Vietnam war. While some counter-insurgency techniques carry over, the multiplicity of players and objectives in 4GW face counter-insurgents with an entirely different context. The first draft of a counter-insurgency field manual written for 4GW, a product of the Fourth Generation seminar, will become available this summer on this web site.

- * No doctrine, including the above manual, offers a magic potion for winning Fourth Generation wars. As the basic 4GW field manual FMFM-1A warns, even if an invader does everything right, he will still probably lose. Kelly Vlahos cautions in an important piece in the August issue of *The American Conservative*, "One-Sided COIN," that the neo-libs are pushing counter-insurgency as patent medicine. Just get the dosage right and we can "do" counter-insurgency successfully anywhere. She quotes retired Lt. Col. John Nagl as saying, "The soldiers who will win these wars require an ability not just to dominate land operations, but to change entire societies." That is hubristic nonsense.

- * The Obama administration has decided to continue its predecessor's Quixotic commitment to unattainable strategic objectives, i.e., changing entire societies. Afghanistan is to be made into a liberal, democratic, secular country

the Soviet Union, the Communist Party was careful to seem to take elections with the utmost seriousness. It knew the pretence was important for its legitimacy.

In contrast, the Iranian regime in effect laughed as it rigged its election's outcome, saying to the Iranian people and the world, "Rig the elections? Of course we rigged the elections. What are you going to do about it, sucker?" The fact that the outcome was announced within three hours of the polls closing suggests they did not count the votes at all. The Interior Ministry was just told what numbers to put down on the tally sheets.

Now it has blown up in the regime's face, in the worst kind of crisis any government can face, a crisis of legitimacy. The Iranian opposition is able to say, "You did not play by the rules you wrote." That is a powerful rallying cry anywhere in the world.

The Iranian people have rallied, by the millions, to the opposition. Iran is in the midst of the greatest upheaval since the revolution that overthrew the Shah.

Like governments everywhere, Khamenei seems unable to grasp that he faces a crisis not merely of leadership but of legitimacy. Had he grasped that essential fact, he would have professed to be "shocked, shocked" by the electoral fraud, dumped Ahmadinejad and devoted himself to showing Iran's political system works.

Instead, he has decided to keep himself and Ahmadinejad in power by force. Today's Washington Post quotes the opposition's leader, Mir Hossein Mousavi, as saying, "Shooting at the people, militarizing the city, scaring the people, provoking them, and displaying power are all the result of the unlawfulness we're witnessing today." Force may keep the current regime in power, but it also completes the destruction of its legitimacy.

Fourth Generation theory warns that when a government loses its legitimacy and attempts to retain power by naked force, it weakens the state itself. Iran has been a relatively stable state. But there is no guarantee it will remain so. Iran includes many different ethnic groups, not just Persians. If the opposition, which is loyal to the Iranian state, is suppressed by force, Iranians may start to transfer their loyalty away from the state.

The current crisis in Iran also reveals a fracture Fourth Generation theory sometimes overlooks, a break on urban/rural lines. Ahmadinejad is genuinely popular in much of rural Iran. His rural strength might have allowed him to win an election where the votes were actually counted. The opposition, in turn, appears to be almost entirely urban. Its urban strength is what has allowed it to contest the announced electoral results with mass marches.

A collapse of the American state is not impossible. But the lines along which most secessionists see it breaking up are overly optimistic. Paul Starobin writes in the Journal,

The most hopeful prospect for the USA, should the decentralization impulse prove irresistible, is for Americans to draw on their natural inventiveness and democratic tradition by patenting a formula for getting the job done in a gradual and cooperative way.

Fat chance.

Instead of a restored Vermont Republic, Cascadia and perhaps a new Confederacy, if America breaks up it is likely to do so along non-geographic lines. Fourth Generation theory suggests that the new primary identities for which people are likely to vote, work and fight will not be geographical. Rather, they will be cultural, religious, racial or ethnic, ideological, etc. Following the sorts of massacres, ethnic cleansings, pogroms and genocides such Fourth Generation civil wars usually involve, new geographically defined states may emerge. But their borders will derive from cultural divides more than geographic ones.

The fact that a second American civil war would be nastier than the first — itself no picnic — does not mean it won't happen. That depends on whether the Washington Establishment can recognize it has a legitimacy problem, get its act together and provide competent governance. It is currently failing that test, and I expect it to continue to fail. Any member of the Establishment who dares subordinate court politics to the good of the nation or advocates more than very modest change quickly finds he is no longer a member of the Establishment.

I spent most of last week at the Congress on the New Urbanism, which I have attended for many years. New Urbanism seeks to build new villages, towns and urban neighborhoods as alternatives to suburban sprawl, an essentially conservative endeavor. This time, something new came to the fore: making such communities agriculturally self-sufficient. Why? Because there is growing recognition among New Urbanists and others that only a local food supply may be secure as things fall apart. A few people at the Congress were looking toward the next logical step: giving such communities an ability to defend themselves. If the future brings the end of the empire, how do we get ready for the Dark Ages?

Again, if this sounds fanciful, Fourth Generation war theory says it is not. It is by no means inevitable, but it is one possible outcome of the Establishment's misrule.

My most recent book, *The Next Conservatism*, talks at some length about these matters. In the mid-1990s, I wrote a novel, *Victoria*, about an American Fourth Generation civil war and its aftermath. It never found a publisher, perhaps because the idea seemed so outlandish, more likely because it is a face shot at

On War #305: The Future is Now

by William S. Lind
19 May 2009

For years, I have warned in these columns and elsewhere that the future weapon of mass destruction we should most fear is not a nuke. Rather, it is a genetically engineered plague, a plague no one has ever seen before and against which no one has any immunity. In the time it would take to identify the new disease, develop a vaccine, distribute the vaccine and have it become effective, modern societies could suffer death rates equivalent to those of the Black Death: up to 2/3 of the population.

Regrettably, it appears that dread future has now arrived. The May 12 Wall Street Journal carried a front-page story titled "In Attics and Closets, 'Biohackers' Discover Their Inner Frankenstein."

In Massachusetts, a young woman makes genetically modified E. coli in a closet she converted into a home lab. A part-time DJ in Berkeley, Calif., works in his attic to cultivate viruses extracted from sewage ...

These hobbyists represent a growing strain of geekdom known as biohacking, in which do-it-yourselfers tinker with the building blocks of life in the comfort of their own homes.

Developing nuclear weapons requires vast facilities. Even so significant a country as Iran must strain to its limits to design, build and operate the complex industrial plants required. The costs run in the billions of dollars.

In contrast, the Wall Street Journal writes of the woman in Massachusetts that

She's got a DNA "thermocycler" bought on eBay for \$59, and an incubator made by combining a Styrofoam box with a heating device meant for an iguana cage.

As usual, the Internet plays the role of Sorcerer's Apprentice in this unfolding nightmare:

The (biohacking) movement has made big strides recently thanks to the commercial availability of synthetic DNA. This genetic material, normally found inside the nucleus of cells, can now easily be purchased online. That provides any amateur with the ingredients for constructing an organism.

The WSJ reassuringly notes that the government is interested in all this.

The E. coli manipulator got a phone call from a government security contractor: How did she build that lab? Did she know other people creating new life forms at home?

The woman, a Ms. Aull, says the worries are overblown. DIY biologists are trying to “build a slingshot,” she says, “and there are people out there talking about, oh, no, what happens if they move on to nuclear weapons?”

Well, my dear, the fact is that you and your fellow biohackers have moved on to nuclear weapons. Or, as I fear, something even more dangerous than nuclear weapons. One little “oopsie” in a basement lab could inadvertently unleash a plague.

In their collective hubris, modern people seem to have forgotten what the plague did. It brought down a whole civilization, the Middle Ages. So vast and terrible were its effects that children still sing about it:

Ring around the rosie,
Pocket full of posies,
One, two, three and
We all fall down.

The rosie was a rose-shaped, red blotch, often with a ring around it, that was one of the first symptoms showing a person had caught the plague. The posies were sweet-smelling herbs; people thought breathing through them might ward off the disease. One, two, three and we all fall down – dead.

It’s nice to know the Feds are paying some attention to what is happening here. But what are jihadi biohackers cooking up? What’s brewing in Columbian drug labs? Anything available on the Internet is available everywhere.

A calm, measured, thoughtful response to biohacking would be to run around madly in one’s underwear screaming “The sky is falling! The sky is falling!” It is impossible to overstate this threat.

What can we do about it? Probably nothing. Only students of history, who know what the Black Death did to Medieval Europe, will understand what is at stake. Since World War I, and in some ways since the onset of the mis-named Enlightenment, the Modern Age has been folding back on itself, creating self-amplifying feedback loops of ever-greater destructive power. But only Cassandra can see it happening.

One of the few effective defenses the Middle Ages had against the Black Death was immurement: when plague appeared in a household, the house was bricked up, with the inhabitants inside. Some towns saved themselves that way. Should we immure biohackers? Absolutely.

Thus far, the great swine flu “pandemic” exists mainly in newspaper headlines. “World Ends Tomorrow” always sells a few extra papers. I’m waiting for the Onion: “Pigs flu.”

If swine flu follows the route of its 1918-1919 predecessor, receding over the summer, then coming back in a more virulent version next winter, it could get serious. But so far, the “pandemic’s” most interesting aspect is as a rehearsal for one of 4GW’s most dangerous threats, the release of a genetically engineered plague.

Genetic engineering is a hideous technology, crafted in Mordor. Honest blunders will be enough to unleash plagues on crops, critters (honeybees may have already been hit), and man. It offers Brave New World its final, almost inescapable control mechanism.

Like every other technology man has invented, it will also be used in war. I have argued for years that a genetically engineered plague, a disease no one ever saw before and against which there are no defenses, could replicate what the Black Death brought to medieval Europe. Such a weapon could kill far more people than a single nuke or even several nukes. Worse, while building nuclear weapons requires vast facilities, genetic engineering is knowledge-based. No non-state entity will be able to build a fission or fusion weapon (they may buy or steal one), but they will be able to genetically engineer deadly diseases, if they can’t already.

Let us imagine, for a moment, that the ongoing swine flu epidemic were a deliberate rehearsal for release of a genetically engineered plague. What would be the lessons so far?

First, the main target, the United States, offers a wonderful incubator right next door: Mexico. Mexico has densely populated slums; a culture in which life is lived socially, outside the home; and typical Third World standards of public health. Getting a plague started is tricky. It needs to achieve “critical mass” before it is detected. Mexico is just the “Petri dish” a 4GW attacker would need.

An article in the Sunday, May 3 Washington Post noted:

Mexican scientists said the virus has been spreading primarily within families and among co-workers, often in dense, poor neighborhoods of Mexico City...

“When you have this huge accumulation with crowded people in a rather small area, you have a greater opportunity to spread the disease,” (Mexican epidemiologist) Lezana said. “Besides, it’s an area – in general – of low income, poor people, urban poor, very crowded, so those might be some of the main explanations...”

On War #302: Blinders

by William S. Lind
28 April 2009

At the height of the Cold War, a U.S. army corps commander in Europe asked for information on his Soviet opposite, the commander of the corps facing him across the inter-German border. All the U.S. intelligence agencies, working with classified material, came up with very little. He then took his question to Chris Donnelly, who had a small Soviet military research institute at Sandhurst. That institute worked solely from open source, i.e. unclassified material. It sent the American general a stack of reports six inches high, with articles by his Soviet counterpart, articles about him, descriptions of exercises he had played in, etc.

What was true during the Cold War is even more true now, in the face of Fourth Generation war. As we have witnessed in the hunt for Osama, our satellite-photo-addicted intel shops can't tell us much. But there is a vast amount of 4GW material available open-source: websites by and about our opponents, works by civilian academics, material from think-tanks, reports from businessmen who travel in areas we are interested in – the pile is almost bottomless. Every American soldier with access to a computer can find almost anything he needs. Much of it is both more accurate and more useful than what filters down through the military intelligence chain.

Or at least he could. In recent months, more and more American officers have told me that when they attempt to access the websites they need, they find access is blocked on DOD computers. Is al Qaeda doing this in a dastardly attempt to blind American combat units? Sadly, no. DOD is doing it. Someone in DOD is putting blinders on American troops.

I do not know who is behind this particular bit of idiocy. It may be the security trolls. They always like to restrict access to information, because doing so increases their bureaucratic power. One argument points to them, namely an assertion that the other side may obtain useful information by seeing what we are looking for. That is like arguing that our troops should be given no ammunition lest muzzle flashes give away their positions in a fire-fight.

But the fact that websites of American organizations whose views differ from DOD's are also blocked points elsewhere. It suggests political involvement. Why, for example, is access to the website of the Center for Defense Information blocked? CDI is located in Washington, not the Hindu Kush. Its work includes the new book on military reform America's Defense Meltdown, which has garnered quite a bit of attention at Quantico.

April 20, 2009

As the U.S. sends thousands more American soldiers to Afghanistan, it risks speeding its own defeat in that graveyard of empires. Why? Because the Second Generation practice of the U.S. military reduces tactics to little more than bumping into the enemy and calling for fire. The fire, most often delivered by aircraft that can see and understand little of what is happening on the ground, often kills civilians. Even when it does not, the disproportion of pitting jet fighter-bombers and attack helicopters against guys in bathrobes armed with rusty rifles turns us into Goliath, a monster. Both effects bring about our defeat on the moral level. In effect, the Second Generation leaves us in a trap of our own making: to win the engagements we have to lose the war.

How might U.S. forces in Afghanistan escape the 2GW trap? To start with, they should accept and live by a principle laid down by Marine Corps General James Mattis, one of our more successful commanders in Iraq. That principle, taken from medicine, is, "First, do no harm." When and where fighting is likely to cause civilian casualties, wreck the civilian infrastructure and alienate the population, don't fight. A withdrawal is better than a combination of tactical victory and strategic loss.

Second, seek to de-escalate. De-escalation is the way state armed forces prevail in Fourth Generation wars. De-escalation is the first principle of FMFM 1-A, Fourth Generation War and the field manuals derived from it. Those field manuals are available on d-n-i and, for U.S. military personnel, on the website of the Marine Corps' Expeditionary Warfare School. Any soldier or Marine heading for Afghanistan who has not read these FM's is ignoring an important resource. They include two books of 4GW Tactical Decision Games units can use for their own training.

Third, use The Grid to evaluate every mission before it is undertaken. The Grid is a simple tool I devised last year in a seminar with Royal Marines who were on their way to Helmand Province. Its purpose is to try and foresee the larger consequences of tactical actions, or, as one Royal Marine general put it, to predict potential second-order effects. Here it is:

The Grid

	Physical	Mental	Moral
Tactical			
Operational			
Strategic			

Second Generation armed services consider only one of the nine boxes on the grid, the Tactical/Physical box in the upper left corner. They are subsequently surprised by the results of their action in the eight other boxes. The surprises are seldom pleasant.

What lessons might we draw from the previous 299 On War columns and their interplay with the larger world? Three seem to me to be of overriding importance.

1. So long as America pursues an offensive grand strategy, Fourth Generation war will ensure her defeat. The reason is Martin van Creveld's concept of the power of weakness and its intimate relationship with legitimacy. In a Fourth Generation world, legitimacy is the coin of the realm. At root, Fourth Generation war is a contest for legitimacy between the state and a wide variety of non-state primary loyalties. American power lacks legitimacy because, on the physical level, it is so overwhelming. That is the power of weakness: anyone who stands up to the American military becomes a hero. In turn, any state the American military supports loses its legitimacy. The more places America intervenes militarily, the more states lose their legitimacy, to the advantage of Fourth Generation, non-state entities. In effect, we have a reverse Midas touch. Only a defensive grand strategy, where we mind our own business and leave other states to mind theirs, can break us out of this downward spiral.

2. Second Generation militaries cannot win Fourth Generation wars. Second Generation armed forces, such as those of the United States, fight by putting firepower on targets. This wins at the physical level, but as it does so it brings defeat at the moral level, which is decisive in 4GW. The best current example is Pakistan, where the combination of Predator strikes and arm-twisting of the Pakistani government has undermined the legitimacy of the Pakistani state. That state now stands on the verge of disintegration, which would give al Qaeda and other Islamic 4GW forces the greatest victory they could imagine. The image on Osama's cave wall should be a Predator, with the title, "Our best weapon."

3. There is no chance America will adopt a defensive grand strategy or reform its military to move from the Second to the Third Generation – a necessary though not sufficient step in confronting 4GW – so long as the current Washington Establishment remains in power. That Establishment is drunk on hubris, cut off from the world beyond court politics and thoroughly corrupted by Pentagon "business as usual," which knows how to buy whatever political support it needs. Like all establishments, it sees any real change as a threat, to be avoided. So long as it reigns, nothing will change.

What are the implications of these three observations? Militarily, they portend continued failure and defeat. We will fail to get out of Iraq before the next phase of that war begins, or, worse, an Israeli attack on Iran costs us the army we have in Iraq. We will be defeated in Afghanistan, because we will refuse to scale our strategic objectives to what is possible and we will continue to alienate the population with our firepower-intensive way of war.

We will push Pakistan over the brink into disintegration, which will be a strategic catastrophe of the first order. We will ignore the disintegration of the state in Mexico, while importing Mexico's disorder through our ineffective border controls. We will not even be able to stop Somali pirates. What does it say about us when

necessary step forward facing the Fourth. Cultural change is central to that transformation, and quite properly it is the purpose of much of what Vandergriff proposes.

After a look at the history of manning the U.S. Army, which explains how and why it adopted the Taylorist “industrial age” model, the book makes an important call for “parallel evolution.” Parallel evolution, in which many things change at the same time, is essential for bringing the Army’s culture from the inward-focused, process-driven Second Generation to the outward-focused, result-driven Third Generation. In its absence, all you get is specific, unrelated alterations such as the recent move to brigades (while keeping the fifth-wheel division headquarters) that leave the culture untouched. Instead of reforming, the Army merely reorganizes. Vandergriff rightly points to the reforms of the Prussian Army under Scharnhorst as a model of parallel evolution the U.S. Army might profitably follow (see Charles Edward White’s superb book, *The Enlightened Soldier*).

When he discusses the key subject of developing leaders, Vandergriff draws on his earlier work at Georgetown (described in his book *Raising the Bar*), which the Army now calls Adaptive Leader Methodology (ALM). ALM is of central importance to cultural change, because it teaches outward focus. Thanks largely to Don’s missionary work, ALM is spreading in the Army, including to important places such as West Point and the Basic Officer Leader Courses at Ft. Benning and Ft. Sill.

Manning the Future Legions is optimistic about the future of the U.S. Army, but it also raises the question of how optimistic dare we realistically be? As Vandergriff writes, “Proposed reforms to Army culture still avoid changing the system’s legacies, which also serve as the four pillars holding up the (current) cultural structure.” He rightly identifies the “four legacy pillars” as:

1. The up-or-out promotion system
2. Quantity-based vs. quality-based officer accessions
3. Centralized control of the evaluation and promotion system, and
4. A top-heavy officers corps and too many headquarters.”

As Vandergriff states, “As long as these legacies of today’s Army culture remain invulnerable, the service will evolve only slowly, or not at all, and therefore will have trouble in recruiting, developing, and retaining adaptive leaders and soldiers.”

My own view of the Army is that, to borrow from an old European bon mot, while the United States Marine Corps’s situation is serious but not hopeless, the U.S. Army’s condition is hopeless but not serious. I participated as an “outside expert” in one of the Army’s “transformation” exercises, and all I saw were the usual games, despite explicit guidance to the contrary from the Army Chief of Staff.

The Holbrooke-Petraeus-Clinton faction, according to the sources, prevailed. The result is expected to be a major, long-term military and civilian program to reinvent Afghanistan from one of the most backward, least developed nations to a relatively prosperous democratic state.

I have not seen similar stories in other papers, so it is possible Gertz is not correct. But if he is, the Obama administration has just made the Afghan war its own, and lost it.

Ironically, the reported decision duplicates the Bush administration's error in Iraq, another lost war (the next phase in Iraq's Sunni-Shiite civil war is now ramping up). The error, one that no tactical or operational successes can overcome, is setting unattainable strategic objectives.

Short of divine intervention, nothing can turn Afghanistan into a modern, prosperous, democratic state. Pigs will not only fly, they will win dogfights with F-15s before that happens. The most Afghanistan can ever be is Afghanistan: a poor, backward country, one where the state is weak and local warlords are strong, plagued with a drug-based economy and endemic low-level civil war. That is Afghanistan at its best. Just achieving that would be difficult for an occupying foreign power, whose presence assures that war will not be low-level and that no settlement will be long-term.

In fact, even the minimalist objectives reportedly urged by Vice President Biden are not attainable. We cannot deny safe haven in Afghanistan for the Taliban, because the Taliban are Afghans. They represent a substantial portion of the Pashtun population. The most we can hope to obtain in a settlement of the Afghan war is the exclusion of al Qaeda. That is a realistic strategic objective, because al Qaeda is made up of Arabs, i.e. foreigners, whom the Afghans dislike the same way they dislike other foreigners. The Taliban's commitment to al Qaeda is ideological, and the right combination of incentives can usually break ideological commitments.

Instead of a pragmatic, realistic approach to attaining that limited objective, it seems we are committed to a Quixotic quest for the unattainable. Again, that guarantees we will lose the Afghan war. No means, military or non-military, can obtain the unattainable. The circle cannot be squared.

Here we see how little "change" the Obama administration really represents. The differences between the neo-liberals and the neo-cons are few. Both are militant believers in Brave New World, a Globalist future in which everyone on earth becomes modern. In the view of these ideologues, the fact that billions of people are willing to fight to the death against modernity is, like the river Pregel, an unimportant military obstacle. We just need to buy more Predators.

around Hainan Island, for which Impeccable surely was also trolling, would be critical for any attempt to bottle Chinese submarines up in their base.

I'm sure these arguments were used by the U.S. Navy to sell Impeccable's mission. But whoever bought the sales job forgot about strategy. America's strategic interests dictate that we avoid, rather than prepare for, a war with China. Such a war could end up destroying both countries as powers. More, in a Fourth Generation world, America needs China to be a center and source of order. If China lost a war with America, there would be a real danger that China's internal unity might also be lost. If China came apart internally, as she has so many times in her history, she could end up a vast, bubbling cauldron of Fourth Generation war. Few outcomes would be worse, from the standpoint of all states.

The U.S. Navy might respond that a Chinese-American war is unlikely to start over harassment of a survey ship, and it would be right. But missions such as Impeccable's send a message that we see China as a likely enemy. Such messages, if repeated often enough, can establish a dynamic that is difficult to reverse. It took almost half a century for just such a dynamic to bring war between the U.S. and Japan — I think the first U.S. Navy "Plan Orange," for war with Japan, dated to 1907 — but eventually it did the trick.

The way Washington works, it would take courage for someone in OSD or the State Department or the White House to tell the U.S. Navy to swallow the tactical disadvantages and avoid missions we know will antagonize China. But that is what sound strategy requires. Anything else elevates tactics over strategy, an elementary blunder that almost always brings unfortunate results.

The same critique applies to the Chinese. Tactically, it is understandable that the Chinese navy wants to give its submarines every possible advantage. Protecting its boomers is important strategically as well as tactically. While China has more submarines than America, its fleet is far inferior qualitatively, in personnel as well as hardware. In any naval confrontation with the U.S., China is very much the underdog. She needs every advantage she can get.

But the wise and prudent strategy of China's leaders, ever since the end of the disastrous reign of Chairman Mao, has been to avoid military conflicts while building up China's economy. The Chinese leadership has understood that economic power must precede military power if the latter is not to be shallow and brittle. China needs at least 20 to 30 more years of peace and rising prosperity before she dare think about war. From this perspective, the harassment of Impeccable was putting tactics ahead of strategy, the same error the U.S. made by sending the ship on her mission. No less than America, China must avoid establishing a dynamic of conflict between the two powers.

Here again we come to the central requirement dictated by the rise of Fourth Generation war. States should avoid conflicts with other states, because the

'Would you rather win with higher casualties, or lose with few casualties?'" I am not sure adopting Third in place of Second Generation infantry tactics would result in higher casualties. It might do so in individual engagements, but it might reduce total friendly casualties in the war. Air strikes serve as one of our opponents' most effective recruiting tools, both because of the civilians killed and because when you attack someone from an invulnerable position, i.e. 20,000 feet up, you make him want to fight you all the more. If we deprive our opponents of the recruits our airstrikes generate, might not our total casualties go down?

* Bob P. writes, "We call for airstrikes because that's what you do to equalize combat power when you are outnumbered." Later he added, "Most AARs in Afghanistan start with a platoon getting ambushed by approximately equivalent forces, then the enemy forces, through various means (the part I won't discuss) obtain local superiority. Platoon calls in airstrikes..." I find it interesting that our opponents appear better at concentrating forces at the decisive point than we are. I wonder if two 3GW tactical concepts might help us, namely Schwerpunkt and the importance of maintaining a strong reserve (normally at least one-third of available troops). In contrast, 2GW tactics scatter forces in penny-packets and regard troops in reserve as "wasted" because they are not engaging the enemy. Does that describe what we are now doing in Afghanistan?

* Jeffrey R. writes, "I do not agree that our officers are not well read and educated on 'good' tactics. Remember, they have to operate in a 'system' that does not reward innovation and success." That is certainly true of our system. But it is also true that the U.S. military's educational system offers little real education. Mostly, it just trains people in one way to do something. If an American officer wants broad education in alternative tactics, he has to educate himself.

* Sven Ortmann writes, "The light infantry approach doesn't help much in a terrain that doesn't offer enough concealment, though. It's no solution for all problems... Tanks in an assault gun role could handle the problems that plague light infantry in open terrain." This is correct, in that light infantry is terrain dependent. That is why it seldom fights "pure," but mixed with heavy infantry (now motorized/mechanized) units. However, those heavy infantry forces also need 3GW tactics, which are simpler versions of Jaeger tactics. In the 1980s, some military reformers, including John Boyd, asked German General Hermann Balck why so many of the best Panzer commanders in World War II had been light infantry officers in World War I. He replied, "Because it was the same." As to tanks, I would say instead, "infantry guns." These may be tanks, wheeled assault guns or towed pieces, depending on the situation. Their purpose is to provide heavy direct fire, which in many cases could replace airstrikes with less risk of collateral damage.

* Max writes, "Somebody was saying there's no way the current US force of occupation in Iraq could be seriously imperiled by any force on earth." That bit of hubris is common in Washington, and it has given me many a bad night. If either the U.S. or Israel attacks Iran, we could lose the whole army we have in Iraq. Such a defeat would be our Adrianople, or, given the degree to which we now resemble Imperial Spain, our Rocroi.

President Barack Obama recently announced a bold new initiative to save up to \$40 billion per year by reforming defense procurement. Like the Pentagon, I greeted his proclamation with a yawn.

If there is one game the Pentagon knows how to play, it is “reforming defense procurement.” It has gone through the drill more times than it or I can remember. The script is always the same. A “reform” program is announced with great fanfare. Experts are convened (all from or on their way to defense industry), commissions and panels meet, reports are issued and recommendations are offered. Then it all peters out, and nothing changes. The whole game is just another form of “rounding up the usual suspects.”

How do I know this time won’t be different? By the Obama administration’s defense appointments. With the exception of Secretary of Defense Robert Gates, who seems to have some inclinations toward genuine reform, they are hacks. All either served in Pentagon jobs in the Clinton administration or come from defense industry, or both. They have demonstrated for years that they are custodians of business as usual.

A further clue to the meaninglessness of President Obama’s “reform” initiative is its focus on “waste, fraud and abuse” in defense budgeting. There is no shortage of all three, in the Pentagon as in all government departments. But the only “reforms” this focus will elicit are changes in procedures, which are not the heart of the problem. More “reviews,” more layers of bureaucracy and more powerpoint briefings will do nothing to reduce waste, fraud and abuse. The system will have dozens of work-arounds for any changes that might actually threaten rice bowls. Again, we’ve seen it all before, with virtually every new administration.

What would real reform of defense procurement entail? First, we would reform what is being procured. Most current and projected major defense programs are buying weapons and other “systems” that are outdated or simply represent a false understanding of war.

We spend tens of billions of dollars on computerized command and control systems that encourage more and more centralization of decision-making. But sound military doctrine calls for decentralized decision-making. The Army’s Future Contract System, the most expensive current Pentagon program, is a Rube Goldbergian, semi-portable Maginot Line that in combat would collapse of its own internal complexity. The J-35 fighter-bomber is another F-111, a flying piano that is useless for the one attack aviation function that really works, supporting ground troops. Only a handful of the ships the Navy wants are useful in coastal waters, where future naval actions are likely to be fought. These and many similar “legacy” systems are military museum pieces, designed for wars with the armies, navies and air forces of other states. Serious defense procurement reform would start by canning all of them.

Once we figured out what to buy for real wars, another reform would help us buy it at reasonable prices. It is a common tool in private business, called “should cost.” Based on marketplace prices for similar systems and components, we would determine what a given system should cost. Bids would not only be compared with each other but with the “should cost” figure. If all the bids were over the “should cost” figure, we would re-bid or decide to do without the system. Prices would soon come down, especially if at the same time we made it easier for companies that now do no defense work to get into the business.

Another simple procurement reform that would turn from state capitalism to the free market is buying off the shelf. When a service identified a need, it would look around the world to see what is available to fill that need. Then we would build it here, under license if it were a foreign design. At present, DOD buys virtually everything by coming up with a wish list, then finding someone to build it. It is as if when you wanted a new car, you came up with a list of everything you wanted in that car, then went to an automobile company and asked them to build it for you. You can imagine what it would cost.

This is just a small sample of real defense procurement reforms. Among the long-time military reformers are people who have studied defense procurement for decades. They have identified many other similar reforms that would make a genuine difference. Of course, that is why none of the reforms they recommend have ever been enacted.

John Boyd used to say, “It is not true the Pentagon has no strategy. It has a strategy, and once you understand what that strategy is, everything it does makes sense. The strategy is, don’t interrupt the money flow, add to it.” That was true before the Obama administration, it will be true while it is in office, and it will still be true when it ends. The people it has appointed to the Pentagon — again, Secretary Gates excepted — know the strategy, benefit from it and will continue it. They will defend it as if their future incomes depended on it, which, of course, they do.

The one wild card that could change everything is the growing probability of national financial collapse. If that happens – or perhaps when it happens – defense procurement will be on the chopping block along with everything else. At that point, reformers’ slogan should be, “Keep the combat units, cut everything else.” If we have a Secretary of Defense strong enough to do that (the bureaucracy will want to do the opposite), we will find that almost everything above the battalion level was waste, fraud and abuse of one sort or another.

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In Congressional testimony, Secretary of Defense Gates said that unless we stop killing Afghan civilians in airstrikes, “we are lost.” So why do we keep doing airstrikes?

The answer is, because American infantry tactics are bad. They amount to little more than bumping into the enemy and calling for fire. The easiest way to provide the overwhelming firepower our bad infantry tactics depend on is with airstrikes. So to win tactically, we have to lose strategically. At least from the Vietnam War onward, that equation has come to define the American way of war. It is the price of bad tactics.

Why does American infantry continue to employ bad tactics? Superior alternatives are readily available. The “infiltration tactics” used by German infantry in the Kaiserschlacht of 1918 are far superior. Better still are true light infantry or Jaeger tactics, which influenced the development of infiltration tactics. Light infantry tactics rely less on firepower and more on stealth, surprise, ambush and encirclement. Their history is well known, and reaches back as far as the 18th century. The literature on them is extensive. [Ed. note: please see the 4GW Light Infantry Manual, available on our 4GW Manuals page, for more on these tactics.]

There are three basic reasons why the U.S. military continues to employ bad infantry tactics when superior alternatives lie ready to hand. The first is the unfortunate combination of hubris and intellectual sloth which characterizes most of the American officer corps – and infantry officers in particular. Most read nothing about their profession. Of those who do read, most confine their study to doctrinal manuals — the U.S. Army’s are wretched rehashed French stuff, the Marine Corp’s somewhat better — or histories of American victories. The number who really study tactics, learning about infiltration tactics, Jaeger tactics, the infantry tactics of oriental militaries etc. through reading, is tiny.

This ignorance is buttressed by hubris, false pride. The American military spends a great deal of time and effort telling itself how wonderful it is. Gorged on its own baloney, it thinks, “How could we possibly learn anything from anyone else? After all, we’re the greatest.” So there is no need for any study beyond study of ourselves. Hubris justifies the closed system ignorance creates.

The second reason we persist with bad infantry tactics is bad training. Almost all American training is focused on procedures and techniques, taught by rote in canned, scripted exercises where the enemy is a tethered goat. Free-play training, against an active, creative enemy, generates imaginative tactics, because whoever employs such tactics wins. But free-play training is so rare in the American military that most American infantrymen receive none at all. They become expert in techniques for applying fires, but they know nothing else. In effect, many American infantry units have no tactics, they only have techniques.

— and possibly physical security as well, hoping for better luck next time, if there is a next time.

I suspect the odds of that happening in Iraq are small. The Washington Post recently quoted one U.S. officer who served as an adviser to Iraqi army units saying of Iraqi commanders, “When you got to know them and they’d be honest with you, every single one of them thought that the whole notion of democracy and representative government in Iraq was absolutely ludicrous.”

That quote was in a piece by Tom Ricks, the Post’s long-time defense correspondent, in the Sunday February 15 “Outlook” section. Rick’s goes on to say,

I don’t think the Iraq war is over yet, and I worry that there is more to come than any of us suspect...

Many of those closest to the situation in Iraq expect a full-blown civil war to break out there in the coming years. “I don’t think the Iraqi civil war has been fought yet,” one colonel told me.

In such an environment, elections do not substitute for war but rather prepare the way for it. They exacerbate differences, heighten local conflicts, and lengthen the lists of “injustices” each party uses to justify fighting.

This unfortunate reality points again to what America needs to do in Iraq: get out now, fast, while it can. If we are lucky, history will grant us a “decent interval” between our departure and the next round of 4GW in Iraq. If we dawdle until the fighting ramps up again, we may find it difficult, politically if not militarily, to leave at all.

This brings us to another election, that in Israel. It is not clear what government will emerge from Israel’s vote. It is clear the Knesset has shifted to the right. From the standpoint of America’s interests, that is a negative outcome.

The danger is not only to prospects of peace between Israel and the Palestinians, which are probably small in any event. The danger is that a new Israeli government in which Likud and voices to Likud’s right are stronger is more likely to attack Iran.

As I have said repeatedly in past columns, an attack on Iran by the U.S. or Israel threatens consequences disastrous to America. The worst potential consequence is the possibility of the destruction of the army the U.S. now has in Iraq. As almost no one in Washington seems to realize — thanks, as usual, to hubris — that possibility is all too real. All one need do to see it is look at a map. Iran sits alongside our main line of communications, supply and retreat all the way from Baghdad to the straits of Hormuz. Add in the probability that various

war's outcome. 4GW is a clash between two cultural meta-narratives, one embodied in the state, the other in non-state entities rising up against states. Regrettably, the state meta-narrative is weakened by a turning inward on itself, something Vlahos discusses with special reference to America.

Much of *Fighting Identity* is devoted to considering Globalization as an act of "creative destruction" that generates ever more non-state elements. Here, Vlahos usefully compares the current period of Globalization with two earlier globalizations, that which occurred in Late Antiquity and the globalization of the High Middle Ages. I think Vlahos is correct in seeing the present as the Third Globalization; it is only the hubris of Moderns that prevents them from recognizing parallels.

He further argues that in the end, those earlier globalizations too created new types of entities, entities which did not entirely fit in pre-existing frameworks. Here the book does present something of a terminological problem, in that Vlahos speaks of "states" and "non-state" entities anachronistically, before states existed. But in substance what he is saying is justified.

I do have one substantive quibble. Vlahos in effect argues that Rome never "fell." Well, yes, it did, Mike. A city of 1,500,000 people ended up with 5000 inhabitants, while wolves prowled the forum. It is true that elements survived, especially symbols that conveyed legitimacy (which is different from identity). The Holy Roman Empire lasted until 1806. But 90% of the literature of the ancient world was lost, and in northern Europe, people forgot even how to make bricks. That's like Americans forgetting how to make hamburgers, and it suggests some significant events took place. A dying St. Augustine watched from the walls of Hippo as the Vandals burned the villas.

Vlahos puts in context the American narrative and that of America's Islamic 4GW opponents, by arguing that each supplies context for the other. Of America's invasion and occupation of Iraq, he writes:

Thus in looking at them, I came back at last to us. In its 9/11 War the United States embarked on a flamboyant enterprise: the "transformation" of the Muslim world...

We staged the grandest opera to remake the world, but also centrally to set up our own transcendence in history.

We achieved our apocalyptic goal, but not as we had planned. Our ensuing and intimate relationship with the Muslim world was liberating – at least in forcefully opening that world to new things. But they turned out not to be our things, nor old things, but things still taking form.

For as little as \$100, Jordal was making the same kinds of weapons he saw used against his fellow soldiers in Iraq and selling them on the streets of Oklahoma City to gang members...

Surprise, surprise. This is not the first such report I have seen. Shortly after my initial column ran, I received a letter from a reader in Poland with a news story that Polish police were being attacked and killed with IEDs.

If we read these stories merely as accounts of the spread of a technology, IEDs, we read them too narrowly. American and other foreign troops in places such as Iraq and Afghanistan are learning more than how to make IEDs and how effective they can be. They are learning by direct observation how a place works when the state disappears.

To the large majority of American and European soldiers, this is a lesson in horror. They return home thankful they live in a place where the state endures. The last thing they want is to see their native country turn into another Iraq or Afghanistan.

But a minority will learn a different lesson. They will see statelessness as a field of opportunity where people who are clever and ruthless can rise fast and far. They look upon themselves as that kind of people. They will also have learned it is possible to fight the state, and how to do so. The effectiveness of IEDs is part of that lesson; so are the power and rewards that come to members of militias and gangs. In their own minds, and perhaps in reality, they will have found a new world in which they can hope to thrive.

There is a parallel here with what the men who fought in the trenches on the Western Front in World War I learned. For most, it was the worst time in their lives. Their experience is captured by *All Quiet on the Western Front*. But a minority found it the best time of their lives. Their book is Ernst Junger's *Storm of Steel*. It was these men, looking to re-create that tremendous experience, who made up the Brownshirts of the S. A. Their very name, Storm Troopers, originated in what they had done during the war. They came home determined to create a different Germany, and they did.

As I have argued both in these columns and elsewhere, if we want to avoid importing 4GW into the United States, we need to isolate ourselves from 4GW overseas. We need a defensive, not an offensive, grand strategy. So long as we enmesh ourselves in Fourth Generation wars like those in Iraq and Afghanistan – will the Obama administration add Somalia and Sudan to the list? – we will increase the danger we should seek most to avoid, the horror of 4GW on our own soil. That is the Fourth Generation's strategic IED, and if it ever goes off in America, we will all get blown up.

“And is President Obama likely to prove a good mouser?”, I ventured.

“Judging by most of his appointments, he seems better at catching fleas,” the Kaiser replied. “This ‘democracy’ business is such a joke. All you get is a different slice from the same sausage. Now, when kings died and their sons took the throne, you saw real change. Just think of the differences between Bertie and my grandmother Queen Victoria. Not a change for the better, let me add.”

“Yet your generation of monarchs also got blindsided by history,” I suggested.

“Yes, we did, as poor mortals always will,” the Kaiser said. “All earthly leaders are time-blinded. We saw backward too clearly and forward hardly at all.”

“My generation of kings and emperors were fixated on the age-old contest between dynasties. Would the houses of Hapsburg and Hohenzollern defeat those of Romanoff and Savoy or the other way around? We could not see the paradigm shift welling up all around us, the onward rush of democracy and equality and socialism and all the rest of that garbage. What we needed was an alliance of all monarchies against democracy. Instead we wiped each other out, putting the levellers in charge everywhere, to the world’s ruin.”

“Does that hold any lessons for our time?”, I asked.

“From Olympus, the picture could not be more clear,” His Majesty replied. “As we were mesmerized by dynastic quarrels, so your politicians cannot see beyond the state. They think only of states in conflict. Will America be threatened by China? Should India go to war with Pakistan? Is Iran a danger to Israel? They cannot see that states are now all in the same, sinking boat, just as all the dynasties were in 1914.”

“What should states then do?”, I enquired.

“Form an alliance of all states against non-state forces, what you call the Fourth Generation,” the Kaiser answered. “The hour is late, and the state system itself has grown fragile. That is the lesson of America’s quixotic war in Iraq. You destroyed the state there, and now no one can recreate it. That is what will happen almost everywhere when states fight other states. But none of your leaders can see it, because they, too, are time-blinded. It is the human condition.”

“So is ‘democracy’ both the culmination of the state and its end?”, I asked.

“Indeed,” Kaiser Wilhelm replied. “If states have a future, it will be monarchy, not democracy. A good monarch is above politics. When governments fail, people do not blame the king, who remains as the symbol of the state. The state obtains

saying to Israeli voters, “Why vote for an oaf like Bibi Netanyahu when you can get the same thing from us without the endless embarrassments?”

What all Israeli parties and the IDF seem to share is that they don't get 4GW. They have repeatedly been defeated by Fourth Generation forces but they do not learn.

The problem goes beyond John Boyd's framework of moral-mental-physical, with the moral the most powerful level of war and the physical the weakest. What Israel cannot grasp is that in the face of 4GW, all states should be seen as allies.

The most dangerous opponent of any Fourth Generation entity is a local state. The state must be local: interventions against 4GW forces by outside states are doomed to failure. But local states can sometimes win. It does not matter whether the state in question is a democracy or not. It does not matter whether it is a friend or enemy of Israel. By its inherent nature as a state, it will view Fourth Generation forces as threats.

A state may or may not be strong enough to suppress 4GW entities on its soil. It is in Israel's most vital interest that neighboring states be strong enough – morally as well as physically – to do so.

In concrete terms, what does that suggest? First, it means Israel should be very concerned about the strength and solidity of Egypt, Jordan, Syria and Iraq (Lebanon is a state in name only). The Israeli assault on Gaza has seriously undermined the legitimacy of three of those four, with Syria the only exception. Egypt and Jordan have diplomatic relations with Israel, and Egypt has been an all-too-obvious partner of Israel in besieging Gaza. Iraq's government (still a government without a state) is an American creation, and the U.S. is seen as Israel's main enabler. On the moral level, every Israeli bomb dropped on Gaza has also landed on Cairo, Amman and Baghdad.

One Israeli party, Likud, is so oblivious to 4GW that its proposed grand strategy for Israel, largely written by American neo-cons, calls for the destruction of every Arab state. Iraq was the first victim of that strategy, thanks to the neo-cons' influence on the Bush administration. If Likud wins the coming Israeli elections, there is every reason to think it will put its strategy into practice, pushing Israel into the maelstrom.

Israel's dependence on strong neighboring states is equally true with regard to the Palestinians. That means Israel needs a strong Palestinian state in the West Bank. But the effect of the war in Gaza is to undermine Fatah in favor of Hamas on the West Bank, which also has elections coming up. So Israel has in effect shot itself in both feet.

by dni
On War #287: Rundschau

By William S. Lind

January 6, 2009

If we look around the world at the prospects for Fourth Generation entities, what does the new year reveal? Regrettably, they seem to face a rosy future.

The Israeli assault on Hamas in Gaza will succeed physically, prove a mixed bag mentally and fail on the moral level of war. Hamas is militarily a pushover compared to Hezbollah, which makes the David vs. Goliath nature of the conflict all the more evident. The stronger the contrast, the worse the outcome for Goliath. The fact that the timing if not the event is driven by Israeli electoral politics makes the moral picture even grimmer. Add in that absent a deal Hamas's rocket fire will continue and we see the makings of a debacle for Israel.

Some may see the assault as Israel selecting the "Hama option" van Creveld discusses, but I do not agree. Choosing the Hama option would mean subjecting Gaza to a World War I – style bombardment, with tens of thousands of Palestinians killed and the rest fleeing into Egypt for their lives. Gaza would largely be flattened, as was the Syrian city of Hama. As usual, the reality here is that the state has fallen between the two stools of the Hama option and de-escalation, which guarantees failure.

When the dust settles, I expect Hamas to emerge bloodied but stronger. It will continue to control Gaza, its support on the West Bank will soar (right before elections there) and the Palestinian Authority will look more like a stooge than ever. Strategically, the most important result will be further weakening of the legitimacy of the Egyptian government, which is bad news for America's interests in the region.

On another front, the seeming quiet between India and Pakistan is deceptive. I expect an out-of-the-blue strike by India on 4GW training camps in Pakistan, a Pakistani defeat and possibly a collapse of the Pakistani government in consequence. How many collapses of governments Pakistan can endure before the state itself crumbles is a key strategic question. The answer, I suspect, is not many more. Pakistan could offer Islamic 4GW forces an earth-shaking victory in 2009.

In Afghanistan, the war continues to go badly for NATO and the U.S. More American troops doing what they are doing now will make the situation worse. The U.S. Army seems incapable of transferring what it learned in Iraq to Afghanistan. It is attacking the population rather than protecting it, which

America's Defense Meltdown is the title of a new book on military reform, edited by Winslow Wheeler and published by the Center for Defense Information. In it, some of the leading figures from the military reform movement of the 1970's and '80's update their work and relate it to today's challenges, including that posed by Fourth Generation war.

The book is timely. For years, Chuck Spinney and I have said that there will be no reform until the money simply isn't there anymore. If that day has not yet arrived, it is on the calendar. The combination of a severe recession or depression and vast New Deal-type public works programs means something has to give. As the largest element in the discretionary federal budget, defense spending is an obvious target. More, it is a worthy target, in that much of what we spend buys little or no capability. The problem is not only mismanagement, but outdated and fundamentally wrongheaded approaches to war.

The latter are the focus of America's Defense Meltdown, although the book addresses financial and managerial issues. Here, I want to focus on three chapters, the three most innovative (I leave my own two chapters, on the Marine Corps and the Navy, for others to weigh). The first is Chet Richards, "Shattering Illusions: A National Security Strategy for 2009-2017."

In its first incarnation in the 1970's and 1980's, the military reform movement deliberately avoided the subject of strategy. It did so because the Cold War locked the U.S. into worshipping the great clay god NATO, which is to say into a continental strategy. Then as now a maritime strategy made better sense, but anyone who questioned the holiness of NATO was cast into outer darkness. So we bit our tongues and bided our time.

Now, with the Cold War over and the challenge of 4GW upon us, a debate over strategy is urgent. Chet Richards launches it con brio, arguing that we must determine what state militaries can and cannot do in a Fourth Generation world. Then, we must stop asking our armed services to do things that are impossible for them, like turning fly-blown, flea-bitten Third World hellholes into Switzerland. More, we should stop buying forces that are useless or worse for the types of conflicts we are likely to face.

Chet may disagree, but I think that in his chapter he moves closer to what I have advocated for years, namely a defensive rather than an offensive grand strategy. In any event he puts the subject of strategy on the table, which is vitally important. Because a higher level of war dominates a lower, if you don't get your strategy right, no matter what you do at the tactical and operational levels, you lose.

The book's second brilliant chapter is by Pierre Sprey and Bob Dilger, "Reversing the Decay of American Air Power." In it, the authors chop up the idea of "winning through air power," aka strategic bombing, and flush down war's cloaca maxima.

By William S. Lind
December 8, 2008

Panglossing through reality, the New York Times recently offered the sort of thoughtless sunny picture of the Obama administration's security policy that lulls children to sleep but leaves adults restlessly wakeful. In a front-page story on December 1, "A Handpicked Team for a Foreign Policy Shift" by David Sanger, the Times reported that the new administration's key national security policy appointees

were selected in large part because they have embraced a sweeping shift of resources in the national security arena.

The shift, which would come partly out of the military's huge budget, would create a greatly expanded corps of diplomats and aid workers that, in the vision of the coming Obama administration, would be engaged in projects around the world aimed at preventing conflicts and rebuilding failed states.

Whether they can make the change... "will be the great foreign policy experiment of the Obama presidency," one of his senior advisors said recently.

In the best Christmas spirit of my old friend Mr. Scrooge, I will spoil the story by spilling the ending up front. The "great foreign policy experiment" will fail.

It will fail for two reasons, one practical and one theoretical. The practical reason is that, no matter how much money you give them, out State Department and other civilian agencies cannot produce a product.

Over the years, I have heard one ambassador after another say, "I had to turn to the military because they are the only people who can get anything done." If you give the U.S. military an order, something usually happens. It may happen late, clumsily, and expensively, but still, something happens.

In contrast, with State and other agencies, most of the time nothing happens. That is true even when budgets are ample. Why? Because the internal culture of our civilian agencies is so rigid, bureaucratic, risk-averse and rule-bound that they cannot act.

Often, the people at the working level are quite talented. They want to do the assigned job. But the internal focus of their agency is so strong they cannot, at least without risking their careers. A single broken rule or bent regulation, undotted i or uncrossed t, and they quickly learn to follow the regs and forget about the product. So nothing happens.

The Obama administration may wish this were not the case. Worse, it may pretend it is not the case, and learn only by failure. But if it is serious about its

by Chet
On War #284: More 4GW Operational Art

by William S. Lind
3 December 2008

Applying operational art in Fourth Generation war is so difficult it is hard to point to many successful examples of it. The recent assaults in Bombay are among the few and also among the best, bordering on brilliant. We may regret brilliance on the part of our opponents, but that should not prevent us from acknowledging it.

The operational logic is evident:

1. The United States wants Pakistan to focus on fighting al Qaeda and the Taliban.
2. To be able to do so, Pakistan must shift its focus away from the Indian threat, which requires a détente with India. A piece by Jane Perlez of the New York Times which ran in the November 28 Cleveland Plain Dealer reported that

Reconciliation between India and Pakistan has emerged as a basic tenet in the approaches to foreign policy of President-elect Barack Obama, and the new leader of Central Command, Gen. David H. Petraeus. The point is to persuade Pakistan to focus less of its military effort on India, and more on the militants in its lawless tribal regions....

3. Friends of al Qaeda and the Taliban need to block this shift in focus by Pakistan. To do so, they must ramp up the hostility between India and Pakistan. How could they do that?
4. With a special operation in India's most important city. Remember, a special operation must have operational significance to qualify as "special ops." If its meaning is only tactical, it's just a bunch of yahoos running around making noise.
5. The special operation was tactically well planned and carried out. To work operationally, India must blame it on Pakistan. Early indications suggest that may happen.
6. If India does blame Pakistan and Pakistan feels the Indian threat is increasing, the American strategy of convincing Pakistan to focus on the Taliban and al Qaeda will have been defeated. That is operational art at its best.

Meanwhile, in Iraq, an odd combination of events may offer a strategic win-win-win opportunity for all parties: the U.S., the al-Maliki government and al Qaeda. Last week, the Iraqi parliament passed the new status of forces agreement that would keep American troops in Iraq through 2011. Washington regards that as a success, which it is not. What America needs most is to get out of Iraq before the next round in the Iraqi civil war starts.

However, to get Sunni support for the agreement, the al-Maliki government had to agree to submit the deal to a national referendum next year. If the agreement

south, manifested most powerfully by invasion by immigration but also evident in many other ways, can only be met by a united global north. Russia holds the West's vast eastern flank, which stretches all the way from the Black Sea to Vladivostok. Were that flank to collapse, as Russia came close to doing in the early 1990s, the West's geo-strategic position would become well-nigh hopeless.

Despite this strategic reality, evident to anyone who can read a map, Republican and Democratic administrations have vied to determine which could more effectively humiliate and alienate Russia. The Clinton administration probably won that contest with its inane war on Serbia, Russia's historic ally. Bush II's subsequent efforts to enlarge NATO and insistence on locating anti-missile defenses in eastern Europe were additional sticks in the Kremlin's eye. The only reason for any of it was great power hubris, of the sort which littered the 20th century with wreckage. Regrettably, the Washington Establishment is as prideful as it is short-sighted.

Until last week, I would have said that the U.S. had damaged the prospects for an American-Russian entente beyond repair. But to the West's potential good fortune, Russian president Dmitry Medvedev has now signaled otherwise. According to the November 14 Financial Times, speaking shortly before his trip to Washington to a group of Russian and European business leaders, President Medvedev said that Russia could develop "neighborly and partnership-based relations with the U.S." In Washington for the Group of 20 meeting, he repeated the message. The November 16 Washington Post quoted him as saying, "I think we can create in principle a new framework...a partnership between the U.S. and Russia."

Responding to a question before the Council on Foreign Relations, Medvedev sent the message yet again. According to the Post, he said, "In my state of the nation address, I mentioned that Russia has no anti-Americanism, but there are some difficulties in understanding each other. We would like to overcome this with the new administration."

It is imperative that the Obama administration respond positively to this diplomatic opening. After eight years of alienating friends and making more enemies, America is in dire need of fewer enemies and more friends. Russia could be a valuable friend indeed, diplomatically, militarily and economically.

Medvedev offered tantalizing hints about how the issue of missile defense might be handled. Again quoting the Post, he said, "But to my mind we have good opportunities to solve this problem ... to agree either on a global system of protection against rogue states ... or to find ways out in terms of programs existing already." Russian anti-aircraft and anti-missile defense technology is a least as good as our own, maybe better. If the Obama administration is serious about missile defense for Europe, it can be provided far better by working with Russia than by threatening Russia.

Kimball calls “experiments against reality.” We must pretend that there are no meaningful differences between men and women, even on a battlefield, and that gays and normal men and women can mix without serious friction, even in very close quarters. Anyone who refuses to play “let’s pretend” is to find himself in trouble.

The military reformers rightly argued that for winning in combat, people are most important, ideas come second and hardware is only third. Allowing women into the ground combat arms and open homosexuals into the armed services will impact critically important “human factors” in strongly negative ways. They will strike directly at why men fight.

It is a mistake to think that if you call a group of people an army, give them uniforms and hand them some weapons, they will fight. Throughout history, some armies have fought a lot harder than others. The specific reasons vary widely, but one way or another they all come down to human factors.

One of the most basic human factors is that men fight to prove they are real men. They join fighting organizations, whether the U.S. Army or U.S. Marine Corps or MS-13, because those organizations are made up of fighting men. Their membership is a badge of honor that says, “We’re not sissies or pansies. We are men who fight, serving alongside other men who fight.” That tells others and themselves they are real men.

If ideologically-driven policies deprive fighting organizations of their ability to convey that message, men who want to prove they are real men will not join. Instead of men who want to fight and will fight, they will end up recruiting men who join for good pay, or education benefits, or because they can’t get a civilian job. Armies like that may fight when they have no other choice, but if they come up against opponents who want to fight, they will be in trouble.

No two actions would more powerfully undermine the ability of the U.S. armed forces to recruit the kind of men who want to fight than allowing women into the ground combat arms and open gays into the military. How can a man prove his manhood by serving with women and gays? The recruitment of women into the U.S. military has already gone far beyond what military effectiveness would counsel. Martin van Creveld has written a whole book, *Men, Women and War*, arguing that women have essentially no place in a military. President Obama would do well to read it before making any hasty decisions.

President Obama’s first national security test will in fact be a test of his honesty. Will he govern as the centrist he presented himself as being during the campaign? If so, he will allow present policies on women and gays in the military to remain in place. Or, will he reveal himself as a cultural Marxist who deceived the American public in order to get elected and will govern from the left, not the center? If so, we will witness many experiments against reality, with the U.S.

invader and more extreme 4GW elements at the same time, it is probably strong enough to defeat the latter. We have seen this happen in Sunni-controlled regions in Iraq. Once American forces stopped fighting the nationalist Sunni resistance, those Sunni fighters wiped out al Qaeda.

At the same time, it is almost inevitable that the presence of occupying foreign troops will eventually alienate most of the population. When the alienation reaches a degree where it leads the political center to start fighting the occupier, the latter has reached a strategic culminating point (defined in time rather than in space). The longer he remains in country after reaching that point, the weaker his position will become.

If we put these two aspects of our new 4GW culminating point together, we see it marks the moment in time when an occupier both can leave and should leave. Unlike traditional culminating points, this new variety is useful rather than harmful. It helps an invader answer one of the most difficult questions in 4GW, when to leave. Timing a strategic withdrawal is always challenging, but in 4GW it is critical to winning the war. If timed too early, the occupier may open the door to victory by inherently hostile 4GW elements. If timed too late, he risks uniting most of the people against him, which can cost him an army as well as a hostile post-war relationship with the country he invaded. A culminating point that tells him the best moment to withdraw is something a wise occupier will welcome rather than seek to avoid.

What might our new, useful culminating point tell us about the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq? If the new anti-coalition, anti-Taliban grouping in Afghanistan proves real and gains significant strength, it tells the U.S. and NATO it's time to go. The new centrist grouping would have legitimacy, unlike the Karzai puppet regime; if it can fight the Taliban effectively, it would probably represent the best chance of re-creating an Afghan state.

We may be on the cusp of a similar development in Iraq. The former Sunni insurgents now allied with U.S. forces as "the Awakening" have been rejected by the Shiite al-Maliki government, and at some point they will start fighting that government. If Washington reacts stupidly (as it usually does) and orders the U.S. military to fight the Sunnis, the latter will be fighting us and al Qaeda at the same time. Muqtada al-Sadr's militia is preparing for another round with the Americans, this time on the Hezbollah model which relies on small, well-trained units instead of armed mobs. As Shiites, they will be equally hostile to us and to al Qaeda. Once we find ourselves fighting Sunnis and Shiites simultaneously we will have hit the 4GW culminating point.

If the U.S. government and the American armed forces understand the new culminating point, which is doubtful, they will withdraw from Iraq when they see it coming but before they actually hit it. They would thereby avoid a new round of fighting, which they would lose, and avoid a fighting withdrawal, which is always

Those who imagine an Obama victory will see the neo-cons shown the door are in for an unpleasant surprise. Under the guise of neo-libs, they are no less influential in the Democratic establishment than in the Republican. The only way Likud could get shut out of a Democratic administration is if Obama bypasses the whole establishment in choosing his foreign and defense policy appointments. While that is fervently to be wished, it is probably not going to happen. Like figures on a medieval clock, the Republican and Democratic establishments succeed each other in an unbroken chain of policy failure.

A Likud government in Israel come next spring would make two wars virtually certain: a war between Israel and Hezbollah and another between Israel and Iran. The Israeli military leadership recently announced that in the event of another war with Hezbollah, Israel would destroy Lebanon's civilian infrastructure throughout the country. Since the neo-libs will make certain America backs Israel to the hilt, world-wide Islamic anger over the unnecessary destruction of a small, helpless Middle Eastern country (at least a third of whose people are Christians) will focus as much on America as on Israel. Islamic 4GW organizations will get a huge boost to their recruiting and fundraising, while the legitimacy of Islamic states with ties to America will be further weakened.

An Israeli attack on Iran, in turn, could bring about the loss of the army America has in Iraq. If I sound like Cato in repeating this warning endlessly, I do so with reason. The destruction of an entire American army would mark an historic turning point, America's Syracuse Expedition, which is what the Iraq war has resembled from the start. Our strategic position in Iraq hangs by a thread, its long, thin supply line coming up through the Persian Gulf and Kuwait. If Iran and its allied Iraqi Shiite militias cut that line, the best outcome we can hope for is a *saue que peut* withdrawal of U.S. forces north into Kurdistan.

To this happy picture a Likud government in Israel might add a war with Syria and an open U.S. break with Pakistan, driven by Pakistani popular anger at America for its alliance with a Likud-led Israel. That would cut our main supply line for the war in Afghanistan, again forcing a withdrawal.

All of this would occur against a background of a world economic depression, a depression wars in the Middle East would intensify. The price of oil, now artificially depressed by a fire sale of commodities held by hedge funds, would soar to unprecedented heights. Those countries still exporting oil might dump the dollar and demand payment in gold. The American defense budget could skyrocket at a time when the U.S. faced an urgent need to cut federal spending, leading to printing-press dollars and hyperinflation.

It may be that elections in Israel hold more meaning for the United States than does America's own coming vote. One writer quoted in the Washington Post said that if McCain wins, history will pay America a visit, "the shroud, the scythe and all Four Horsemen." That may be no less true if Obama wins, unless he

with severity. They cannot do otherwise without becoming “impure” themselves. It is useful to remind ourselves where the word “Puritan” comes from.

A failure of the al Qaeda model, while welcome, does not imply any weakening of the impulse toward Fourth Generation war. On the contrary, it represents its evolution. 4GW is something new in the post-Westphalian world, and it is likely to go through many cycles of innovation, failure, learning and adaptation as it evolves. I expect that evolution to play out over the course of the 21st century and beyond.

What does the prospective failure of the al Qaeda model mean for other current models? The Taliban model would seem to share al Qaeda’s DNA. When they were in power in Afghanistan, the Taliban also imposed a Puritanism that overrode local cultural norms and thereby alienated much of the population. However, the Taliban also left power with several assets on its balance sheet, assets it continues to draw on. It represented Pashtun dominance of Afghanistan, something all Pashtun regard as natural and necessary (the Karzai regime’s origins are Uzbek and Tajik). Like a state, it brought order. It reduced corruption, now out of control, to locally acceptable levels. And while actually a creation of Pakistan’s ISI, the Taliban successfully presented themselves as something home-grown, which the Karzai government will never be able to do. In terms of the all-important quality of legitimacy, Robespierre always trumps Vichy.

Beyond Afghanistan, the Fourth Generation future belongs neither to al Qaeda nor to the Taliban but to two more sophisticated models, Hezbollah and the Latin American drug gangs. Both can fight, but fighting is not primarily what they are about. Rather, both are about benefiting their members with money, services, community, identity, and, strange as it may sound, what passes locally for good government. Even the drug gangs’ governance is often less corrupt than that of the local state.

Both of these 4GW models can fall into the fatal error of alienating the local population, but the tendency is not inherent. While Hezbollah is religiously defined, it seems to appeal well beyond the Puritans, which means it can give orders Puritans will not obey. The drug gangs’ principal faith is in making money, and few faiths are more broadly latitudinarian.

Andrew Phillips adds to his analysis the prudent warning that “Al Qaeda may have lost Iraq, but this in no way implies that America and its allies have won.” In Iraq as elsewhere, the fading of the al Qaeda model is being balanced not by the rise of a new state but by the adoption of other models of 4GW. So far, as best I can determine, no foreign intervention in a Fourth Generation conflict has succeeded in re-creating a real state (you can add Ethiopia in Somalia to the long list of failures).

On War #276: War on Two Fronts, Without Railways

By William S. Lind

September 30, 2008

One way to look at the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan is to see them as one war with two fronts. Germany fought two-front wars twice in the 20th century, and it was almost able to prevail because it had the advantage of interior lines. The German Army could quickly shift divisions and corps from the Eastern to the Western front or vice versa, using the superb German rail system. Unfortunately, the U.S. lacks the advantage of interior lines in its ongoing two-front war. No railways run from Baghdad to Kabul.

U.S. commanders in Afghanistan have reportedly requested an additional 10,000 troops. Secretary of Defense Robert Gates was recently quoted in the Washington Post as telling the Senate Armed Services Committee, "I believe we will be able to meet that commanders' requirement, but in the spring and summer of 2009...we do not have the forces to send three additional brigades to Afghanistan at this point."

The only source for additional troops for Afghanistan is Iraq. The September 2008 issue of Army magazine quotes Joint Chiefs Chairman Admiral Michael Mullen as saying, "I don't have troops I can reach for, brigades I can reach, to send into Afghanistan until I have a reduced requirement in Iraq."

Without railways running on interior lines, we cannot move three brigades from Iraq to Afghanistan this week, then move them back to Iraq again a few weeks later if the situation there demands them. That means any shift of forces requires long-term stability in Iraq. Neo-con voices in Washington are now claiming "victory" in Iraq, which, if it were true, would release American forces stationed there for redeployment. This appears to be what Secretary Gates is counting on when he says we should be able to meet commanders' request for 10,000 more troops in Afghanistan next spring or summer.

But I fear this represents a falsely optimistic reading of the situation in Iraq. In my view, the current relative quiet in Iraq is merely a pause as the parties there regroup and reorient for the next phase of the war. Unless we have the good sense to get out of Iraq now, while the going is good, we will be stuck there when that next phase starts. We will not then be in a position to shift forces from Iraq to Afghanistan, because without interior lines, any such shift must be long-term.

While most of the stuff on the internet is junk, the junk pile does hold an occasional diamond. One such is a daily report called "NightWatch," written by a retired DIA analyst, John McCreary. As quoted in the Washington Post's "Tom Rick's Inbox," "NightWatch" for September 11, 2008 said that

All of Martin van Creveld's books are worth reading, but a few are "big books," books so important that anyone interested in war must read them. To date, his big books include *The Transformation of War*, *The Rise and Decline of the State and Fighting Power*. Van Creveld's latest book has just come out, and it is a very big book indeed. Titled *The Culture of War*, it targets, hits and obliterates Clausewitz's assertion that war is merely the continuation of politics by other means.

Like John Boyd, van Creveld has engaged in a running feud with Clausewitz. I happen to think Clausewitz still offers much of value, as do many things Prussian. But as Boyd often said, we have learned a few things since Clausewitz's day.

The Culture of War offers one of the most important lessons. War exists not to serve the interests of states, it argues, or anything else. Rather, it is a fundamental part of human nature and culture. No human culture is imaginable that excludes war. At the same time, war and those who fight it develop their own cultures, cultures which shape how war is carried on far more powerfully than do rational calculations of military effectiveness.

It is impossible to summarize a book this rich in a column. Rather than try, let me give two examples from it, both from German military history. The first illustrates the danger of military culture divorcing itself from actual war, the second the consequences of trying to separate military institutions from the culture of war.

After the end of the Seven Years War in 1763, the Prussian army routinized itself to the point where complex and largely useless drills came to be everything. Creveld writes,

Many were especially devised for the king's benefit; the most spectacular, if not the most useful, movement of all was turning a battalion on its own axis, like a top...

However, the extent to which the culture of war had taken over from war itself is nicely illustrated by two contemporary stories. One had (General) von Saldern earnestly debating the pros and cons of increasing the regulation marching speed of seventy-five paces a minute to seventy-six; according to the other, when he went to heaven and explained his system of maneuvers to Gustavus Adolphus, the king answered that he was not aware that in the years since his death the earth had been made flat. Briefly, a thousand details—"pedantries" as Field Marshal Gebhard von Blücher was to call them later—that had originally served a useful purpose now became detached from reality, so to speak. They continued to float about solely as parts of a highly developed culture, one that no longer made sense in any terms except its own.

The result was an army so brittle that, when faced in 1806 with Napoleon, it shattered.

Crevelde's second example is today's German military, the Bundeswehr. Germany's politicians have demanded the Bundeswehr be stripped of all German military traditions, not just those of the Nazi period. Crevelde notes that

At first, only the years 1933-1945 were exorcised. From 1968 on, however, there was a growing tendency to extend the shadows until they covered previous periods. Not only the Panzer leader Heinz Guderian, not only the desert fox Erwin Rommel, but Hans von Seeckt, Paul von Hindenburg, Erich Ludendorff, Alfred von Schieffen, and Helmut von Moltke disappeared. From heroes who had served their country, they were turned into "militarist," "reactionary," and "imperialist" villains; in today's casernes, it is in vain that one looks for their names or their portraits...

In comparison with similar institutions in other countries, German military academies, staff colleges, and other educational institutions have an empty, bare, functional, and soulless appearance. The relics of the "wars of liberation" apart, almost the only items on display pertain to the Bundeswehr's own history. However, since the Bundeswehr has never gone to war, the ability of those items to excite and inspire is limited...

Given the terrible historical background, all this is perfectly understandable. On the other hand, it is indisputable that an armed force, if its members are to fight and die for their country, must have a culture of war...

One does not have to be a "militarist" or a right-wing extremist to note the peculiar smell that prevails throughout the Bundeswehr. That smell is made up of impersonal bureaucratic procedures, political correctness, and the obsequiousness that results when people worry lest speaking up will lead to bad consequences.

Both of these extremes hold lessons for today's U.S. military. The inward-focused culture of the Second Generation that dominates the American armed forces has generated an ever-widening disconnect with the nature of the modern battlefield. That contradiction lies at the heart of the American failures in Iraq and Afghanistan. At the same time, like the Bundeswehr, the U.S. armed forces are under political assault by forces that care nothing for preserving the necessary culture of war. The forced insertion of large numbers of women into the American military is one example. If the next administration opens the combat arms to women and also demands the recruitment of homosexuals, the damage to the culture of war may be vast. The kind of men who fight often join the military to validate their manhood. They cannot do that in armed services heavily peopled with women and homosexuals.

approval. Speaking to the Woodrow Wilson Center, he said, "If we have actionable intelligence about high-value terrorist targets and President Musharraf won't act, we will." President Bush took Senator Obama's recommendation this past July, authorizing such actions.

This is an example of the classic strategic error of sacrificing a more important goal to one of lesser importance. Not even outright defeat in Afghanistan would do America's interests as much damage as would the disintegration of the Pakistani state and the transformation of Pakistan into another stateless region. The state of Pakistan is already dangerously fragile, and actions such as cross-border raids by American troops will diminish its legitimacy further. No government that cannot defend its sovereignty will last. Ironically, if Pakistan collapses, so does our position in Afghanistan, because our main logistics line will be cut. In effect, Obama wants to hand al-Qaeda and the Taliban a double victory.

In June of this year, Obama spoke to the annual AIPAC conference. What he said there about Iran put him once again firmly in the Bush camp:

As President, I will use all elements of American power to pressure Iran. I will do everything in my power to prevent Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon....

There should be no doubt: I will always keep the threat of military action to defend our security and our ally Israel. Do not be confused.

Sometimes there are no alternatives to confrontation. If we must use military force, we are more likely to succeed and have more support at home and abroad if we have exhausted our diplomatic options. That is the change we need in our policy.

In other words, the change we need in our policy is to offer a bit more diplomatic kabuki before we attack Iran.

As I have said repeatedly and will keep on saying, an attack on Iran could cost us the whole army we have in Iraq. It could set the region on fire, from Afghanistan to the Nile. It could create an oil crisis with severe economic consequences at a time when the world economy is tottering. It is, in short, madness. But it is also what Obama promised AIPAC.

Here we see the central reality of American politics shining through the smoke and mirrors. America has a one-party system. That party is the Establishment Party, and its internal disagreements are minor. Both McCain and Obama are Establishment Party candidates. They agree America must be a world-controlling empire. Both men are Wilsonians, believing we must re-make other countries and cultures in our own image. Neither man conceives any real limits, political, financial, military or moral, on American power. McCain and Obama vie only in

nothing to protect the country in question. Poland is a recent example: Britain and France went to war with Germany in 1939 over Poland, but Poland remained an occupied country for 50 years.

NATO membership also increases the pressure to build a toy army, or to specialize in “niche” capabilities like water purification that serve NATO but not home defense. Both are roads to military irrelevance.

There is a model that would work for the Baltic states and other small countries: the Iraqi model. Instead of creating a toy army, they should plan an Iraq-style insurgency against any occupier. This requires a universal militia like Switzerland’s, where every male citizen knows how to shoot and how to build and emplace IEDs and where weapons and explosives are cached all over the country. In the Baltics, this would be a rural rather than an urban defense: Russia could take the cities but not the countryside. The “Forest Brothers” kept up just such a resistance to the Soviet presence well into the 1950s.

An Iraqi-model defense would not make it impossible for Russia to conquer the Baltic states. It could only make such a venture expensive for Russia, hopefully too expensive.

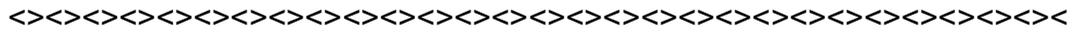
For long-term security, the Baltic states must approach the problem not just at the military but at the grand strategic level. What that means is that, like all small countries bordering Great Powers, they must accommodate the Great Power’s interests. The model here is Finland during the Cold War. Finland maintained complete sovereignty in her domestic affairs, but she was careful to accommodate the Soviet Union in her foreign and defense policies. She was a good neighbor to Russia, as the Baltic states should strive to be good neighbors to Russia now. Their goal should be to create a situation where it is more in Russia’s interests for the Baltics to remain independent than to reincorporate them into the Russian empire.

I realize this advice is unpalatable to the Baltic peoples. Half a century of Soviet occupation has left a residue of hatred for all things Russian. But grand strategy must be based on facts and reason, not emotion. The most important fact is geography. Geography dictates that the Baltic states must accommodate Russian interests, whether they want to or not. If they refuse, then the recent example of Georgia may have more relevance than anyone would wish.

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On War #272: A Deeper Global Crisis

William S. Lind
August 18, 2008

Despite the recent drop in the price of oil, the world economy is still sailing into troubled waters. The U.S. credit crisis is intensifying and spreading to Britain. Europe is moving toward recession. The international financial system continues to depend on mountains of debt. If the financial panic the Federal Reserve Bank has thus far managed to stave off materializes, we could witness a meltdown of historic proportions.

What does all this portend for Fourth Generation warfare? Regrettably, it means the omens are favorable for some non-state entities, especially those which compete with the state in the delivery of vital social services.

Here we must remind ourselves that the root and origin of Fourth Generation war is a crisis of legitimacy of the state. One of the functions the state is now expected to perform, in free market as well as socialist countries, is to ensure that the economy functions as well. A world-wide financial panic followed by a world recession or depression would mean the state was failing in one of its core functions. That in turn would further diminish the legitimacy of the state.

Wilsonians and other “democracy” hucksters think that a state’s legitimacy is a function of elections. Even in established democracies such as the United States, those elections are becoming empty forms, political kabuki in which citizens are not given an opportunity to vote against the New Class. In most of the world elections do not even determine which collection of thieves will next get to plunder the treasury. The game is blatantly rigged.

In poor countries, the state’s legitimacy is more a function of its ability to provide vital services than the election of ju-ju. Often, those services include allowing people to eat. Most people’s diets depend on subsidized state rations, such as the bread ration in Egypt. Recent riots there when the issue of cheap bread was disrupted showed the potential power of hungry mobs.

A world-wide depression would cause hardship in rich countries. In poor countries, it would quickly lead to widespread starvation. The state would no longer be able to provide the subsidized rations millions of its citizens rely on. The rise in world food prices already underway would put states in a double squeeze: the state’s revenues would be falling at the same time that the difference between market and subsidized prices was growing. Add in global

financial panic where credit dries up and we will see the number of failed states rise rapidly.

In the Great Depression of the 1930s, states' economic failure brought governments and even systems of government, including democracy, into question. In both Europe and the United States, Communism and Fascism gained certain popularity because in the Soviet Union, Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany, everyone had a job. But the state itself was not challenged, because there was no alternative to the state.

Now, there is. Intelligent Fourth Generation entities, ranging from some drug gangs through organizations such as Hezbollah, are competing directly with the state for people's primary loyalty. If those Fourth Generation entities can provide basic services, including food, when the state can no longer do so, they will gain the legitimacy that state is losing. In Fourth Generation war, that is a bigger win than any potential military victory.

In terms of 4GW theory, the lessons here are two. First, a global economic crisis is likely to lead to a much deeper crisis, a widespread existential crisis of the state itself. Second, the Fourth Generation entities that benefit from this crisis will be those that provide basic services more effectively than can the state. Once again, just as from a military perspective, we see that the "Hezbollah model" is the most promising model for Fourth Generation, non-state organizations. That model includes a highly competent military that can defeat state armed forces. But it employs its military capability sparingly, fighting only when attacked or when a low-risk, high-payoff military opportunity presents itself, which will be seldom. For 4GW entities as for states, the outcome of wars will remain unpredictable. Instead, the Hezbollah model focuses day-to-day on providing services to the people, building its legitimacy vis-à-vis the state and gaining the population's primary loyalty. At some point, that loyalty will become so strong that not even military defeat by a state's armed forces will destroy it.

Notes:

1. Do not assume the war between Russia and Georgia is over. So long as Mr. Saakashvili remains Georgia's President, he will continue to challenge and taunt Russia. As the last week has made plain, he will be encouraged to do so by the Bush White House, his partner in folly. If Russia does not force his removal from office now, it will have to come back and finish the job.

2. The will no On War column next week, as I will be in Ostland.

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theory. I think Muqtada al-Sadr is attempting to transition from leading a 4GW, non-state entity, the Mahdi Army, to taking over a state.

Like all changes of horses in mid-stream, the operation is delicate and can easily go awry. But Mr. Sadr so far seems to be making all the right moves. As the Wall Street Journal piece reports,

Mr. Sadr began moving away from military operations when he ordered a cease-fire last August after Mahdj Army members clashed with government forces in the southern city of Karbala during a Shiite religious holiday. The fighting represented growing rivalry between Sadr followers and supporters of the main Shiite parties in government ... In February Mr. Sadr extended the cease-fire for an additional six months.

If Muqtada al-Sadr wants to rule Iraq, he cannot let himself and his organization be drawn into Shiite-on-Shiite violence. That would narrow his base when he needs to broaden it, and would also alienate the large majority of Iraqis who want order and security, not more war. The cease-fire and its extension were wise.

The Journal quotes from a new brochure issued by the Mahdi Army leadership that lays out Sadr's next move:

(The) brochure ... states that the Mahdi Army will now be guided by Shiite spirituality instead of anti-American militancy. The group will focus on education, religion and social justice... The brochure also states that it "is not allowed to use arms at all."

Here, the Mahdi Army is clearly taking a page out of Hezbollah's book. Hezbollah's strength comes from its effectiveness and honesty in delivering services to the community that the state cannot provide. The Journal quotes Kenneth Pollack of Brookings as saying, "If the government fails to deliver on basic services and other needs of the Iraqis, Sadr followers could use their new organization to tell people they should look to them as the voices of change." Precisely so. This is a key element of the struggle for legitimacy, which Mr. Sadr seems to understand will be decisive in determining who controls post-occupation Iraq.

Mr. Sadr has promised that small, well-trained elements of the Mahdi Army will continue to attack the Americans, but so far he has held off launching such attacks. That too is wise. He can maintain his anti-American credentials, another key to legitimacy, with less risk by working politically for the Obama-al-Maliki plan, under which the American occupation troops would leave Iraq by 2010. If I were in Sadr's position, I would be organizing massive street demonstrations to demand withdrawal by 2010 be the basis of any new status of forces agreement with the Americans. That is a win-win position. If the Iraqi government demands American withdrawal on that timetable, Sadr can claim the

credit, and if al-Maliki crumbles under American pressure and allows the occupation to continue indefinitely, al-Maliki loses his only chance to gain some legitimacy.

The Mahdi Army will retain its ability to go to war with the Americans if it has to. But that capability is most useful as a “fleet in being,” maintained as a threat but not employed. The threat gives Mr. Sadr more leverage than armed action would buy him, because the Mahdi Army is not strong enough to force the Americans out and it could suffer a military defeat. More, war with the Americans would bring more chaos and suffering to the Iraqi people, for which they might blame Sadr.

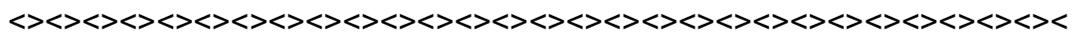
Sadr’s change of horses in mid-stream may of course fail. His movement could come apart under the strain, as militant elements that want to fight the Americans split off. His failure is not in America’s best interest, not only because it would mean more American casualties but also because it would undermine the chance for a new state to arise in Iraq. I continue to think Muqtada al-Sadr represents that best available leader for a new Iraqi state, because only someone who has opposed the occupation can have legitimacy. America only wins in Iraq if and when a new state emerges there, a real state, not a fig-leaf to cover the reality of continued American control.

From the standpoint of Fourth Generation War theory, the Mahdi Army’s attempt to move from its status as a 4GW, non-state entity to an organization that can create and control a new Iraqi state is a hopeful sign. If it succeeds, other 4GW entities may be tempted to do the same. That brings them back within the state framework, a positive development in terms of the interests of the international state system. It is the success and continuation of that system that is America’s most vital interest in the face of Fourth Generation War. Not all 4GW entities will take that track, nor would it be in their interest to do so. But if even some can be drawn back into the framework of the state, the 4GW threat will diminish. Washington will never see it this way, because Washington cannot think strategically. But those who can should pray that Muqtada al-Sadr continues to make all the right moves.

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On War# 269: Why McCain is Wrong

By William S. Lind
July 28, 2008

Senator John McCain's position on the situation in Iraq is wrong on two counts, which means his criticism of Senator Obama is also wrong. The twin pillars of McCain's assessment of the war are a) the surge worked and b) because the surge worked we are now winning. Neither of those views is based in fact.

The first represents the long-recognized logical fallacy known as post hoc ergo propter hoc, i.e., because one event occurred after another, it was a consequence of the first event. Because the cock crows before sunrise, he thinks he makes the sun come up. Because violence in Iraq dropped after the surge, McCain claims the surge caused the reduction in violence. He is quick to add that he supported the surge at the time, which Obama did not. In the real world, neither rooster nor Senator has quite so much reason to strut upon his dunghill.

The reduction in violence in Iraq, which is likely to prove temporary, has four causes, the least of which is the surge.

In order of importance, they are:

1. Al Qaeda's alienation of much of its Sunni base, a consequence of its attempt to impose its Puritanical version of Islam before it won the war and consolidated power. This is a common error of revolutionary movements. The smart ones back off and take a "broad front" strategy until the war is won, at which point they cut their "moderate" allies' throats. Al Qaeda's non-hierarchical structure, coupled with the message it employs to recruit, may prevent it from adopting a broad front strategy. If so, that may prove a fatal weakness.

2. A change in policy by the U.S. Marines in Anbar Province whereby they stopped attacking the Sunni population and started paying it instead. As the FMFM 1-A argues, in 4GW, cash is your most important supporting arm. The Marines' new policy, which has now spread to the U.S. Army and beyond Anbar, enabled the locals to turn on al Qaeda and its brutally enforced Puritanism.

3. General Petraeus's decision to move U.S. troops off their FOB's and into populated areas where they could protect the population instead of merely protecting themselves.

4. Last and least, the surge, which made more troops available for #3. Absent the other three developments, the surge would have achieved nothing.

In his first assertion, Senator McCain is claiming credit where credit is not due. In his second, that we are winning in Iraq, he fails to understand what "winning" means in a Fourth Generation conflict.

The current reduction in violence in Iraq does not mean we are winning. Nor does al Qaeda's incipient defeat mean we are winning. We win only if a state re-emerges, the state we destroyed by our invasion. A reduction in violence and the defeat of al Qaeda are necessary preconditions for the re-emergence of a state, but they are not sufficient to ensure it.

A state will be re-established in Iraq only if and when authority comes from a person's position in the state hierarchy, e.g., governor, minister, mayor, army or police commander, functionary, etc. Services must also come from the state. At present, as best as I can determine, this is happening seldom. If at all. Rather, authority derives from non-state bases such as relationship to a tribe, clan or militia, and services are provided by the U.S. military, NGOs, and Iraqi militias or religious organizations. An Iraqi who holds a nominal state office may have authority, but his authority is not a product of his state office. A local Iraqi government may provide some services, but the government in Baghdad is seldom the source of the resources or authority to provide those services.

In fact, the relative peace now prevailing in Iraq is largely the product of deals the U.S. military has made with real non-state Iraqi authority figures. These deals were both necessary and prudent, but they represent de facto acceptance of the reality that there is no state.

So McCain is wrong on both counts. The fact that a Presidential candidate is fundamentally wrong on so important a subject as the war in Iraq is disturbing. More disturbing is the nature of the errors. Both represent carryovers of Bush administration practices. The first, stating that the surge is the cause of reduced violence, represents the Bush White House's cynical practice of assuming the American people are too stupid to understand anything even slightly complex. The second, claiming we are winning the Iraq war, represents President Bush's policy of making statements that are blatantly at odds with reality and figuring that if the truth catches up with them, it will do so too late to alter the course of events. It was the latter practice that got us into the Iraq war in the first place.

Together, the twin pillars of McCain's Iraq assessment, both built of sand, give substance to the Democrats' charge that a McCain Presidency would represent a third term for George Bush. They also raise the question of whether they are honest mistakes or, like the arguments the Bush White House used to sell the Iraq conflict, simply lies. One would hate to think that McCain's "straight talk" comes from a forked tongue, but the parallels with Bush administration practices are too obvious to overlook.

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By William S. Lind
July 15, 2008

The war as in life, the secret to success is having a wide range of options. That was the basis of von Moltke's approach to operational art, as opposed to the Schlieffen school's myopic focus on one option. The list of commanders and nations whose single option failed is a long one.

Regrettably, whoever takes over as America's President and Commander in Chief next January will face a rapidly narrowing range of options. With the fall of Communism and the dissolution of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s, America was given an almost limitless range of options. A series of bad decisions since that time have reduced that range to a paltry few, none of them particularly attractive. Running the narrows with a ship of state is a perilous enterprise.

In foreign affairs, most of the rest of the world is now hoping to see America take a fall. We have alienated the Russians, irritated the Chinese and dragged the Europeans into a "war against terror" that finds little support outside ruling elites. Virtually every European public would vote to pull out of Afghanistan tomorrow if given the chance. The elites go along only because of a residual fear of "losing the Americans," much as Berlin feared "losing the Austrians" if she did not support Vienna in 1914. Both were allied to a corpse, which at some point even the wizened moles who govern Europe may discern.

Militarily, the US has managed the contortionist's feat of getting various body parts stuck in different pits of quicksand. Washington counts on Iraq gaining stability, but the absence of a state means it can go unstable again overnight. The Afghan war is going the way Afghan wars do, as the Pashtun slowly get their act together to push the occupier out. Spillover from the war in Afghanistan is destabilizing Pakistan, with Washington accelerating the process by putting impossible demands on that country's leaders. Finally, the likelihood of an attack on Iran by the US or by Israel acting as a proxy grows, which would in turn pitch Iraq back into chaos as all the Shiite militias ganged up on us.

More, the money is about to run out. We seem to have forgotten that no activity the state can undertake is more expensive than war. If a tanking economy cuts off the money flow, what comes next? The Sunday, July 12 Cleveland Plain Dealer quotes a local investment advisor saying, "A year ago, I would have discounted the scenario of the next depression. After what I've seen this year, I don't discount anything anymore." The Fed is trying to head off a full-scale financial panic by turning itself into a pawnshop, but no one knows how long that trick will work. The whole Ponzi scheme that is the current US economy still depends on an inflow of \$2 billion in foreign, money daily. What happens if, or when, that flow ceases?

Nonetheless, some lessons for Fourth Generation wars may be drawn, because the way in which the war is fought — a guerilla-style insurgency — similar to many (not all) Fourth Generation conflicts. The recent successful rescue of hostages long held by the FARC is a case in point. It was a brilliant victory for the Colombian government and armed forces, on all levels, including the moral level. What might the U.S. Armed Forces learn from it that they could apply in Iraq, Afghanistan, and (we fear) elsewhere?

First, it illustrated the advantage mental cleverness has over brute firepower. The Colombians' previous foray, the aerial bombing of a FARC camp in Ecuador, blew up in their face. In contrast, the hostage rescue made the Colombians look both brave and smart and the FARC appear to be the Three Stooges. The FARC was not bombed or blown up, it was outsmarted. It has no martyrs to off the public or its supporters, just its clownish face covered in pie. The FARC was made a laughingstock, which is the worst blow that can be inflicted upon any political organization.

Second, the combination of outsmarting the FARC with the fact that no one on either side was hurt, much less killed, allows this action to count as an unmixed victory, a rarity in this kind of war. Usually, a victory at the physical level generates blowback on the mental and moral level. Not here. It was a real triple-play. The fact that the testimony of the rescued hostages made the FARC, not the government forces, into the bully adds to the score.

Third, the operation was a strategic success because it was a Colombian, not an American, operation. Had American forces gone in and done exactly the same thing, the action would have made the Colombian government look weak, not strong. It would have undermined rather than strengthened its legitimacy. Most Latin Americans would have seen the rescue as one more humiliation of fellow Hispanics by the North Americans, and they would have identified with the FARC rather than laughing at it.

The reason the FARC now seems to be on the ropes and, one hopes, going down for the count is that it is fighting a Colombian enemy, not an American enemy. As several observers have noted, while almost no foreign occupiers have defeated insurgencies, the local state has sometimes won.

I am sure the United States played some role in the Colombian hostage rescue, but for once we seem to have been smart enough to keep our mouth shut about it. Whoever is running the show there for us — I think it is an admiral — seems to understand the value of a small footprint. We had another admiral who knew his business running the show for a while in the Persian Gulf, Admiral Fallon. The Bush White House fired him for the mortal sin of committing truth, a sin his successor is not likely to repeat.

Germany deliberately started both World Wars as part of a drive to conquer the world, a drive stopped when valiant American armies defeated the German army. And, oh yes, some Brit named Churchill beat the Luftwaffe in the Battle of Britain. Thanks to the victories of the freedom-loving allies, we now live in the best of all possible worlds, where everyone can be a “democracy.”

Nothing of the comic-book version of history is true, not even the Battle of Britain bit. Curiously, the key British records from the Battle of Britain remain classified “secret;” it seems the RAF was on the ropes. Buchanan goes after the rest of it with spirit and zest, demolishing it utterly. As Colonel House told Woodrow Wilson after talking extensively with Kaiser Wilhelm in 1915, the Kaiser neither wanted nor expected war. I have seen the last, desperate telegram he sent the Tsar, trying to avoid a general European war. He was mocked for years before the war by many Germans as the “Peace Kaiser” because in crisis after crisis he backed down. Kaiser Wilhelm knew, as did Theodore Roosevelt, that a World War would cost the West its world dominance.

Because World War I was unnecessary, so was World War II, which was really a resumption of World War I. Buchanan goes further and argues that had Britain and France not offered a wildly imprudent guarantee to Poland in the spring of 1939, there would have been no war in the West. Hitler wanted to fight Stalin, not the Western powers. That too is true, but Buchanan makes one assumption I am not so sure of, namely that Germany would have defeated the USSR. As it was, World War II was fought mostly in the east, and it was the Red Army, not the comparatively small British and American armies, that defeated the Wehrmacht. Could Stalin have done it alone? Maybe.

In both World Wars, the U.S. came out a winner because it left most of the fighting to others. In World War I, Germany was defeated by the (under international law, illegal) starvation blockade. The French army bore the brunt of the war in the west. Buchanan’s debunking of Churchill is thorough and valuable. Churchill was brilliant, forceful, imprudent, and often wrong. A howler for war both in 1914 and 1939, he may not have sought to preside over the dissolution of the British Empire, but it was his own fault he did so. Prudence, which means evaluating prospective actions in terms of their probable long-term effects, is conservatives’ first political principle, and the debacles created by Churchill illustrate why. At heart, he was far more Whig than Tory. Burke would have loathed him.

Buchanan’s historical revisionism is welcome on several counts. The neo-cons have elevated an unhistorical Churchill into the patron of interventionism, selling him in Washington and elsewhere like saints’ bones. It is a snare for the simple, with George W. Bush numbered among them.

Debunking comic-book history and replacing it with the real thing is vital if America is to avoid the dual trap of cultural Marxism and Brave New World. As

constantly shifting network of deals and alliances among Iraq's warlords has created a stable interlude. Those alliances will continue to shift, and as they do so violence will rise again. How many reporters are asking the talking dog majors who brief the press the central strategic question, namely whether there is any evidence a state is re-emerging in Iraq? As best I can tell, none. The same number appears to be trying to answer that question from other, more reliable sources.

The reporting on Afghanistan is if anything worse. On Sunday, June 22, the Cleveland Plain Dealer, a paper I like, printed an AP article under the headline, "Marines drive Taliban from volatile province," namely Helmand. The article itself more modestly claims victory in one Helmand town, Garmser. If the 24th MEU has driven the Taliban out of Helmand province, I'll eat my yurt. One town, maybe, but what does taking a town mean in a guerrilla war? When the Marines leave, which they will, the Taliban will return.

The fact of the matter is, the whole NATO/American effort in Afghanistan is circling the drain. The American papers should be full of in-depth, multi-sourced stories about the war there. A friend just back from Britain reports that the British press is full of just such stories. In one recent ten-day period, the Brits lost nine soldiers killed, including their first woman. Was that reported anywhere in the U.S. press?

What lies behind the decline in the quality of American reporting? Cutbacks in the size of newsrooms are part of the answer. As the electronic image replaces the printed word, newspapers are dying. To those who know that perceiving reality requires more than shadows on the cave wall, that is bad news.

Lazy reporters are another part of the answer. It is easy to print the bulletins. Reporters have always been lazy, but now their editors let them get away with it. Not too many decades ago, any reporter who single-sourced a story would have been sent back on the street to get more sources, with a richness of invective editors seldom lacked.

But the biggest reason, I suspect, is intellectual cowardice. After the defeat in Vietnam, many supporters of the war blamed the press for our failure. By printing the bad news, the press supposedly undermined popular support for the war and thereby caused our defeat. It's poppycock, of course. The Vietnam War was lost early in the game when MACV, at the demand of General William Depuy, ordered an end to efforts to control the populated coastal lowlands in favor of fighting formal battles against enemy main force units in the highlands. Those units were sent there as bait, which MACV took.

But the American press was scarred by the accusations. Now, it is afraid to be accused of "not supporting the troops" if it does anything but print the bulletins. So the American public gets the mushroom treatment, and two failed wars

corps.” So they remain today. Several years ago, an instructor at the U.S. Army Armor School at Ft. Knox began his first lecture by saying, “I don’t know why I have to teach you all this old French crap, but I do.”

The answer to that captain’s question is also illustrated in *Pyrrhic Victory*. Militaries have enormous continuity over time. Prior to World War I, the French Army’s doctrine was to take the offensive under all circumstances. That doctrine killed almost half-a-million French soldiers in the four months from August to November of 1914 and nearly cost France the war then. Nonetheless, it kept rearing its head again and again throughout the war, despite Petain’s bitter and justified resistance. Reincarnated in the Nivelle offensive in April, 1917, it failed again so disastrously that the French Army mutinied.

The common picture of World War I is of dunderheaded inability to learn on the part of all participants. It was certainly not true of the Germans, but Doughty’s book tends to confirm the image for the Allies. The French, for all their slowness in giving up the offensive à outrance, nonetheless learned faster than the British, Russians or Americans, all of whom seemed to measure success in own casualties. In the AEF’s appallingly bad staff work lies the origin of another outdated habit of the U.S. military, the fixation of its schools on developing staff officers rather than commanders. The astounding degree to which the early 21st century U.S. armed forces still revolve around World War I is evident to historians but apparently invisible to American soldiers and Marines.

There is also a lesson about learning in the Germany Army in *Pyrrhic Victory*, though it must be read between the lines. Doughty makes clear just how close the great German offensive of 1918 came to success. Why did it fail? As General Max Hoffman, one of the best operational minds in the First World War German Army, hints in his memoirs, German operational reserves were mal-deployed. That, I think, was at least in part a consequence of Germany’s fixation of developing the tactics that broke the deadlock of the trenches. Focusing on just one aspect of the challenge, the Germans neglected and thereby forgot some of their expertise at operational art — fatally, since in war a higher level dominates a lower.

These lessons are all relevant to the U.S. military in Iraq and Afghanistan today, because they are lessons about how militaries learn, or fail to, or learn one thing but forget another. Could someone someday write a book about our current wars with the title *Pyrrhic Victory*? No, because we are not going to win those wars. Is there such a thing as *Pyrrhic* defeat?

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When the world was young and hope dared live in Washington, a small group of people put together something called the Military Reform Movement. Its purpose was to measure defense policies and programs by the standard of what works in combat rather than who benefits financially. Launched in the 1970s, it peaked in the early 1980s and was gone by 1990. Why did it fail? Because in a contest between ideas and money, the money always wins.

Two authors, Winslow Wheeler and Larry Korb, recently published a history of the Military Reform Movement, *Military Reform: A Reference Handbook*. Win Wheeler was in the thick of it at the time as a staffer to several members of the Congressional Military Reform Caucus. Larry Korb was at most on the peripheries, one of Washington's innumerable unemployed jockies looking for a horse to ride.

To make my own position clear, I was a staffer first to the Senator who started the whole thing, Bob Taft, Jr. of Ohio, then to Secretary Gary Hart, who gave the movement its name and founded the Caucus (with Congressman Bill Whitehurst of Virginia). I was also part of the informal "Reform Group," which included John Boyd, Pierre Sprey, Jeff Record and Norman Polmar, that did the intellectual work for the Caucus.

The book's stronger chapters are those by Wheeler, who pulls no punches when discussing the ways various members of Congress betrayed the reform cause. The "Washington Game" is to create an image with the public that is a direct opposite to what the Senator or Congressman actually does behind closed doors, and the Caucus saw plenty of that game. Standouts were Senator Bill Cohen of Maine, who attended Caucus meetings while busily working with Senator John Tower to block any reform of the Navy (he went on to be perhaps the most ineffectual Secretary of Defense in the Department's history); Newt Gingrich, who really "got" reform and played a big role in the early history of the Caucus, then did nothing to advance its ideas once he gained power; and Dick Cheney, who also used reform to generate an image and now, as Vice President, does nothing.

As I said years ago to a Marine friend who was trying to get a job on Capitol Hill, working as Hill staff is the post-doctoral course in spiritual proctology. Wheeler's chapters dissect many an ass.

He does an equally good job on the press, which did what it always does: build something up (which creates news) and then tear it down again (which creates more news). What drew many members of Congress to the Reform Caucus was the opportunity it offered to get some good ink. When the wind started blowing the other way, those illustrious legislators blew with it. But the corruption of the press itself is a story told less often, and it needs telling. Why do defense companies buy full-page ads in major newspapers? Not because anyone buys a

approach to one of 4GW's most difficult theoretical challenges, namely the relationship between the three traditional levels of war – tactical, operational, and strategic – and John Boyd's three new levels of war, the physical, the mental and the moral. The seminar that wrote the FMFM 1-A, Fourth Generation War, wrestled endlessly with this problem with little success. If what I will lay out here works – which I leave to others to judge – it may represent a step forward.

The major general leading the conference asked for two products, a "Why We're There" statement and some sort of graphic that could serve as an evaluative tool over the long term. Thinking about the second, it seemed to me the place to start was with a mission-type order that would encompass the whole British effort. The commander's intent is clear: restore order in Helmand province. 4GW theory suggests the Schwerpunkt should be de-escalation, because that is what promises to be decisive in restoring order. What we need is a "mission generator" that permits us to evaluate missions in terms of supporting the intent and the Schwerpunkt.

I suggested a simple grid, three boxes across and three down. Those across would be labeled "Physical," "Mental" and "Moral;" those down, "Tactical," "Operational" and "Strategic."

*

How would the grid work to evaluate possible missions? Let's consider three examples, looking just at the basics; in a column, I don't have the space to fill in every box. First, killing the enemy: physically it reduces threats to order, mentally it makes some potential enemies afraid to fight us, but morally it turns us into Goliath and also obligates the relatives of those we kill to fight us in their blood-feud culture. Going down, it counts as a win tactically, offers little but attrition operationally and works against us strategically because every fight is an escalation that diminishes order. Since a higher level dominates a lower, on both scales killing the enemy is a net negative.

Next, consider capturing the enemy. Physically, it is harder and riskier than killing him. Mentally, it may be less frightening and thus less effective. But morally it works in our favor because the strong appear merciful (assuming prisoners are treated well) and a suspicion of cowardice hangs over anyone who surrenders. Looking down, a capture is equal tactically to a kill as a win, operationally it is still just attrition but strategically it is a plus because captives are useful chips in bargaining de-escalatory deals. Net result: missions should put a premium on capture vice killing.

Let's look at one more example, this time originating at the operational level. How might our grid help us evaluate moving out of FOB's into villages, towns and cities? Physically, the risk to our troops goes up. Mentally, we may be more apprehensive but the people become less frightened of us as they get to know us. Morally, it is a huge plus because we are now protecting the people instead

If we are to see Iraq and other Fourth Generation conflicts as they are and not through the looking glass, we need to use words more carefully. Because there is no state in Iraq, there is also no government. Orders given in Baghdad have no meaning, because there are no state institutions to carry them out. The governmental positions of Iraqi leaders have no substance. Their power is a function of their relationship to various militias, not of their offices. (Mr. al-Maliki has no militia, which means he is a figurehead.) The Iraqi “army” and “police” are groupings of Shiite militias, which exist to fight other militias and which take orders from militia leaders, not the government. Government revenues are slush funds militia leaders use to pay their militiamen. All of these phenomena, and many more, are products of the one basic reality: there is no state.

The failure of Mr. al-Maliki’s “big push” into Basra put Iraq’s statelessness on display. Ordered to do something it did not want to do, the Iraqi “army” fell apart, as militias usually fall apart when given unwelcome directives. Iraqi “soldiers” and “police” went over or went home, in considerable numbers. Those who did fight had little fight in them; the affair reportedly ended with the Mahdi Army controlling more of Basra than it did at the beginning. Mr. al-Maliki, desperate for a cease-fire, had to agree in advance to any conditions Muqtada al-Sadr cared to impose.

American policy proved even more reckless than that of Mr. al-Maliki. To win in Iraq, we must see a state re-emerge. That means we should stay out of the way of anyone with the potential to recreate a state. Muqtada al-Sadr is at or near the head of the list. The al-Maliki “government” isn’t even on it.

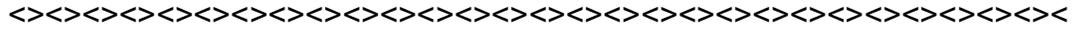
So what did we do? Why, we went to war against al-Sadr on behalf of al-Maliki, of course. Our leadership cannot grasp one of the most basic facts about 4GW, namely that the splintering of factions makes it more difficult to generate a state. Should we have the bad luck to “win” this latest fight and destroy the Mahdi Army, we will move not toward but further away from that goal.

In the end, the Administration’s (and the Pentagon’s) insistence that the Iraqi state, government, army and police are real blinds only themselves. Iraqis know they are not. The American public knows they are not. The average Hottentot probably knows they are not. Do the members of the Senate Committees on Armed Services and Foreign Relations know less than the average Hottentot? So last week’s hearings might suggest, and such is the power of empty words.

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On War #257: Die Panzerwaffe

By William S. Lind

Bruce Gudmundsson, author of the best book on the development of modern tactics by the German Army in World War I, *Stormtroop Tactics*, has a new book out. Its title is *On Armor* (link is to the 2004 edition on Amazon), but thankfully it is not another book about tanks. Most books about tanks, like most books about fighting ships and combat aircraft, fall in the category of children's literature. Their invariable theme is "Look at the big tank/cruiser/fighter go bang/boom/splat."

In contrast, what *On Armor* offers is tanks and other armored fighting vehicles in multiple contexts. The contexts, not the tanks make this book valuable and important.

One context is combined arms. That tanks fight as one element of combined arms may seem obvious today, but as Gudmundsson notes, it was not obvious to many early tank theorists. Much of *On Armor* is devoted to discussing the evolution of armored units and the many types of vehicles other arms required if they were to work with tanks. Armored personnel carriers, mechanized Sturm and anti-tank artillery, and armored cars all share the limelight here with tanks. More important than the vehicles are the functions other arms performed when working with tanks. Gudmundsson correctly writes that in World War II the Germans always made an initial breakthrough with infantry, saving the tanks for exploitation. Furthermore, when they tried breaking through with tanks, they failed.

Particularly good is *On Armor's* discussion of the evolution of the *Sturmeschutz* and *Panzerjager* in World War II. In the 1970's, in a small group discussion with General Hermann Balck, someone asked him how, on the Eastern Front, he had used these two vehicle types compared to the way he used tanks. He replied, "I used them all the same way." When he was asked about the utility of motorcycles, another vehicle type covered by *On Armor*, he said, "Their only problem was that I could never get enough of them."

Another context that runs through *On Armor* is the tension between two characteristics armored vehicles require if they are to be effective, operational mobility and tactical combat power. Gudmundsson establishes this context at the outset, on the book's first page:

On Armor is not just another book about tanks. Rather, it is an attempt to make sense of nearly a hundred years of interplay between the two definitive characteristics of armored fighting vehicles – tactical utility and operational

mobility. (The former is the ability to fight. The latter is the ability to rapidly travel over long distances in the absence of significant enemy forces.)

The U.S. Army, which has only the most rudimentary understanding of operational art, has designed its tanks, especially the M-1 Abrams, for tactical utility with little thought for operational mobility. This is typical of Second Generation, French-model armies. The Abrams is essentially the latest version of the French Char B.

In contrast, German and Soviet tanks were designed to serve a doctrine of operational mobility. Not many years ago, a friend of mine was being shown over the German Leopard II tank by a German officer, who kept stressing the tank's wide tracks. Puzzled, the American finally asked, "What's the big deal about wide tracks?" The German officer replied, "The Pripet marshes!"

On Armor concludes with an especially thoughtful discussion of the future of armor. Gudmundsson writes,

At the beginning of the story, these two characteristics (operational mobility and combat power) are embodied in very different classes of vehicles. Light armored vehicles (initially armored cars and trucks) had operational mobility while tanks had combat power...In the middle of the story, which also coincides with the middle of the twentieth century, the two principle virtues of the armored vehicle are embodied in a single class of vehicle: an all-purpose tank such as the German Panzer III, the Soviet T-34, or the American Sherman. It was not long, however, before the two lines began to diverge again. By the end of the twentieth century, it was no longer possible to combine both operational mobility and first-class combat power in a single vehicle.

I am not sure it is no longer possible, and I would probably use the German Panzer IV with the long-barreled 75 mm gun rather than the Panzer III as the German example, but Gudmundsson is correct about the divergence. The U.S. Marine Corps' wheeled Light Armored Vehicle was originally conceived as a way to give some Marine units operational mobility at a time when the M-1 Abrams was taking it away from tank battalions. On Armor is a fine book, one that is essential to understand many of the developments in land warfare in the 20th century. Fourth Generation war renders much of the history that and nothing more; in 4Gw conflicts, all tanks in effect become Sturmgeschütze.

Operational art is practiced on the mental and moral levels of war as great sweeps of armored formations deep in the enemy's rear become militarily meaningless.

But history remains important as a history of how people thought through the problems of earlier times. On Armor offers that history of armored warfare better than any other book on the subject.

question I have not seen addressed is what percentage of the troops for #3 were already in the country. My bet is a large majority.

If we look at where each of these is now going, we see rough water ahead:

1. Al Qaeda in Iraq and other anti-U.S. forces (there are many) are both attacking and penetrating Sunni militias now working with U.S. forces; the latter is likely to prove more effective. U.S. forces are also killing Sunni militiamen who are working with us, by accident of course, but sufficiently often to strain relations. Much of this results from our counter-productive and just plain stupid continued use of air power in a country we occupy. American attack aircraft are al Qaeda's (and the Taliban's) best friends. The most powerful alienating factor is the irreconcilable hostility between most Sunnis and the Shiite government in Baghdad. The Sunnis know we created the government and remain allied to it. The government fears any armed Sunnis. We are left with one foot on the boat and one on the dock, a position that is difficult to sustain indefinitely.

2. Muqtada al-Sadr is feeling increasing pressure from his "street" to respond to U.S. attacks (again, often by aircraft) on Shiite neighborhoods. He has quietly been using U.S. and Iraqi government forces to "whack" dissenters within his own movement. But this can easily blow back on him. At this point his "street cred" is or soon will be on the line, at which point he has to respond or see his militia fragment (which is the natural tendency of everything in 4GW). The Mahdi Army can send U.S. casualties soaring overnight.

3. Any rise in American casualties means politicians in Washington will want U.S. troops to head back to the FOBs. The absurd American definition of "force protection" means many within the military will want to do the same. Petraeus will stay the course (in this case, rightly), but he's on his way out. Having gotten this right doesn't mean we won't get it wrong again.

4. The extra troops brought over by the surge will go home this summer. Again, this is far less important than what the remaining troops do, and points #1 and #2 also, but it is a factor.

The main story of the current lull is one of lost opportunity. Whether soon or in the more distant future, the war in Iraq will get hotter again. The lull gave us what might be our only opportunity to leave Iraq with some tailfeathers intact. Just as the Bush administration's blindness got us into this war, so its rigidity made us pass over our best change to get out. Like opportunity, Mars only knocks once. Next time, he blows the building.

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Simultaneously, Iran activates the Shiite militias to cut the roads that lead from Kuwait to Baghdad. Both the Mahdi Army and the Badr Brigades — the latter now supposedly our allies — enter the war against us with their full strength. Ayatollah Sistani, an Iranian, calls on all Iraqi Shiites to fight the Americans wherever they find them. Instead of fighting the 20% of Iraqis population that is Sunni, we find ourselves battling the 60% that is Shiite. Worse, the Shiites logistics lie directly across those logistics lines coming up from Kuwait.

U.S. Army forces in Iraq begin to run out of supplies, especially POL [petroleum, oil, and lubricants], of which they consume a vast amount. Once they are largely immobilized by lack of fuel, and the region gets some bad weather that keeps our aircraft grounded or at least blind, Iran sends two to four regular army armor and mech divisions across the border. Their objective is to pocket American forces in and around Baghdad.

The U.S. military in Iraq is all spread out in penny packets fighting insurgents. We have no field army there anymore. We cannot reconcentrate because we're out of gas and Shiite guerrillas control the roads. What units don't get overrun by Iranian armor or Shiite militia end up in the Baghdad Kessel. General Petraeus calls President Bush and repeats the famous words of Marshal MacMahon at Sedan: "Nous sommes dans une pot de chambre, and nous y serron emerdee." Bush thinks he's overheard Petraeus ordering dinner — as, for Bush, he has.

U.S. Marines in Iraq, who are mostly in Anbar province, are the only force we have left. Their lines of supply and retreat through Jordan are intact. The local Sunnis want to join them in fighting the hated Persians. What do they do at that point? Good question.

How probable is all this? I can't answer that. Unfortunately, the people in Washington who should be able to answer it are not asking it. They need to start doing so, now.

It is imperative that we have an up-to-date plan for dealing with this contingency. That plan must not depend on air power to rescue our army. Air power always promises more than it can deliver.

As I have warned before, every American ground unit in Iraq needs its own plan to get itself out of the country using only its own resources and whatever it can scrounge locally. Retreat to the north, through Kurdistan into Turkey, will be the only alternative open to most U.S. Army units, other than ending up in an Iranian POW camp.

Even if the probability of the above scenario is low, we still need to take it with the utmost seriousness because the consequences would be so vast. If the United States lost the army it has in Iraq, we would never recover from the defeat. It would be another Adrianople, another Manzikert, another Rocroi. Given

First, adopt a defensive rather than an offensive grand strategy. America followed a defensive grand strategy through most of her history. We only went to war if someone attacked us. That defensive grand strategy kept defense costs down and allowed our economy to prosper. We do not have to be party to every quarrel in the world.

Second, scrap virtually all the big ticket weapons programs such as new fighter-bombers, more Aegis ships, and the Army's Rube Goldbergian Future Combat System. They are irrelevant to where war is going.

We should not plan for conventional wars against hypothetical "peer competitors," which can only be Russia or China. We should do our utmost to make Russia an ally, and we should make a fundamental, bi-partisan national strategic decision that we will not go to war with China. Regardless of who "won" such a war, it would destroy both countries, just as the two World Wars destroyed both Germany and Britain. The world needs China to serve as a source of order in what will be an increasingly disorderly 21st century. We should welcome the growth of Chinese power, just as Britain learned (reluctantly) to welcome the growth of American power in the 20th century. It is only a threat to us if we make it one.

Third, as we cut, preserve combat units. That means, above all, Army and Marine Corps infantry battalions. Cut the vast superstructure above those battalions, but keep the battalions. Infantry battalions are what we need most for Fourth Generation wars, which we should do our utmost to avoid but which we will sometimes be drawn into, even with a defensive grand strategy.

In the Navy, keep the submarines. Submarines are today's and tomorrow's capital ships, and geography dictates we must remain a maritime power. Keep the carriers, too, though there is little need to build more of them. Carriers are big, empty boxes, which can carry many things besides aircraft. Mothball most of the cruisers and destroyers. Build lots of small, cheap ships useful for controlling coastal and inland waters, and create strategically mobile and sustainable "packages" of such ships. Being able to control waters around and within stateless regions can be important in 4GW.

Fighter-bombers are largely useless in Fourth Generation wars, where their main role is to create collateral damage that benefits our enemies. Keep the air transport squadrons and the A-10s, and move them all to the Air National Guard, which flies and maintains aircraft as well as or better than the regular Air Force at a fraction of the cost. Reduce the regular Air Force to strategic nuclear forces and a training base.

In all the services, vastly reduce the baggage train: the higher headquarters, the development commands, the education bureaucracies and the armies of

British Navy in the Dutch Wars, the line ahead replaced the general melee. The two developments were causally related: the line ahead was adopted when generals took command of the British fleet under the Commonwealth.

The First Generation lasted about two centuries, centuries in which the culture of state militaries was formed. Linearity on the battlefield carried over directly into that culture, where it remains today. In Second Generation militaries, such as the American, the tactics too remained largely linear. As late as the First Gulf War a battalion commander in the Second Marine Division was nearly relieved for “breaking the line” when he pulled his unit back to avoid an Iraqi fire sack.

The expectation of linearity lies behind much of the U.S. military’s misreading of the current situation in Iraq. If you look at its projections of success, they follow a line. It foresees a linear “building process” where its alliance with some Sunni militias in Anbar province and parts of Baghdad leads to similar alliances elsewhere, with no regression in “pacified” areas. Similarly, it expects the Sunnis to follow their acceptance of U.S. forces with acceptance of the Shiite-dominated government in Baghdad and its army and police. These lines, which lead to improved security, then mesh with other lines such as economic and political developments that represent the re-emergence of a state in Iraq. It graphs nicely as a series of vectors on a chart, all pointing up. Linearity has marched from Waterloo to PowerPoint.

Unfortunately, Fourth Generation wars (and many other types of war as well) are not linear. Rather, they are chaotic, an unending melee of coming together and splitting apart that leaves an occupier running in place. Seemingly linear progress is matched or exceeded by non-linear regression. The state military perceives the former much more readily than the latter because linearity is what it expects. You find what you seek, whether or not it is there.

The reality in Iraq is that both Sunnis and Shiites are split along many different axes. Factions come together in temporary alliances of convenience, including with the foreign occupiers, only to split apart again and fight former allies. Reality for all parties is local and short-term. To the Iraqis, one alliance, such as with the Americans, does not imply any other alliance, such as with the central government. Arrangements that appear contradictory to us are natural to them. Linear progress toward a set of goals that represent a state is not what they expect. Our linearity and their non-linearity are ships passing in the night.

It will happen from time to time that the chaos shakes out into patterns in which we can see linear progress. But the reality remains chaos, which means the patterns will soon reform into other, quite different shapes. We cannot anticipate what those shapes might be. If we can be quick enough, we may be able to use some of those new shapes, as we have used the unexpected outbreak of fighting between local Sunni militias and al Qaeda. What we must not do, if our

On War #251: War or Not War?

By William S. Lind

Between February 8 and February 14, four American schools suffered attacks by lone gunmen. The most recent, at Northern Illinois University on February 14, saw five killed (plus the gunman) and 16 wounded. Similar attacks have occurred elsewhere, including shopping malls.

Is this war? I don't think so. Some proponents of "Fifth Generation war," which they define as actions by "superempowered individuals," may disagree. But these incidents lack an ingredient I think necessary to war's definition, namely purpose. In Fourth Generation War, the purpose of warlike acts reaches beyond the state and politics, but actions, including massacres of civilians, are still purposeful. They serve an agenda that reaches beyond individual emotions, an agenda others can and do share and fight for. In contrast, the mental and emotional states that motivate lone gunmen are knowable to them alone.

The whole "Fifth Generation" thesis is faulty, in any case. However small the units that fight wars may become, down to the "superempowered individual," that shrinkage alone is not enough to mark a new generation.

Generational changes are dialectically qualitative changes, and those are rare. Normally, a dialectically qualitative change only occurs after time has brought many dialectically quantitative changes, such as a downward progression in the size of units that can fight. In effect, quantitative changes have to pool behind a generational dam until they form so vast a reservoir that their combined pressure breaks through in a torrent. I expect it will take at least a century for the Fourth Generation to play itself out. A Fifth Generation will not be in sight, except as a mirage, in our lifetimes.

This is not to say that the lone gunman phenomenon, and its increasing frequency, are wholly unrelated to Fourth Generation war. They have some common origins, I think.

At the core of 4GW lies a crisis of legitimacy of the state. A development that contributes to the state's crisis of legitimacy is the disintegration of community (Gemeinschaft). Since the beginning of the Industrial Revolution and the rise of the powerful, highly intrusive state, community has increasingly been displaced by society (Gesellschaft), where most relationships between people are merely functional.

That progression has now gone so far that never before in human history have so many people lived isolated lives. I sometimes visualize a conversation between a Modern man and a Medieval man, where the proud Modern says,

administration is sufficiently quixotic we might as well also pretend the republic can endure.

Richards' first major point is that most of our armed forces are "legacy forces," white elephants designed for fighting the Red Army in Europe or the Imperial Japanese Navy in the Pacific. They have little utility in a world where nuclear weapons prevent wars among major powers, wars with minor powers can be won easily and usually aren't worth fighting, and legacy forces generally lose against Fourth Generation opponents. Although they are largely useless, these legacy forces eat up most of the defense budget. Richards would disband them, save the Marine Corps, some useful tac air (i.e., A-10s) and some sealift, and give the money back to the taxpayer.

That will happen when pork stops flying. But the point is a good one; most of what we are buying is a military museum. I disagree with Richards that the Marine Corps or any other major elements of the U.S. armed forces are Third Generation forces, forces which have institutionalized maneuver warfare. The Marines talk it, but it is not what they do. I would prefer to keep enough of the Army to face the Corps with some competition, rewarding whichever service actually makes it into the Third Generation. Bureaucratic competition is a good thing.

Perhaps Richards' sharpest point is that DOD's latest fad, counter-insurgency, is something of a fraud. He notes that whereas states have often been successful in defeating insurgencies on their own soil, invaders and occupiers have almost never won against a guerrilla-style war of national liberation. Not even the best counter-insurgency techniques make much difference, because neither a foreign occupier nor any puppet government he installs can gain legitimacy. Despite the current "we're winning in Iraq" propaganda, both Iraq and Afghanistan are almost certain to add themselves to the long list of failures. If neither the U.S. Army nor the Marine Corps can do successful counter-insurgency, what can they do? That brings us back to Richards' first point.

While all these observations are useful, there is one suggestion in *If We Can Keep It* the next administration desperately needs to follow, namely Richards' recommendations on grand strategy. As Germany discovered in both World Wars, if you get your grand strategy wrong, nothing else you do well matters; you still lose. At the moment, America's grand strategy suggests

we have the national character of a rich kid schoolyard bully. Somebody hit us pretty good from the back, so in retaliation, we've beaten up on some weak kids in the playground, one of whom had nothing to do with it but whom we had been wanting to thrash anyway. In the meantime, we've left the real perpetrators alone, even though everybody is sure we know where they are, and we've been careful not to pick on kids who look like they might hit back.

Yesterday I placed my annual call to my All-Highest War Lord and Sovereign Master, Kaiser Wilhelm II, to offer my usual felicitations on his birthday. His Majesty was laughing when he picked up the receiver, so after congratulating him I took the liberty of inquiring what Heaven found so funny.

“Democracy,” His Majesty replied.

“I take it you are watching this year’s Presidential election in the U.S.,” I said.

“The flea circus? That’s part of it,” said the Kaiser. “It nicely illustrates one of democracy’s contradictions, namely that no one who is willing to crawl and grub for votes can be worthy of the office to which he aspires. There’s no place for the *nolo episcopari* in democratic politics, it seems, nor for anyone with the slightest shred of character. Your Giulianis and McCains, Clintons and Obamas are happy to eat every toad in the public garden.”

“I think the American public is no happier with their options this year than is Your Majesty,” I replied.

“Thereby illustrating another funny aspect of democracy,” the Kaiser shot back. “Who do they think is responsible? They are, of course. No candidate who told them the truth could get above 10% in the polls. They want nostrums, bromides, comforting lies, and they won’t tolerate anything else. America speaks of citizens, but all it has are consumers whose heads are as fat as their bottoms. That too is where democracy leads, to an ever-declining lowest common denominator. It cannot do anything else.”

“The funniest aspect of the whole business,” His Majesty continued, “is that the lower America sinks, the more determined its politicians are to force democracy on everyone else. All but one of your Presidential candidates has pledged to continue crusading for democracy, despite the lessons of Iraq and Afghanistan. By comparison, even the late Spanish Hapsburgs were models of realism.”

“The democracy advocates – and I trust Your Majesty knows I am not one – would reply that democracy is necessary to freedom,” I suggested.

“Another contradiction,” said the Kaiser. “Prussia in my day was far more free than America is today, because Prussians understood what freedom is. Freedom is not doing whatever you feel like. Freedom is replacing imposed discipline with self-discipline. No democratic office-seeker would dare say that, because the voters would not like it. They want to be told that they can do whatever they please – spend without saving, live immoral lives without degenerating, vote without thinking – and suffer no unfortunate consequences. If the public wants to square the circle, Presto!, a hundred politicians promise to do it.”

Dutch Channel coast. There was little doubt about the outcome, should that army land in Britain. But it could never get across the English Channel.

A recent conversation over dinner with a Marine lieutenant colonel, formerly a battalion commander in Iraq, helped clarify the nature of our “crossing the Channel” challenge in Fourth Generation war. With a combination of good counter-insurgency tactics (tactics that de-escalate confrontations), a strategy of protecting the population and some luck in the form of blunders by our 4GW opponents, we may be able to restore some degree of order in places where the state has disintegrated. We may further be able to take advantage of the restoration of order to get things working again on the local level: open the schools, turn the power back on, create some jobs, see local commerce revive.

What we do not know how to do, either in theory or in practice, is move from these local achievements to seeing the re-creation of a state. Yet in 4GW, that is crossing the Channel, because unless we can do that we cannot win the war.

As I have said before, the restoration of some degree of local security, such as we now see in parts of Iraq, does not in itself mean we are winning. Restoring local security is necessary to win, but not sufficient. The valid measure of victory is whether or not a state arises anew out of statelessness. If it does, the non-state elements who define 4GW lose, regardless of the nature of that state. If it does not, we lose and they win. That’s the bottom line.

At present, the best we can do toward seeing a state resurrect itself is try to build some connectivity between areas where relative order has been restored and hope for the best. A previous On War column written by the Fourth Generation Seminar gave some examples of how we might do that.

But this is substituting hope for operational art. It is the equivalent to the French or Germans sitting with their army on the Channel coast, hoping that a lucky wind or a chance conjunction of fleets or the intervention of the Archangel Michael might let them get across. The precedent is not encouraging.

The worst we can do is what we have done in Iraq and Afghanistan, namely set up a puppet government under heavy American protection and pretend that it is a state. Such pretense fools no one, not even ourselves, as our deals with local sheiks in Iraq demonstrate.

Theory tells us what we cannot do, namely establish legitimate state institutions in occupied foreign countries whose cultures and traditions are very different from our own. Unfortunately, theory has no answer to the question of what we can do, beyond hope. As the old saying goes, hope makes a good breakfast but a poor supper.

there are lots of Pashtun in Pakistan. War with the Pashtun is war with the Pashtun, to whom borders drawn in London mean nothing.

Our attempt to contain the damage in Pakistan instead set the wreckage on fire. We forced our friendly local dictator, General/President Musharraf, to line up publicly with George Bush, to the point where his local nickname is "Busharraf." It is not intended as a compliment. Worse, we pressured him into sending the Pakistani Army into the Northwest Tribal Territories, where it has gotten its backside kicked at the same time that it has brought more tribesmen into the fight. Defeat plus destabilization plus de-legitimatization, most of it American inspired, has left Pakistan's government teetering on the edge of disintegration, with a real danger that the disintegration could spread beyond the regime to the Pakistani state itself.

Not content with mere disaster, the Bush administration ("Blunders are Us") wants to put out the fire it set by pouring gasoline on it. A story in the January 6 Cleveland Plain Dealer reported that

President Bush's senior national security advisors (Larry, Curly and Moe?) are debating whether to expand the authority of the CIA and the military to conduct far more aggressive covert operations in the tribal areas of Pakistan.

Pakistan has publicly said no, but that won't stop the Bushies. If the tribesmen soon have American captives to display, what little is left of Musharraf's legitimacy will be beheaded along with them.

Again, the point to remember is that most of this is a side effect of the war in Afghanistan. Why is this important? Because it reminds us that the ill effects of bad strategy tend to spread. The bad strategy is invading, occupying and attempting to transform countries whose culture is vastly different from our own. That is the essence of the neo-cons' neo-Trotskyite vision of the world revolution, which the Bush administration has made its own. Nor is George W. Bush the neo-cons's only dupe: the same poisonous nonsense flows in the speeches of most of the Presidential candidates, from Obama on the left to McCain (nominally) on the right. Only Ron Paul and Dennis Kucinich have dared suggest we might serve ourselves better by minding our own business.

In statecraft as in war, side effects can prove fatal. If Pakistan collapses, turning into another stateless happy hunting ground for al Qaeda and numberless other Islamic 4GW organizations, our position in Afghanistan will quickly become unsustainable. Our grand strategic position in the whole Middle Eastern/Southwest Asian region will be reduced to a two-legged stool, not the most stable of platforms. Osama in his cave will be distinctly more comfortable than W. in the Oval Office.

What might we do with this pause between phases of the Iraqi civil war? Obviously, get out. Violence is not likely to diminish much further; at some point it will almost certainly start to rise again. What better moment can we hope for than the present to announce "Mission accomplished" and head for the door?

The Bush administration will not make a decision to withdraw no matter how favorable the opportunity. It has adopted the ugly baby approach, planning to hand the war off to its (probably Democratic) successor.

But what of the Democrats who control both Houses of Congress? Why do they keep funding the war, as they just did again?

The reasons are several, and none of them are pretty. Obviously, Democrats think they will garner more votes in November if the war is still going on with no end in sight. Running against "Bush's war" appears more promising than ending it.

Most of the leading Democratic Presidential candidates are ambiguous, at best, about ending the war in Iraq if they win. Why? In part, because just as the neo-cons now dominate Republican circles, so the Democratic Establishment is in thrall to the neo-liberals. Both cabals of neos favor a world-dominating American empire, run of course by themselves. We are reminded once again that while there may be, at least on paper, two parties, there is one Establishment. It does not look favorably on ending the games off which it feeds.

Then there is the matter of a certain Small Middle Eastern Country which likes the war in Iraq, and hopes for a war on Iran as well. Said SMEC speaks with a loud voice in Democratic Party circles, the voice of campaign contributions. Never does money speak more audibly than in an election year.

So the politicians will sit and wait while the time we have so dearly bought in Iraq runs out. In no human activity is time more precious than in war. Frittered away, it can never be recovered. There is good reason why Napoleon said, "I may lose a battle but I will never lose a minute."

If we are to make good use of the time kicking the can down the road has bought us, it falls to the senior military to do so. The moral burden of command demands that they go public and say, "If we are going to get out of Iraq, the time to do so is now." Some of them may get fired for it, although General Petraeus is probably (again, for a time) untouchable. The Bush White House still will not be moved, but squirm as they might the Democrats in Congress would almost have to act or risk a revolt of their base, which is not very happy at the moment in any case.

Regrettably, as we saw throughout the war in Vietnam, American generals are more likely to step up to the trough than to the plate.

assessment from Hell's standpoint: the American invasion has virtually destroyed Iraq's ancient Christian community.

Otherwise, the news is everywhere encouraging. Both NATO and the United States are getting bloody noses in Afghanistan and cannot adapt. Western governments' devilish combination of ignorance and hubris prevents them from accepting the primary Afghan reality, namely that the Pashtun always win Afghan wars.

The spillover from Afghanistan, in turn, is pulling Pakistan apart. We assess that the Pakistani state will disintegrate in the near future, with strategic consequences far more Hellish than anything possible in Iraq. The potential combination of 4GW and loose nukes is one we view with delight.

Adding to the witches' brew is the likelihood of an American attack on Iran, which we assess as unaffected by the recent American NIE. As you are aware, the American White House has fallen into one of Hell's favorite traps, a closed system. With outside reality excluded and all decisions a product of court politics, the probability of blunders is almost 100%. The leadership's erroneous belief that it is now winning in Iraq adds to its already towering hubris. Putting the two together, we assess a 60%-70% probability that American bombers will be hitting targets in Iran by the end of March.

Our optimism, however, is based less on what is occurring in the Islamic world, which we own anyway, than on the West's internal folly. Here we see on a grand scale the consequences of the West's abandonment of Our Enemy and its embrace of irreligion, which is another name for Our Father Below.

Having accepted and internalized the cultural Marxism of the Frankfurt School – please offer my most humble greetings to its distinguished members, on whom I know you dine regularly – Western elites embrace anything that promises the West's destruction. From a military perspective, that includes invasion by millions of immigrants from other cultures, immigrants who regard the West and its traditions with loathing and contempt. Even as they spread Fourth Generation war from one Western country to another, the elites' ideology forbids any honest discussion of what is going on. Defense is impossible, because no Western country dare acknowledge it is under attack. I beg you offer Hell's propaganda department my deepest thanks for the wonderful goblin-words it has created to stop all discussion; my two favorites are “racism” and “fascism.”

So long as the West busies itself in sandboxes such as Iraq and Afghanistan and ignores what is happening on its own soil, we assess that Hell's victory is certain. By the end of the 21st century, our most dangerous opponent for two millennia, the Western, Christian tradition, will be wiped off the earth and out of history. That will, we trust, be worth popping the corks in the Supreme Infernal Headquarters' mess on more than a few bottles of warm goat urine.

largely stateless. Restoring a real state in Iraq requires not just a government but a government that is generally accepted as legitimate. No government created or installed by a foreign, occupying power is likely to achieve legitimacy.

This poses a serious operational obstacle for U.S. forces in Iraq, one that is common in Fourth Generation conflicts. While we can only win if a real state re-emerges, we cannot create such a state, nor be seen as doing so. When it comes to legitimacy, we have a “reverse Midas touch.” The operational question, therefore, is: how do we indirectly encourage and facilitate the re-emergence of a state in Iraq?

The basic answer, in the view of the seminar, is to facilitate a bottom-up re-creation of an Iraqi state by building connectivity among local areas that have achieved a reasonable level of security. There is no guarantee expanding connectivity will eventually lead to a state, but it seems to offer the best chance of attaining that decisive strategic goal.

The seminar’s specific ideas for developing increasing connectivity include:

- * Recognize that increased economic activity which raises local living standards is likely to be welcomed by the Iraqi people, and that restoring economic connectivity is a promising tool to that end. Until the American invasion and subsequent dissolution of the Iraqi state, Iraq had a national economy. The basis for a national economy therefore still exists in the minds and experiences of Iraqis (which is an advantage over some other stateless areas). Actions by U.S. forces that could encourage the growth of economic connectivity include:

- o Establish safe roads for commerce between Iraqi cities.
- o Provide capital for businesses that function beyond the local level, e.g., regional banks.
- o Provide matching grants to fund local chambers of commerce, and increase the percentage of the match if the local chambers form regional and trans-regional chapters.
- o Restore the railroads and water transport. Railroads in particular further regional and national commerce.
- o Make traditional tourist and resort areas safe, along with routes to those areas from major cities.

- * Beyond furthering regional and national commerce, ideas which could help the growth of connectivity include:

- o Fund the establishment and growth of regional and trans-regional educational institutions and sports leagues.
- o Go beyond traditional “sister cities” arrangements to create “sister state/province” relationships between American states and Iraqi provinces. Such a relationship between, for example, Anbar province and an economically powerful American state such as New York or California could provide multiple inducements to connectivity among local areas in Anbar.

must. The Clausewitzian temple dogs at times work themselves into such a fit they become funny, i.e. denying that World War II was fought within the state system because it was war between alliances (of states, of course).

The better chapters come toward the end of the book, and several are very good indeed. One of the most informative is Paul Jackson's "Fourth Generation Warfare in Africa: back to the future?" The state system has always been a fiction in most of post-colonial sub-Saharan Africa, which means it's easy to find 4GW in its purest, pre-First Generation form. Jackson writes,

One of the central difficulties facing analysts and militaries in African conflicts is accurately identifying various groups involved in violence. This is exacerbated by a continuing flux of alliances and temporary agreements, as well as a cycle of group creation and disintegration...

The combatants themselves are difficult to define. Any cursory glance at the literature dealing with rebel movements leads to a number of different definitions: rebels, brigands, subversive elements, gangs, criminals, warlords, militia, etc...

This is encouraged by an emphasis on a pseudo-feudal system of primitive accumulation, whereby territory is only valued for the resources it holds and those resources are granted as a means of paying subordinates.

Welcome to a world without the state.

Frank Hoffman also offers a fine chapter, "Combating Fourth Generation Warfare," which he prefers to call Complex Irregular Warfare. Like the FMFM I-A, Hoffman recognizes that classical approaches to war which emphasize physical destruction may be counter-productive:

The traditional way to approach strategic options to impose our will upon an opponent is Delbruck's two major options. One is the strategy of annihilation, which calls for the substantial if not the total destruction of the enemy force. The alternative approach, more common to the weaker side, is to employ a strategy of exhaustion...

"Incapacitation" may be more appropriate in many cases (in 4GW). We rarely intend or need to annihilate a rebel force, and may find it counterproductive to do so with respect to long-term political objectives.

One of the better ways to learn how to fight 4GW is to look at foreign practice, and Rajesh Rajagopalan's chapter, "Fighting Fourth Generation wars: the Indian experience" offers several suggestions. Under The Indian army's 4GW doctrine, he states,

Five elements make up the Indian army's 4GW doctrine. The first is the limitation on the quantum of force used in operations...Indian forces engaged in 4GW operations get no artillery or close air support. And this principle has almost never been violated...

The third element in the Army's approach is dominating the affected area...Thus the stress is on blanketing the area with troops more than conducting offensive operations...This approach is somewhat unique to the Indian experience, and it is premised on two important elements: a huge infantry pool...and an acceptance of the inevitable higher casualties.

The volume's editors add thoughtful perspectives of their own to the collected essays, in the introduction and the conclusion. In sum, Global Insurgency offers enough of real-world, practical value to those stuck with fighting 4GW or helping prepare others to do so to make it worth reading. By the usual standards of academic works, that makes it a masterpiece.

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