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**THE FREE CONGRESS COMMENTARY  
BY WILLIAM S. LIND**

**On War #203  
February 5, 2007**

[Raise the Bar or Cross It](#)

**By William S. Lind**

Perhaps the most serious deficiency in the American armed forces is the fact that both of our ground forces, the U.S. Army and the United States Marine Corps, remain Second Generation military organizations (so do the Navy and the Air Force, but in the kinds of wars we are likely to fight, they don't much matter). The Marine Corps has at least attempted to move into the Third Generation (maneuver warfare), while the Army brontosaurus has kept its green head contentedly buried in the primeval ooze. To borrow from an old *bon mot*, the Marine Corps's situation is serious but not hopeless, while the Army's condition is hopeless but not serious.

We should all therefore greatly admire those few Army officers who have tried to wake their dinosaur up. None has done more than Major Don Vandergriff. Not only has he produced two excellent books that get at the heart of the Army's problem, its personnel system, he also led a highly successful reform of the Army's Georgetown University ROTC program. ROTC is, for the most part, a sad joke. Vandergriff's program was a highly demanding, creative exercise in building real leaders. Many of its graduates have gone on to outstanding performance as platoon and company commanders in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Major Vandergriff (recently retired, which illustrates why the Army is hopeless) has turned his experiences at Georgetown into a new book, *Raising the Bar: Creating and Nurturing Adaptability to Deal with the Changing Face of War*. Unlike most reform books, his is a book of solutions, not just problems.

Top-down reform, like the Army's ongoing "Transformation" program, changes little but appearances. Vandergriff recognizes that real reform has to come primarily bottom-up. He writes:

After long study and analysis of the Army's existing system, it is clear that focusing efforts on people who already have had their character defined and shaped by the antiquated personnel system, or what I refer to as today's leadership paradigm, will be ineffective. Rather, the effective transformation of the Army requires the cultivation of a very different military mindset, starting at the cadet, or pre-commissioning, level. As one former ROTC cadet—now a captain serving with the Special Forces—recently observed: "Why not begin the reform where it all begins?"

At the heart of Vandergriff's reforms of Army education lies a shift away from teaching officers what to think and what to do—endless processes, recipes and formulas, learned by rote—to teaching how to think, through, as he writes:

1) a case study learning method; 2) tactical decision games; 3) free play force-on-force exercises; and 4) feedback. . The academic methods employed in support of the pillars include: small group lectures, small group training exercises, exercise simulations, staff rides and private study.

I would add, and I think Vandergriff would agree, that private study means reading real books on war, not the wretched junk contained in most Army manuals.

Rightly, Vandergriff rejects the "crawl, walk, run" approach now favored in American military education, which in reality seldom gets beyond "crawl." He recommends instead what one German general called "the Hansel and Gretel approach: first you let the kids get lost in the woods."

The POI (Program Of Instruction) begins the development of adaptability through exposure to scenario-based problems as early as possible. The POI should put students in tactical and non-tactical situations that are "above their pay grade" in order to challenge them.

The purpose, I would add, is not just to challenge them but to develop in them the habit of "looking up" and seeing their own situation in a larger context that is essential for mission-type orders to work.

Perhaps the single most powerful tool to develop Third Generation leaders is the free-play field exercise. Only free-play exercises can teach leadership in war; scripted exercises, which make up almost all of current Army training, are useful only to train an opera company. Vandergriff stresses the importance of free-play training, writing that such exercises should be "seen as a course's or unit's premier event."

As with his recommendations for reform of the personnel system, Vandergriff's prescriptions for fixing Army education are right on the mark. How do we know? Because he didn't invent any of them. Everything he recommends was practiced in German officer education a hundred years ago and more. What worked for them then can work for us now.

And it might, except that the Army remains hopeless. I would like to think the Army's leadership would take Vandergriff's books, including *Raising the Bar*, turn to their subordinates and say, "Make it happen." But I know it won't happen. All that can happen is what the Army has seen a million times: the slogans and buzzwords change, but the organizational culture remains Second Generation, so everything else that is real does too. Faced with new ways of war demanding that it change or die, the Army will prefer to die, because it's easier.

Maybe Vandergriff should title his text book *Crossing the Bar*.

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## **On War #202**

**January 29, 2007**

### [The Real Game](#)

**By William S. Lind**

Bush's splurge is already bringing premature claims of success, even though the first troops are just arriving in Iraq. A column in today's *Washington Times* by Ollie North quotes an American officer in Iraq as saying, "Do they (Members of Congress opposed to the war) even know that in the last two weeks we have set AQI (al Qaeda in Iraq) and the Mahdi Army both back on their heels?" Well, maybe, but if they are back on their heels, it is only to sit and see how their enemy's latest operation evolves. That is smart guerilla tactics, and does not mean they have suffered a setback.

In Anbar province, al Qaeda may have overplayed its hand. A number of reports suggest some of the local sheiks have turned against al Qaeda, and we are providing the sheiks with discreet assistance in going after them. That is smart on our part. But Bush administration propaganda to the contrary, al Qaeda does not represent the bulk of the Sunni resistance. The nationalists will continue to fight us because we are there, and the Baathists will continue to fight us so long as we represent a despised Shiite regime in Baghdad. We can and should try to negotiate settlements with both nationalists and Baathists, but political considerations in Washington and in Baghdad have largely tied the hands of our local commanders.

The Mahdi Army and other Shiite groupings have a different perspective. Once we understand what it is, we can see that it makes sense for them to avoid a confrontation with the U.S. military if they can. From the Shiite perspective, American forces are in Iraq to fight the Sunnis for them. Our troops are, in effect, the Shiites' unpaid Hessians.

Thus far, we have been willing to play the Shiites' game. Their challenge now is to make sure we continue to do so as Bush's "big push" in Baghdad unfolds. Originally, they wanted U.S. forces to control access to Baghdad, cutting the Sunnis' lines of communication and reinforcement, while the Shiite militias carried on their successful campaign of ethnic cleansing. With Bush insisting American forces work in Baghdad, the Shiites came up with an alternate plan, one we have seemingly accepted: the Americans will drive out the Sunni insurgents, leaving Sunni neighborhoods defenseless. As the American troops move on, they will be replaced by Iraqi soldiers and police, mostly Shiite militiamen, who will ethnically cleanse the area of Sunnis, just as in

plan A. Again, the Americans will have fulfilled their allotted function, fighting the Sunnis on behalf of the Shiites. Aren't Hessians great?

The potential spoiler is the possibility that the Americans will also go after some Shiite militias, particularly the Mahdi Army. If we do so by entering Sadr City in strength, the Mahdi Army can simply let us come -- and go. We cannot tell who is a militiaman and who is not. They can let us mill around for a while, achieving nothing, then watch us leave. Big deal.

An action that might force them to respond would be an intensification of our ongoing drive to capture or kill Mahdi Army leaders. But they still would not have to respond in Baghdad. The classic guerilla response in such a case is to retreat from the area where the enemy is attacking and hit him somewhere else. An obvious place would be in Iraq's Shiite south, with our supply convoys coming up from Kuwait the target. Another response would be to match our escalation of raids with an escalation of mortar and rocket attacks on the Green Zone. As we go after their leaders, they return the favor by going after ours. There are some indications this may be occurring.

No doubt, our forces will attempt to be even-handed between Sunnis and Shiites. But this merely shows that we do not understand the real game. The real game, and a successful one to date, is to let the Americans take the brunt of the fight with armed Sunni organizations, whether nationalist or Baathist or Al Qaeda or whomever, while the Shiite militias get the softer job of terrorizing Sunni civilians and forcing them out. That is likely to be the story of Operation Baghdad, regardless of our intentions.

Should the day ever come when we cease to play that game, our utility to the Shiites, and thus to the Shiite-controlled Iraqi government, will be over. Like Hessians in earlier wars, we will then be sent home. All it takes is a *fatwa* from Ayatollah Sistani, telling us to go. If we don't understand this, everyone else in Iraq certainly does, including Muqtada al Sadr.

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## **On War #201**

**January 23, 2007**

### [His Majesty's Birthday](#)

**By William S. Lind**

With the birthday of my rightful Sovereign and *oberste Kriegsheer* Kaiser Wilhelm II coming up fast on January 27 – *Hoch!* -- I placed my usual call to His Majesty to offer my felicitations. Somewhat to my surprise, the duty *Funker* at Zossen said he had been ordered to patch me through to Madrid. *Der Reisekaiser* must be at it again, I thought, hoping that old tub the *Hohenzollern* had an easy passage through the Bay of Biscay, which was no sure thing in January.

My surprise was greater when the phone was answered not by our attaché in Madrid but by none other than the Count-Duke of Olivares, the *Privado*—what we would now call Prime Minister—to King Philip IV of Spain from 1622 to 1643. Those were the years in which Spain, the first true global power, had gone headlong down history's tube. Was the Kaiser trying to tell me something?

Olivares, it seems, was in on the joke. "Your *Allerhoehste* thought Madrid in my time had more in common with 21st century Washington than Berlin in his day," he said. "The Kaiser, after all, had no ambition to rule everyone. I did. As the greatest historian of Spain, the *Inglés* J.H. Elliott, wrote of me, I was heir "to the great imperial tradition, which believed firmly in the rightness, and indeed the inevitability, of Spanish, and specifically Castilian, hegemony over the world."

"Is our war in Iraq then the equivalent of Spain's war in the Netherlands?" I asked.

"That parallel is an interesting one," Olivares replied. "After all, the Enterprise of England was undertaken as a way to attain a decision in the Netherlands. Just as you attacked Iraq because you could not get at Osama, so we sent the Invincible Armada against England because we could not get at the Dutch rebels, especially the Sea Beggars. Compare what your President Bush has said about the War on Terror to what the Jesuit Ribadeneyra said about the Armada:

Every conceivable pretext for a just and holy war is to be found in this campaign. . . This is a defensive, not an

offensive, war; . . . one in which we are defending the high reputation of our King and lord, and of our nation; defending, too, the land and property of all the kingdoms of Spain, and simultaneously our peace, tranquility and repose.

Unfortunately, neither our enterprise nor yours met with success."

"What were the consequences of the Armada's defeat for Spain?" I asked Olivares.

"It was of course before my time," he replied, "and two-thirds of our ships did make it home. But let me again quote Señor Elliott if I may:

the psychological consequences of the disaster were shattering for Castile. For a moment the shock was too great to absorb, and it took time for the nation to realize its full implications. But the unthinking optimism generated by the fantastic achievements of the preceding hundred years seems to have vanished almost overnight.

"Why did Spain not reform its military and its overstrained finances and recover from its defeat?" I inquired of the man who knew best.

"We tried," Olivares replied. "Our reformers, the *arbitristas*, put forth many good plans. As soon as I became *Privado*, I pushed for a great reform program with all my considerable energy."

"What happened?"

"We abolished the ruff," Olivares replied.

"The ruff?"

"You know, that big starched thing we wore around our necks that made it look as if our heads were on platters."

"That was it?"

"That was it," Olivares said ruefully. "The interests at court that lived off the decay were too powerful to overcome. Perhaps you see why your Kaiser thinks there are some similarities between Washington in your time and Madrid in mine."

"Indeed," I said. "We recently tried to reform our Army by giving all the soldiers funny hats."

"There is another parallel, I think," Olivares added. "Our Kings Philip III and Philip IV were, to be diplomatic about it, not quite in the same class as Charles V or Philip II. Your President Bush reminds me a great deal of Philip III. He is not, I think, the fullest oil jar on the *estancia*."

"No," I said, "but what can we do about it?"

"Were I your *Privado* I would recommend he be retired to his estate in Mexico, perhaps with the title of Duke of Plaza Toro."

"That will come in a couple years," I told Olivares. "But what is the chance his successor will be any better?"

"Was Philip IV really an improvement over Philip III? In the end, a systemic crisis such as I faced then and you face now requires a change of dynasty. That came, eventually, for Spain, but too late."

"Now, if you will excuse me, I have a desk full of *consultas* I must read. At least we did not have Powerpoint. But then, I'm not in Hell." With that, Olivares faded into the ether.

I was happy to find that Kaiser Wilhelm has kept his excellent sense of humor. Just as Olivares tried to prevent Spain from committing suicide, so the Kaiser tried to prevent the suicide of the west. Both failed, and we live among the ruins.

Meanwhile, we too write our *arbitrios*, and hope.

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**On War #200**  
**January 16, 2007**

Variables

**By William S. Lind**

One way to look at the situation in Iraq is to try to identify variables, elements that could change. Without change, the war is likely to end with U.S. troops having to fight their way out, if they can.

The military situation in Iraq is not a variable. All that can change is the speed of our defeat. Some actions might slow it, although the time for such actions, such as adopting an "ink blot" strategy instead of "capture or kill," passed long ago.

Other actions could speed our defeat, an attack on Iran chief among them. It now looks as if the Bush administration may have realized that an out-of-the-blue, Pearl Harbor-style air and missile attack on Iran's nuclear facilities is politically infeasible. Instead, the White House will order a series of small "border incidents," U.S. pinpricks similar to last week's raid on an Iranian mission in Kurdistan, intended to provoke Iranian retaliation. That retaliation will then be presented as an Iranian attack on U.S. forces, with the air raids on Iranian nuclear targets called "retaliation." Fabricated border incidents have a long history as *causus belli*; perhaps the Bushies can dress some German soldiers up in Polish uniforms.

As Bush made clear in last Wednesday's speech, his policies are not a variable. He will pursue the neocons' dreams all the way to Hell, where they originated.

That leaves the U.S. Congress, and it may well be the key variable in the equation. 2008 is not that far away, and electoral panic continues to spread among Hill Republicans. Senator Brownback is the first conservative Republican Senator to break with the administration, opposing the "surge." Conservatives have a central role to play here, because if they turn openly against the war, Bush will lose his base.

But the Democrats hold both Houses of Congress, so the main burden of ending a failed enterprise will fall on them. At present, they seem unwilling to go beyond symbolic but ineffectual measures, such as passing "non-binding resolutions." Why? It may be that they are paralyzed by a false understanding of the war, one stated by Vice President Cheney on "Fox News Sunday" when he said, "We have these meetings with members of Congress, and they agree we can't fail... "

In fact, we have already failed. The war in Iraq was lost long ago. In terms of the administration's objective of a "democratic Iraq," which Bush re-stated in his Wednesday speech, it was lost before the first bomb fell, because it was unattainable no matter what we did. Now, not even the minimal objective of restoring an Iraqi state is attainable, at least until Iraq's many-sided, Fourth Generation civil war sorts itself out, and probably not then. Events in Iraq are simply beyond our control; the forces of our invasion and destruction of the Iraqi state unleashed far overpower any army we can deploy to Iraq, surge or no surge.

Once Democrats accept and announce that Congress cannot lose a war that is already lost, they will have the freedom of action they need to get us out. Polls suggest the public will go along; most Americans now realize the war is lost, regardless of what President Bush may say or do.

It is probably true, as Senator McCain constantly reminds us, that chaos will follow an American withdrawal. But that chaos became inevitable, not with America's withdrawal (it is already happening, even with U.S. troops present), but with its destruction of the Iraqi state. Again, the Democrats need to make this point to the American people, and make it often.

Senator Joe Biden, Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, put it best. According to the January 5 *Washington Post*, he said in an interview,

I have reached the tentative conclusion that a significant portion of this administration, maybe even including the vice president, believes Iraq is lost. ... Therefore, the best thing to do is keep it from totally collapsing on your watch and hand it off to the next guy -- literally, not figuratively.

I believe Senator Biden is correct; I said the same thing in an earlier column. If the question the Democrats put to the American people is, should we allow thousands more American kids to get wounded or killed so the Bush administration can put our

withdrawal off until it is out of office, the public's answer will be clear. Killing our kids for national objectives is one thing; doing so for political advantage is something else.

The key variable thus comes down to this: Do the Democrats in Congress have the courage and the communication skills to level with the people about why the war in Iraq is continuing after we have lost it? If not, they will have proven themselves as unfit to govern as the Republican majorities they replaced.

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**On War #199**  
**January 12, 2007**

[Less Than Zero](#)

**By William S. Lind**

On the surface, President Bush's Wednesday night speech adds up to precisely nothing. The President said, "It is clear that we need to change our strategy in Iraq," but the heart of his proposal, adding more than 20,000 U.S. troops, represents no change in strategy. It is merely another "big push," of the sort we have seen too often in the past from mindless national and military leadership. Instead of Dave Petraeus, why didn't Bush ask Sir Douglas Haig to take command?

Relying on more promises from Iraq's nominal government and requiring more performance from the Iraqi army and police are equally empty policies. Both that government and its armed forces are mere fronts for Shiite networks and their militias. If the new troops we send to Baghdad work with Iraqi forces against the Sunni insurgents, we will be helping the Shiites ethnically cleanse Baghdad of Sunnis. If, as Bush suggested, our troops go after the Shiite militias in Baghdad and elsewhere, we will find ourselves in a two-front war, fighting Sunnis and Shiites both. We faced that situation briefly in 2004, and we did not enjoy it.

All this, again, adds up to nothing. But if we look at the President's proposal more carefully, we find it actually amounts to less than zero. It hints at actions that may turn a mere debacle into disaster on a truly historic scale.

First, Mr. Bush said that previous efforts to secure Baghdad failed for two reasons, the second of which is that "there were too many restrictions on the troops we did have." This suggests the new "big push" will be even more kinetic than what we have done in the past, calling in more firepower—airstrikes, tanks, artillery, etc.—in Baghdad itself. Chuck Spinney has already warned that we may soon begin to reduce Baghdad to rubble. If we do, and the President's words suggest we will, we will hasten our defeat. In this kind of war, unless you are going to take the "Hama model" and kill everyone, success comes from de-escalation, not from escalation.

Second, the President not only upped the ante with Syria and Iran, he announced two actions that only make sense if we plan to attack Iran, Syria or both. He said he has ordered Patriot missile batteries and another U.S. Navy aircraft carrier be sent to the region. Neither has any conceivable role in the fighting in Iraq. However, a carrier would provide additional aircraft for airstrikes on Iran, and Patriot batteries would in theory provide some defense against Iranian air and missile attacks launched at Gulf State oil facilities in retaliation.

To top it off, in questioning yesterday on Capitol Hill, the Tea Lady, aka Secretary of State Rice, refused to promise the administration would consult with Congress before attacking Iran or Syria.

As I have said before and will say again, the price of an attack on Iran could easily be the loss of the army we have in Iraq. No conceivable action would be more foolish than adding war with Iran to the war we have already lost in Iraq. Regrettably, it is impossible to read Mr. Bush's dispatch of a carrier and Patriot batteries any other way than as harbingers of just such an action.

The final hidden message in Mr. Bush's speech confirms that the American ship of state remains headed for the rocks. His peroration, devoted once more to promises of "freedom" and democracy in the Middle East and throughout the world, could have been written by the most rabid of the neocons. For that matter, perhaps it was. So long as our grand strategy remains that which the neocons represent and demand, namely remaking the whole world in our own image, by force where necessary, we will continue to fail. Not even the greatest military in all of history, which ours claims to be but isn't, could bring success to a strategy so divorced from reality. Meanwhile, Mr. Bush's words give the lie to those who have hoped the neocons' influence over

the White House had ebbed. From Hell, or the World Bank which is much the same place, Wolfi had to be smiling.

No, Incurious George has offered no new strategy, nor new course, nor even a plateau on the downward course of our two lost wars and failed grand strategy. He has chosen instead to escalate failure, speed our decline and expand the scope of our defeat. Headed toward the cliff, his course correction is to stomp on the gas.

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**On War #198**  
**January 5, 2007**

[A State Restored?](#)

**By William S. Lind**

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

For more than a decade, Somalia has been Exhibit A in the Hall of Statelessness, a place where the state had not merely weakened into irrelevance but disappeared. Somalia's statelessness had defeated even the world's only hyperpower, the United States, when it had intervened militarily to restore order. Fourth Generation war theorists, myself included, frequently pointed to Somalia as an example of the direction in which other places were headed.

Then, over the past several weeks, a Blitzkrieg-like campaign by the Ethiopian army seemed to change everything. A Fourth Generation entity, the Islamic Courts, which had taken control of most of Somalia, was brushed aside with ease by Ethiopian tanks and jets. A makeshift state, the Transitional Federal Government, which had been created years ago by other states but was almost invisible within Somalia, was installed in Mogadishu. The Somali state was restored – or so it seems.

This direct clash between the international order of states and anti-state, Fourth Generation forces is a potentially instructive test case. If the Ethiopians and their sponsors succeed in re-creating a self-sustaining Somali state, it may put Fourth Generation elements elsewhere on the defensive. Conversely, if the Somali state again fails, it will suggest that outside efforts to restore states are unlikely to succeed and the future belongs to the Fourth Generation.

It is too soon to know what the outcome will be. However, we might want to ask the question, what does each side need to accomplish in order to succeed?

The first thing the Transitional Federal Government and its Ethiopian and other foreign backers must accomplish is to restore order. Many Somalis welcomed the Islamic Courts because they did bring order. They shut down the local militias, made the streets safe again and began the revival of commerce, which depends on order.

Can the Transitional Federal Government do the same? Its problem is that its main instrument is the Ethiopian army, which is hated by many Somalis. Its own forces are largely warlord militias. If the TFG fails to bring order, not only will it have failed to perform the first task of any state, it will make the Islamic Courts look good in retrospect. Precisely this dynamic is now playing itself out in Afghanistan.

The pro-state forces' second task is in tension with the first: the Ethiopian Army must go home soon. "Soon" here means weeks at most. If the Ethiopian invasion turns into an Ethiopian occupation, a nationalist resistance movement is likely to emerge quickly. Such a nationalist resistance would have to ally with the Islamic Courts, just as the nationalist resistance in Iraq has been pushed into alliance with Islamic 4GW forces, including al Qaeda. Non-state forces are usually too weak physically to be picky about allies.

The third task facing the TFG is to split the Islamic Courts and incorporate a substantial part of them into the new Somali state. In the end, political co-option is likely to do more to end a 4GW insurgency than any action a military can take.

What about the Islamic Courts? What do they need to do to defeat the state?

They have already accomplished their first task: avoid the Ethiopian army and go to ground, preserving their forces and weapons for a guerilla war. Had they stood and fought, not only would they have lost, they would have risked annihilation. Mao's rule, "When the enemy advances, we retreat," is of vital importance to most 4GW forces.

The next task is harder: they must now regroup, keep most of their forces loyal, supplied, paid and motivated, and begin a two-fold campaign, one against the Ethiopians or any other foreign forces and the second against the Transitional Federal Government. This will be a test of their organizational skills, and it is by no means clear they have those skills. Time will tell, time probably measured in weeks or months, not years.

Against occupying foreign forces, the Islamic Courts will need to wrap themselves in nationalism as well as religion, so that they rather than the TFG are seen as the legitimate Somali authorities. The fact that the TFG has to be propped up by foreign troops makes this task relatively easy.

Against the TFG itself, the Islamic Courts' objective is the opposite of the government's: it must make sure order is not re-established. Here, terror tactics come into if play, and if car bombs, suicide attacks and the like spread in Somalia, it will be a sign the Islamic Courts are organizing.

The Islamic Courts may have an unlikely ally here in the old war lords and clan militias. The Islamic Courts suppressed these elements, but their comeback will help, not hurt them. They were and may again become the main source of disorder, and all disorder works to the Islamic Courts' advantage.

The new government in turn needs to suppress these forces just as the Islamic Courts did, but it may be unable to do so, not only because it has no real army of its own but also because it has warlords and militias as key constituents. This mirrors the situation in Iraq, where the Shiite-dominated government cannot act against Shiite militias because it is largely their creature.

How will it all turn out? My guess is that in Somalia as elsewhere, the dependence of the wanna-be state on foreign troops will prove fatal. In the end, Fourth Generation wars are contests for legitimacy, and no regime established by foreign intervention can gain much legitimacy. On the other hand, if the Islamic Courts cannot organize effectively, the new government could win by default. Either way, it is safe to say that the outcome in Somalia will have an impact far beyond that small, sad country's borders.

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**On War #197**  
**December 18, 2006**

[Last Throw of the Dice](#)

**By William S. Lind**

In a parallel universe, I received a wire last week from the Executive Mansion. Would I meet with First Citizen George X. Bush (Jefferson had won the 1796 election) to advise him on the war in Mesopotamia? Being a Small Endian, I was somewhat surprised to be asked to meet with a Big Endian First Citizen, but of course I telegraphed back that I would.

It was commonly thought that the war in Mesopotamia was not going well. We still had no effective answer to the Mesopotamians' war elephants, and our legionaries were getting squashed on too regular a basis. I had said publicly that we ought to give it up and go home, which made the invitation to the Executive Mansion all the more surprising. First Citizen Bush had to know what advice I would give him.

We met last Friday afternoon, in a gathering that included a few other opponents of the war besides myself. The First Citizen asked what we thought he should do in Mesopotamia, and we all told him we should get out as fast as we could, leaving lots of large caltrops on the roads behind us as we left. Then First Citizen Bush threw us a curveball.

"You've said just what I expected you to say," he told us. "Now I want to ask you a harder question. I'm not going to pull out of Mesopotamia, at least not yet. I have decided on one last throw of the dice, one last attempt to win this war. What should that be?"

We war critics were silent. One by one, the others shook their heads. There was nothing left to try.

Then I had an idea. "First Citizen, if that's your question, I will give you an answer. But remember, last throws save very few gamblers. The overwhelming probability is that this too will fail."

"I understand that's your judgment. I want to hear your proposal anyway," said the First Citizen.

"Very well," I replied. "Take all our troops, and I mean all, out of the vast, secure, star-bastioned fortresses we have built all over Mesopotamia and send them into the Mesopotamian capital, Babylon. Make them move into the city and live there. Each small unit is responsible for maintaining order on the street where it lives. If an elephant shows up, they have to deal with it. If we can successfully de-elephantize Babylon, we would show the rest of Mesopotamia that we can still win. That might at least buy us a graceful exit. Again, I don't think it will work, but if you are determined on a last throw, this would be my advice. Legionaries sitting in fortresses do nothing to help win the war."

"But I thought that famous military theorist you guys all like to quote -- what's his name? Oh yea, Vauban -- said building and holding fortresses was the way to win a war," replied the First Citizen.

Poor Vauban, I thought, so often quoted and so little read. He wrote more about taking fortresses than building and defending them. "First Citizen, this is not quite Vauban's kind of war," I responded. "Mesopotamia is not the Spanish Netherlands, and Vauban didn't face elephants. But getting our troops out of their fortresses and into Babylon is only half my proposal."

"OK, what's the rest of it?," asked First Citizen Bush.

"You have to make an alliance with Persia," I said.

"An alliance with Persia? Are you nuts? Those guys are Zoro-fascists! Just last week three good Americans were killed in Detroit when some Zoros jumped from their burning ziggurat and landed on them. Besides, don't you know they are trying to build flying chariots? Ally with them? Never!" The First Citizen was known for being firm in his likes and dislikes.

"I admit, First Citizen, that this new Zoroastrian practice of setting their ziggurats on fire and then jumping from them is a problem," I replied. "And the Persians may well get chariots to fly regardless of what we do. But the fact of the matter is, we cannot hope to control Mesopotamia without their help. To obtain that help, we must in turn offer them what they want. An alliance with the United States would help solve many of their problems. I think they might go for it."

The First Citizen pondered my advice. "Supposing I wanted to do that. How could I approach them?"

"You might send the Shah a small present," I suggested. "I'm thinking of the people who pushed you into this disastrous war. You know, the neo-claques."

"Why should I send the Shah the neo-claques?," the First Citizen asked.

"Not all of them," I replied. "Just their heads."

Again, the First Citizen seemed lost in thought. Might he actually take a new course? Then, he recovered. "No, dammit, I won't ally with the Persians. I won't even consider it. You Little Egg-heads think you know so much. But I know something you don't, and it proves I'm right to stay the course."

First Citizen Bush looked around the room with a cocky smile on his face. Relapsing into his native East Virginia grammar, he said, "I know smoking ziggurats is bad for your health!"

Merry Christmas!

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**On War #196**  
**December 11, 2006**

## Knocking Opportunity

**By William S. Lind**

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

Last week, the Iraq Study Group Report burst upon a breathless world, and proved to be an empty piñata. None of its recommendations has the slightest chance of reversing the course of the war in Iraq. Only those who just got into town on the last truckload of turnips expected anything more. All Washington "Blue Ribbon Commissions" are part of the kabuki, intended to fool the rubes back home into thinking something real is happening, when it isn't.

If the Iraq Study Group Report is empty of content, the responses to it from the war hawks, or more accurately at this point the war vultures, since what they are feeding on is dead, were as clueless as a Marine at a meeting of Mensa. They denounced it as impracticable, which is true; as fanciful, in thinking Iran or Syria has any reason to help us in Iraq, which is also true; and, in the case of Senator John McCain, as a recipe for defeat.

Senator McCain almost got it right. The Iraq Study Group Report is not a recipe for defeat, but an acknowledgment of defeat. Therein lies its value, and its function. It offers the Bush administration the bi-partisan fig leaf it needs to cover its defeat in Iraq and our inevitable withdrawal.

Like all reports of Blue Ribbon Commissions, the Report of the Iraq Study Group is written so as to cover the backsides of its members. It does not come right out and say, "We've lost, and its time to get out." The Letter from the Co-Chairs begins, "There is no magic formula to solve the problems of Iraq. However, there are actions that can be taken to improve the situation and protect American interests."

After this obligatory tip of the cap to Pollyanna, however, the report lays it out as clearly as Washington ever will. The Assessment of the Current Situation in Iraq concludes on page 32,

Despite a massive effort, stability in Iraq remains elusive and the situation is deteriorating. The Iraqi government cannot now govern, sustain, and defend itself without the support of the United States. Iraqis have not been convinced that they must take responsibility for their own future...The ability of the United States to shape outcomes is diminishing. Time is running out.

Short of concluding with a chorus of "Asleep in the Deep," it would be hard for the Study Group to make the reality of the situation more evident.

Again, what is key is not the details of the report or the viability of its recommendations, but the response to it. Had it the slightest understanding of which end is up, the Bush White House, while politely disagreeing with some details of the report, would have accepted it as "the only way forward." The vultures, led by the neo-cons, would have "sadly concurred." The Joint Chiefs' strings would have been pulled so they saluted and "got on board" the last train out of Baghdad.

It might have gone somewhat like this: According to the Friday, December 8 *Washington Times*:

Yesterday afternoon, less than twenty-four hours after the release of the Iraq Study Group Report, President George W. Bush, accompanied by Iraq Study Group Co-Chairmen James A. Baker and Lee Hamilton and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Marine General Peter Pace, said, "While I do not agree with every detail of the Study Group's Report, I accept that it represents the only way forward in Iraq that will have bi-partisan support of the Congress and the American people. I therefore accept its recommendations as a package, as Secretary Baker has described them, and pledge this administration to their speedy implementation."

"I now call on all members of Congress of both parties to join the administration and the members of the bi-partisan study group to set aside all divisions and work together. I look forward to having all American combat troops home from Iraq early in 2008."

President Bush was immediately followed by Mr. Baker, Mr. Hamilton and General Pace adding their endorsements

to the administration's new course and calling for an end to partisanship and national division over the war in Iraq.

Instead, as we know, the Bush administration and the vultures have rejected the fig leaf the Iraq Study Group Report offers. Determined to achieve "victory in Iraq," they guarantee that America's defeat will be naked before all the world.

One member of the study group, former Democratic Congressman Leon Panetta, was quoted in the Sunday, December 10 *Washington Post* as saying, "I think the feeling was, how do you rescue this administration from the grip of ideology and force it to face the real world?"

The Bush administration's only desire, unfortunately for the country, is to escape the grip of reality and immerse itself more deeply in the Jacobin ideology of neo-cons. It seems that, absent a miracle, we are doomed to wander in Oz for two more years.

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**On War #195**  
**December 4, 2006**

[Boomerang Effect](#)

**By William S. Lind**

Last week, one of my students, a Marine captain, asked whether I had heard a news report about an "IED-like device" supposedly found near Cincinnati, and if I thought we would soon start seeing IEDs here in the U.S. I replied that I had not heard the news story, but as to whether we would see IEDs here at home, the answer is yes.

One of the things U.S. troops are learning in Iraq is how people with little training and few resources can fight a state. Most American troops will see this within the framework of counterinsurgency. But a minority will apply their new-found knowledge in a very different way. After they return to the U.S. and leave the military, they will take what they learned in Iraq back to the inner cities, to the ethnic groups, gangs, and other alternate loyalties they left when they joined the service. There, they will put their new knowledge to work, in wars with each other and wars against the American state. It will not be long before we see police squad cars getting hit with IEDs and other techniques employed by Iraqi insurgents, right here in the streets of American cities.

I know this thought – not to speak of the reality when it happens – will be shocking to some readers. To anyone who really understands Fourth Generation war, it should not be. Fourth Generation war does not merely work on the will of a state's political leaders, as some theorists have said. It does something far more powerful. It pulls an opposing state apart at the moral level.

We saw this phenomenon in the effect the defeat in Afghanistan had on the Soviet Union. Just as that defeat led to the disintegration of the USSR, so defeat in the current Afghan war will bring the disintegration of NATO. We are seeing 4GW pull Israel apart today, to the point where a leaden blanket of *Kulturpessimismus* now oppresses that country.

We will see the same thing here, powerfully I think, as a result of our defeat in Iraq. It will manifest itself in many ways, and one of those ways will be the progression of inner-city and gang crime into something close to warfare, including war against the state.

Police will not be surprised by this prediction. I have talked with cops about Fourth Generation war, and they "get it" much better than do American soldiers and Marines. Many have told me that they already recognize elements of war in what they are encountering, especially in inner cities. Cops have been killed while just sitting in their cruisers, because they represent the authority of the state. How big a step is it for those cruisers to get hit with IEDs instead of pistol shots?

The Bush administration, as usual, has it exactly backwards. The danger is not that the "terrorists" we are fighting in Iraq will come here if we pull out there. Rather, American involvement in 4GW in Iraq will create "terrorism" here from among the people we have sent to fight the war there. Well educated in the ways of successful insurgency, they will come home embittered by a lost war, by friends dead and crippled for life to no purpose. Thanks to America's de-industrialization, they will return to no jobs,

or lousy "service" jobs at minimum wage. Angry, frustrated and futureless, some of them will find new identities and loyalties in gangs and criminal enterprises, where they can put their new talents to work.

It will, of course, be only a small minority of returning troops who will go this route. But something else they will have learned from the Iraqi insurgents, along with how to make and deploy IEDs, is that it takes very few people to create and sustain an insurgency.

The boomerang effect is a central element of Fourth Generation war. When a state involves itself in 4GW over there, it lays a basis for 4GW at home. That is true even if it wins over there, and all the more true if it loses, as states usually do. The toxic fallout from America's 4GW defeats in Iraq and Afghanistan will be far greater than most people expect, and it will fall most heavily on America's police.

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

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On War #194

November 29, 2006

[More Troops?](#)

**By William S. Lind**

The latest serpent at which a drowning Washington Establishment is grasping is the idea of sending more American troops to Iraq. Would more troops turn the war there in our favor? No.

Why not? First, because nothing can. The war in Iraq is irredeemably lost. Neither we nor, at present, anyone else can create a new Iraqi state to replace the one our invasion destroyed. Maybe that will happen after the Iraqi civil war is resolved, maybe not. It is in any case out of our hands.

Nor could more American troops control the forces driving Iraq's intensifying civil war. The passions of ethnic and religious hatred unleashed by the disintegration of the Iraqi state will not cool because a few more American patrols pass through the streets. Iraqis are quite capable of fighting us and each other at the same time.

A second reason more troops would make no difference is that the troops we have there now don't know what to do, or at least their leaders don't know what they should do. For the most part, American troops in Iraq sit on their Forward Operating Bases; in effect, we are besieging ourselves. Troops under siege are seldom effective at controlling the surrounding countryside, regardless of their number.

When American troops do leave their FOBs, it is almost always to run convoys, which is to say to provide targets; to engage in meaningless patrols, again providing targets; or to do raids, which are downright counterproductive, because they turn the people even more strongly against us, where that is possible. Doing more of any of these things would help us not at all.

More troops might make a difference if they were sent as part of a change in strategy, away from raids and "killing bad guys" and toward something like the Vietnam war's CAP program, where American troops defended villages instead of attacking them. But there is no sign of any such change of strategy on the horizon, so there would be nothing useful for more troops to do.

Even a CAP program would be likely to fail at this stage of the Iraq war, which points to the third reason more troops would not help us: more troops cannot turn back the clock. For the CAP or "ink blot" strategy to work, there has to be some level of acceptance of the foreign troops by the local people. When we first invaded Iraq, that was present in much of the country.

But we squandered that good will with blunder upon blunder. How many troops would it take to undo all those errors? The answer is either zero or an infinite number, because no quantity of troops can erase history. The argument that more troops in the beginning, combined with an ink blot strategy, might have made the Iraq venture a success does not mean that more troops could do the same thing now.

The clinching argument against more troops also relates to time: sending more troops would mean nothing to our opponents on the ground, because those opponents know we could not sustain a significantly larger occupation force for any length of time. So

what if a few tens of thousands more Americans come for a few months? The U.S. military is strained to the breaking point to sustain the force there now. Where is the rotation base for a much larger deployment to come from?

The fact that Washington is seriously considering sending more American troops to Iraq illustrates a common phenomenon in war. As the certainty of defeat looms ever more clearly, the scrabbling about for a miracle cure, a *deus ex machina*, becomes ever more desperate - and more silly. Cavalry charges, Zeppelins, V-2 missiles, kamikazes, the list is endless. In the end, someone finally has to face facts and admit defeat. The sooner someone in Washington is willing to do that, the sooner the troops we already have in Iraq will come home - alive.

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**On War #193**  
**November 20, 2006**

[Davy Jones's Locker](#)

**By William S. Lind**

Last week, for three days running, the *Washington Times* carried front-page stories about the interception of a U.S. Navy aircraft carrier, the *Kitty Hawk*, by a Chinese submarine. The submarine, a Song-class diesel-electric boat, popped up undetected in the middle of a carrier battle group, which was operating in deep water off Okinawa. Armed with Russian-made wake-homing torpedos that can ruin a carrier's day, the sub was well within range of the *Kitty Hawk* when it surfaced.

While the *Washington Times* headline read "Admiral says sub risked a shootout," the incident meant little in itself. Navies play these kinds of "Gotcha!" games with each other all the time; both U.S. and Soviet subs were quite good at it during the Cold War. Since neither the U.S. nor China are seeking war, there was no danger of a naval Marco Polo Bridge Incident. The paper quoted an unidentified U.S. Navy official as saying, correctly, "We were operating in international waters, and they were operating in international waters. From that standpoint, nobody was endangering anybody. Nobody felt threatened."

There are, still, some lessons here. One is that, contrary to the U.S. Navy's fervent belief, the aircraft carrier is no longer *the* capital ship. It ceded that role long ago to the submarine. In one naval exercise after another, the sub sinks the carriers. The carriers just pretend it didn't happen and carry on with the rest of the exercise.

About thirty years ago, my first boss, Senator Robert Taft Jr. of Ohio, asked Admiral Hyman Rickover how long he thought the U.S. aircraft carriers would last in the war with the Soviet navy, which was largely a submarine navy. Rickover's answer, on the record in a hearing of the Senate Armed Services Committee, was, "About two days." The Committee, needless to say, went on to approve buying more carriers.

Another lesson is that diesel-electric subs can be as effective or more effective than nuclear boats in same situations. The U.S. Navy hates the very idea of non-nuclear submarines and therefore pretends they don't count for much. You can buy four to eight modern diesel-electric submarines for the cost of a single American "U-cruiser" nuke boat.

At this point, the Chinese sub's successful interception of our carrier does raise an interesting question: How was that sub in the right position to make an interception? What a nuclear submarine can do but a diesel-electric sub cannot is undertake along, high-speed chases. Was it just dumb luck that the Chinese sub was where we, in effect, ran into it? Or were the Chinese able to coordinate the sub's movement over time with successful tracking of our carrier battle group? If the latter is the case, the Chinese Navy may be starting to become a real navy instead of just a collection of ships. That transformation is far more important than whether China has this or that piece of equipment. It won't happen fast, but it bears watching.

Or does it? The somewhat regrettable message from the world of real war, **Fourth Generation** war, is that deep-water battles or prospective battles between navies means little if anything. Speculating about the balance between U.S. Navy aircraft carriers and Chinese submarines is like wondering what would happen at Trafalgar if Villeneuve's van had responded immediately to his signal to wear and support the center of the Allies' line, or Admiral Gravina had led his Squadron of Observation straight for Collingwood's column. It's fun to think about - personally, I enjoy it immensely - but *c'est ne pas la guerre*. Control of coastal and inland waters may play highly important roles in Fourth Generation war, but deep water naval battles like the Glorious First

of June, if they occur, will be jousting contests, with broomsticks. In real war, the U.S. Coast Guard may be more useful than the U.S. Navy.

That is the real lesson of the Chinese sub incident: The U.S. Navy, like the U.S. Air Force, without a torpedo fired or a single dogfight, is on its way to Davy Jones's Locker through sheer intellectual inanition. Preparing endlessly for another carrier war in the Pacific against the Imperial Japanese Navy, it has become a historical artifact.

In the late 19th century, the Chinese people, outraged by repeated foreign humiliations of China, took up a sizeable collection of money to build China a modern navy. The Dowager Empress used the funds to build a marble pleasure boat for herself in the lake near her summer palace. The U.S. Navy's carrier battle groups are the marble pleasure boats of the House and Senate Armed Services Committees of the U.S. Congress.

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**On War #192**  
**November 13, 2006**

[Lose a War, Lose an Election](#)

**By William S. Lind**

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

Lose a war, lose an election. What else should anyone expect, especially when the war is one we never had to fight? Had Spain defeated us in '98, does anyone think T.R. would have been elected in 1900? A logical corollary is, lose two wars, lose two elections. With the war in Afghanistan following that in Iraq down the tube, 2008 may not be a Republican year.

Even better, by 2008 the American people may have figured out that the two parties are really one party, neither wing of which knows or much cares what it is doing. The vehicle for this realization may once again be the war in Iraq. The next two years, rather than seeing us extricate ourselves from the Iraqi swamp, are likely to witness us floundering ever deeper into it.

The lesson of last week's election, in which the Republicans lost both Houses of Congress, will not be lost on either party. Both Republican and Democratic Senators and Congressmen will now agree that the war is a disaster we need to extricate ourselves from. The White House won't admit it, but it has to see the situation the same way. George Bush and Dick Cheney may not, but Bush's brain, Karl Rove, certainly does. The puppet must, in the end, obey the puppeteer.

What, then, will keep us in Iraq? While both parties want to get out, neither has nor will be able to create a consensus on how to get out. Not only will they be unable to generate a consensus between the parties, or between the executive branch and the Congress, they will not be able to find consensus within either party on how the withdrawal is to be managed. The result will be paralysis and a continuation of the war.

Part of the reason Washington will not be able to agree on a plan for coming home from Iraq is political. Neither party wants to enable the other to blame it in 2008 for "losing Iraq." The Democrats are especially fearful of anything that would seem to make them look "weak on defense."

But a greater part of the reason for fateful indecision will be the very real fact that there are no good options. If we stay in Iraq, the civil war there will intensify, with American troops caught in the middle. Already, all those troops are doing is serving in Operation Provide Targets, with casualty rates that continue to rise.

But if we withdraw, the civil war will intensify all the more rapidly. Unless that civil war is won by someone, someone who can re-create an Iraqi state, Iraq will become a stateless region of permanent chaos, a generator and supplier of the non-state Islamic forces who are our real enemy. That may also happen if the wrong elements win the civil war, extremist Shiites allied with Iran or extremist Sunnis with strong al Qaeda sympathies. The factions who might create a government we could live with are either Ba'athist or connected with the current Iraqi government, neither of which is likely to come out on top. Eggs, once broken, are hard to unscramble.

In the absence of any good options, politicians of both parties in Washington, not wanting to hold the bag for the inevitable failure, will be able to agree only on a series of half-measures. We will train still more Iraqi troops or police, ignoring that both are mostly militiamen for one or another faction. We will pull our troops back into remote bases, where most already stay, remaining in Iraq while the civil war boils up around us. We will try to get the regional powers to help us out, despite the fact that those who would can't and those who can have no reason to do so. We will steam in circles, scream and shout, hoping desperately for a *deus ex machina* rescue that is unlikely to appear.

In a reality neither Republicans nor Democrats will dare face, we have only one option left in Iraq. That option is to admit failure and withdraw. We can do it sooner, or, at the cost of more American dead and wounded, we can do it later. Obviously, sooner is better, but that would require a bold decision, which no one in Washington is willing to make.

In World War I, after the failure of the Schlieffen Plan, my reporting senior, Kaiser Wilhelm II, wanted an early, compromise peace. Regrettably, he was unwilling to force that policy on his recalcitrant generals.

Today, in Washington, the generals want peace. They could give the politicians of both parties and both relevant branches of government the cover they need to make peace, by going public in favor of an early withdrawal. Unfortunately, that would require a level of moral courage not notably evident in the senior American military. In its absence, the whole American political system will continue to flounder in a sea of half-measures, American troops will continue to die in a lost war, and the crisis of legitimacy of the American state will continue to grow.

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## **On War #191 November 6, 2006**

[He's Tanned, Rested and Ready](#)

**By William S. Lind**

Yesterday, an Iraqi court found Saddam Hussein guilty and sentenced him to death. The fact that the court was the creature of a foreign power and that the proceedings reeked of a Stalinist show trial do not affect the justice of the verdict. Saddam is guilty as sin.

Of what is he guilty? Saddam Hussein is guilty of governing Iraq. The specific charges against him—murders, massacres, wholesale slaughters, etc.—are subsets of the main charge. All these vicious crimes, and more, are what it takes to govern Iraq.

Like most of the world, Iraq has two possible states: tyranny and anarchy. You can have the one, or the other, but nothing in between. Of the two, for both Iraqis and the world, tyranny is vastly preferable. Today's *Washington Post* quotes an Iraqi Sunni as saying, "Saddam was accused of killing 148 people. Now, more than 148 innocent people are getting killed in Iraq every day." Saddam's Iraq was a bitter enemy of al-Qaeda. Thanks to George W. Bush's discovery of Woodrow Wilson's stash of "Democracy" absinthe, Iraq is now al-Qaeda's biggest success story, not to mention recruiting ground.

With even the Bush White House giving up on "staying the course" in Iraq, the question becomes, how might we walk this dog back? The first course correction must be in our objective. Instead of trying to bring democracy to Iraq, our directing strategic question should be, how can we restore tyranny in place of the current anarchy?

An obvious first step is to replace the current "democratic government" in Baghdad—the "government" of a non-existent state—with a new dictator. Some voices in Washington are quietly suggesting we will soon do this. An occupying power should be able to stage a *coup d'état*, even if it cannot maintain order in the streets.

Then comes a hard question: should the new Iraqi dictator be Sunni or Shiite? In answer, we need to realize that in Iraq, as in Afghanistan, we have gotten ourselves on the wrong side in a civil war. But while that is true locally in Afghanistan—we are allied with the Tajiks and the Uzbeks against the Pashtun, and the Pashtun always win—it is true regionally in Iraq. While Shiites are a majority in Iraq, they are a minority in the Islamic world. The countries that are key to American interests in the region—

Pakistan, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia—are majority Sunni and are governed by Sunni regimes. The leading Shiite power in the region, Iran, is our principal local opponent, and thus far a great beneficiary of our invasion of Iraq. Strategically, the new dictator we install should be a Sunni.

One can add a few more credentials. The new dictator, if he is to have legitimacy, must be an opponent of the American occupation. Ideally, he should be someone who has suffered personally at the hands of the Americans. He should be able to turn off the Sunni insurgency, to facilitate an American exit. He should be able to call an effective army to the colors quickly, to prevail in the Sunni-Shiite civil war that is already underway and will intensify rapidly if briefly once a Sunni is put back in power. He should be someone who knows how to make Iraq work, as well as Arab states do work. Of course, he should have no qualms at inflicting the utmost brutality on his own people, since that is what governing Iraq requires.

Fortunately, we have just such a man at hand. He's tanned, rested and ready. A quick extraction by Delta Force and presto!, Saddam Hussein can be president of Iraq once more. It should take about 48 hours for the Baathists to slit the throat of every al-Qaeda operative in the country. Saddam will, I'm sure, be gracious in victory, allowing us to withdraw our beaten army gracefully. Unlike the current Iraqi government, I doubt he will ally with the Iranians, who will have tasted their victory turn to ashes in their mouths.

Yes, I know, it's a winter night's dream. Monarchies can pull off such dramatic reversals, while republics must wallow endlessly in their blunders, their puny "leaders" too terrified of uncomprehending publics to escape the mire.

One understands why, according to the *Washington Times*, as the President of Iraq was led from the courtroom, sentenced to death, "There was a hint of a smile on Saddam's face."

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**On War #190**  
**October 31, 2006**

[Third and Final Act](#)

**By William S. Lind**

The third and final act in the national tragedy that is the Bush administration may soon play itself out. The Okhrana reports increasing indications of "something big" happening between the election and Christmas. That could be the long-planned attack on Iran.

An attack on Iran will not be an invasion with ground troops. We don't have enough of those left to invade Ruritania. It will be a "package" of air and missile strikes, by U.S. forces or Israel. If Israel does it, there is a possibility of nuclear weapons being employed. But Israel would prefer the U.S. to do the dirty work, and what Israel wants, Israel usually gets, at least in Washington.

That this would constitute folly piled on top of folly is no deterrent to the Bush administration. Like the French Bourbons, it forgets nothing and it learns nothing. It takes pride in not adapting. Or did you somehow miss George W. Bush's declaration of Presidential Infallibility? It followed shortly after the visit to the aircraft carrier with the "Mission Accomplished" sign.

The Democrats taking either or both Houses of Congress, if it happens, will not make any difference. They would rather have the Republicans start and lose another war than prevent a national disaster. Politics comes first and the country second. Nor would they dare cross Israel.

Many of the consequences of a war with Iran are easy to imagine. Oil would soar to at least \$200 per barrel if we could get it. Gas shortages would bring back the gas lines of 1973 and 1979. Our European alliances would be stretched to the breaking point if not beyond it. Most people outside the Bushbubble can see all this coming.

What I fear no one foresees is a substantial danger that we could lose the army now deployed in Iraq. I have mentioned this in previous columns, but I want to go into it here in more detail because the scenario may soon go live.

Well before the second Iraq war started, I warned in a piece in *The American Conservative* that the structure of our position in

Iraq could lead to that greatest of military disasters, encirclement. That is precisely the danger if we go to war with Iran.

The danger arises because almost all of the vast quantities of supplies American armies need come into Iraq from one direction, up from Kuwait and other Gulf ports in the south. If that supply line is cut, our forces may not have enough stuff, especially fuel, to get out of Iraq. American armies are incredibly fuel-thirsty, and though Iraq has vast oil reserves, it is short of refined oil products. Unlike Guderian's Panzer army on its way to the Channel coast in 1940, we could not just fuel up at local gas stations.

There are two ways our supply lines from the south could be cut if we attack Iran. The first is by Shiite militias including the Mahdi Army and the Badr Brigades, possibly supported by a general Shiite uprising and, of course, Iran's Revolutionary Guards (the same guys who trained Hezbollah so well).

The second danger is that regular Iranian Army divisions will roll into Iraq, cut our supply lines and attempt to pocket us in and around Baghdad. Washington relies on American air power to prevent this, but bad weather can shut most of that air power down.

Unfortunately, no one in Washington and few people in the U.S. military will even consider this possibility. Why? Because we have fallen victim to our own propaganda. Over and over the U.S. military tells itself, "We're the greatest! We're number one! No one can defeat us. No one can even fight us. We're the greatest military in all of history!"

It's bull. The U.S. armed forces are technically well-trained, lavishly resourced Second Generation militaries. They are being fought and defeated by Fourth Generation opponents in both Iraq and Afghanistan. They can also be defeated by Third Generation enemies who can observe, orient, decide and act more quickly than can America's vast, process-ridden, Powerpoint-enslaved military headquarters. They can be defeated by strategy, by stratagem, by surprise and by preemption. Unbeatable militaries are like unsinkable ships. They are unsinkable until someone or something sinks them.

If the U.S. were to lose the army it has in Iraq, to Iraqi militias, Iranian regular forces, or a combination of both (the most likely event), the world would change. It would be our Adrianople, our Rocroi, our Stalingrad. American power and prestige would never recover.

One of the few people who does see this danger is the doyenne of American foreign policy columnists, Georgie Anne Geyer. In her column of October 28 in *The Washington Times*, she wrote,

The worst has not, by any means, yet happened. When I think of abandoning a battleground, I think of the 1850s, when thousands of Brits were trying to leave Afghanistan through the Khyber Pass and all were killed by tribesmen except one man, left to tell the story.

Our men and women are in isolated compounds, not easy even to retreat from, were that decision made. Time is truly running out.

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**On War #189**  
**October 27, 2006**

[Strategic Counteroffensive](#)

**By William S. Lind**

A point often missed about the Soviet misadventure in Afghanistan is that the Afghan mujaheddin won not just a defensive but an offensive victory. Not only did they drive the Red Army out of Afghanistan, the defeat they inflicted on it contributed significantly to the fall of the Communist regime in Russia and the disintegration of the Soviet Union.

Now it appears that Iraq may be going for a similar offensive victory against the West. Iraqis are already launching a counter-invasion of the West in response to the American-led invasion of Iraq. Specifically, they are invading Sweden. A story in the October 25 *Washington Post Express* reports that Sweden, a country of only 9 million people, has already taken in more than 70,000 Iraqis who are fleeing the war in their own country, with more on the way.

The culturally Marxist Swedish governing elite presents these invaders as poor, harmless refugees who only want peace. Daily life in the Swedish city of Malmo paints a different picture. A recent Swedish sociological study of the situation in Malmo is titled, "Vi krigar mot svenskarna," or "We're waging war against the Swedes." Based on interviews with young, overwhelmingly Moslem immigrants in Malmo, the study found that

The wave of robberies the city of Malmo has witnessed during this past year is part of a "war against Swedes." This is the explanation given by young robbers with immigrant backgrounds on why they are only robbing native Swedes....

"When we are in the city and robbing, we are waging a war, waging a war against the Swedes." This argument was repeated several times.

If, as seems likely, Iraq splits into three separate entities, Kurdish, Shiite, and Sunni, the Sunnis will be left with no oil, which is to say with no future other than utter poverty. What will they do? Swell the ranks of invaders of Europe. Already, more than 500,000 Moslems invade Europe every year across the Mediterranean. Millions of Iraqi Sunnis will attempt to join that migration. Many of them will have had excellent training in urban guerilla warfare.

A story in the October 18 *Washington Times* says Canada is facing exactly this threat:

Concern is growing among U.S. and Canadian counter-terrorism specialists that Somali-Canadians are joining Islamist militias in their homeland linked to al Qaeda.

Former senior Canadian intelligence official David Harris said there was concern that returning militia veterans with "the kind of skills that...could make them very dangerous" might try to stage terror attacks.

"We're seeing the possibility of a tragic future unfold," he said.

Indeed we are. These Somalis, like the Iraqis now pouring into Sweden, came to Canada as refugees from the fighting there. They received Canadian citizenship, but they never became real Canadians. The Canadian Somalis now return to Somalia to fight *jihad* on behalf of the Islamic Courts Union, then come back to Canada, bringing *jihad* with them. Of the 18 Islamics arrested in Canada in June for a bomb plot, two were Somalis.

Here we see how Fourth Generation war and its practitioners outmaneuver states with almost laughable ease. The states not only provide legal armament to the Fourth Generation fighters, by offering citizenship without allegiance, they virtually beg for more invaders to come. Business wants the cheap labor, and the cultural Marxists welcome the assault on traditional Western culture.

The neo-cons are now going both one better by proposing America recruit hordes of Third World foreigners into her armies, so those armies will have the manpower to carry out the neo-cons' imperial dreams. The last empire that invited barbarians into the legions didn't fare too well.

To turn a favorite piece of Bushbull around, we're fighting them there while inviting them in to fight us here. Soon enough, unless we change course, we won't be able to fight them there or here. If George W. Bush's invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan are America's Operation Barbarossa, Islamic immigration into the West is the Fourth Generation's Operation Bagration.

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**On War #188**  
**October 16, 2006**

[Barbarians at the Gates](#)

**By William S. Lind**

At this low point in our country's history, no phrase in the English language has less meaning than "political leader." The bottom-feeders who "lead" both political parties suck up money and votes while burying themselves in the sand at any sign of a national

issue. Yet one shark still circles among all the flatfish: Pat Buchanan.

Buchanan's new book, *State of Emergency: The Third World Invasion and Conquest of America*, is of central importance to anyone who wants to understand the Fourth Generation threat this country faces. From the outset, *State of Emergency* recognizes that the problem is not just immigration:

This is not immigration as America knew it, when men and women made a conscious choice to turn their backs on their native lands and cross the ocean to become Americans. This is an invasion, the greatest invasion in history. Nothing of this magnitude has ever happened in so short a span of time. There are 36 million immigrants and their children in the United States today, almost as many as came to America between Jamestown in 1607 and the Kennedy election of 1960. Nearly 90 percent of all immigrants now come from continents and countries whose peoples have never assimilated fully into any Western country.

In looking at America, Buchanan focuses on the invasion from Mexico, which is the main danger. Rightly, he stresses that the central issue is assimilation – more precisely, acculturation – or the present lack of it. In part, the failure to acculturate is due to the ideology of “multiculturalism;” I wish Buchanan had traced that ideology to its roots in the cultural Marxism of the Frankfurt School, as he does in his earlier book *The Death of the West*. Here, he focuses on the other side of the coin, the campaign by *La Raza*, the Mexican government and advocates of Aztlán to convince Mexican immigrants not to acculturate, to refuse to transfer their primary loyalty from Mexico to the United States. The result?

“The one absolutely certain way of bringing this nation to ruin, of preventing all possibility of it continuing to be a nation at all, would be to permit it to become a tangle of squabbling nationalities,” said Theodore Roosevelt. We are becoming what T.R. warned against: a multi-lingual, multiethnic, multicultural tower of Babel. To the delight of anti-Americans everywhere and the indifference of our elites, we are risking the Balkanization and breakup of the nation.

Buchanan breaks new ground in his discussion of the Republican Party's disgusting defense of open borders, a position justified by the argument that the resulting cheap labor is good for the economy.

Scholar Jon Attarian gave a name to the cult that has captured the party of Goldwater and Reagan: “economism.” This neo-Marxist ideology is rooted in a belief that economics rules the world, that economic activity is mankind's most important activity and the most conducive to human happiness, and that economics is what politics is or should be all about.

Economism does not just believe in markets, it worships them...The commands of the market overrule the claims of citizenship, culture, country. Economic efficiency becomes the highest virtue.

So far has the cult of economism spread that many conservatives now believe it defines conservatism. It does not. On the contrary, conservatives have never regarded efficiency as an important virtue. Buchanan does not fall into this vulgar error. He devotes an entire chapter of *State of Emergency* to the question, “What Is a Nation?,” and his answer would please Edmund Burke much more than it would Jeremy Bentham.

Buchanan leads as an intellectual, but he also leads in a more profound, moral sense. Here as elsewhere, he does not shrink from telling the truth in the face of a hostile *Zeitgeist*.

It is not true that all creeds and cultures are equally assimilable in a First World nation born of England, Christianity, and Western civilization. Race, faith, ethnicity and history leave genetic fingerprints no “proposition nation” can erase...

Race matters. Ethnicity matters. History matters. Faith matters. Nationality matters. Multiculturalist ideology be damned, this is what history teaches...

To the father of the Constitution, James Madison, one consideration was paramount in deciding who should come and who should not: “I do not wish that any man should acquire the privilege of citizenship, but such as would be a real addition to the wealth or strength of the United States.”

If we follow his guidance, preferences should go to individuals who speak our English language, can contribute significantly to

our society, have an education, come from countries with a history of assimilation in America, will not become public charges, and do wish to become Americans. And as we remain a predominantly Christian country, why should not a preference go to Christians?

Why not, indeed? Perhaps those who wish to spare the United States the agonies of imported Fourth Generation war should take as their slogan, "Buchanan in 08!"

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### **On War #187**

**October 11, 2006**

#### [Why We Still Fight](#)

**By William S. Lind**

At least 32 American troops have been killed in Iraq this month. Approximately 300 have been wounded. The "battle for Baghdad" is going nowhere. A Marine friend just back from Ramadi said to me, "It didn't get any better while I was there, and it's not going to get better." Virtually everyone in Washington, except the people in the White House, knows that is true for all of Iraq.

Actually, I think the White House knows it too. Why then does it insist on "staying the course" at a casualty rate of more than one thousand Americans per month? The answer is breathtaking in its cynicism: so the retreat from Iraq happens on the next President's watch. That is why we still fight.

Yep, it's now all about George. Anyone who thinks that is too low, too mean, too despicable even for this bunch does not understand the meaning of the adjective "Rovian." Would they let thousands more young Americans get killed or wounded just so George W. does not have to face the consequences of his own folly? In a heartbeat.

Not that it's going to help. When history finally lifts its leg on the Bush administration, it will wash all such tricks away, leaving only the hubris and the incompetence. Jeffrey Hart, who with Russell Kirk gone is probably the top intellectual in the conservative movement, has already written that George W. Bush is the worst President America ever had. I think the honor still belongs to the sainted Woodrow, but if Bush attacks Iran, he may yet earn the prize. That third and final act in the Bush tragicomedy is waiting in the wings.

A post-election Democratic House, Senate or both might in theory say no to another war. But if the Bush administration's cynicism is boundless, the Democrats' intellectual vacuity and moral cowardice are equally so. You can't beat something with nothing, but Democrats have put forward nothing in the way of an alternative to Bush's defense and foreign policies. On Iran, the question is whether they will be more scared of the Republicans or of the Israeli lobby. Either way, they will hide under the bed, just as they have hidden under the bed on the war in Iraq. It appears at the moment that a Congressional demand for withdrawal from Iraq is more likely if the Republicans keep the Senate and Senator John Warner of Virginia remains Chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee than if the Democrats take over.

There is a great deal of material available to the Democrats to offer an alternative, much of it the product of the Military Reform Movement of the 1970s and 80s. Gary Hart can tell them all about it. There is even a somewhat graceful way out of Iraq, if the Dems will ask themselves my favorite foreign policy question, WWBD - - What Would Bismarck Do? He would transfer sufficient Swiss francs to interested parties so that the current government of Iraq asks us to leave. They, not we, would then hold the world's ugliest baby, even though it was America's indiscretion that gave the bastard birth.

But donkeys will think when pigs fly. A Democratic Congress will be as stupid, cowardly and corrupt as its Republican predecessor; in reality, both parties are one party, the party of successful career politicians. The White House will continue a lost war in Iraq, solely to dump the mess in the next President's lap. America or Israel will attack Iran, pulling what's left of the temple down on our heads. Congress will do nothing to stop either war.

By 2008, I may not be the only monarchist in America.

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Foundation.

**On War #186**  
**October 3, 2006**

Dear Jim

**By William S. Lind**

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

The *Washington Post* is currently serializing excerpts from Bob Woodward's new book, *State of Denial*, which reads distressingly like Count Ciano's diaries. Yesterday's excerpt quotes Marine Corps General James L. Jones, the current NATO commander, saying to another Marine, General Peter Pace, on the eve of his accession to the Chairmanship of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, "You're going to face a debacle and be part of the debacle in Iraq."

I've known General Jones since he was a major. He is an acute observer of the political scene, and his warning to General Pace was right on the mark. Unfortunately, General Jones is now caught up in another war, the war in Afghanistan, which is not going altogether well. Perhaps it is time to share some bad news with him, as he did with General Pace.

Dear Jim,

I hope this autumn finds you well and enjoying the rigours of chateau campaigning. No wonder the Europeans fought so many wars; they had such lovely places to fight them in.

In another part of the world, less lovely, the snows will soon bring campaigning to an end. As winter will offer some time for adjustment there, I thought I should say to you what you said to General Pace: if NATO continues on its present course, you're going to face a debacle and be part of the debacle in Afghanistan.

It is not news to you that the Taliban has the initiative. What your staff may not be telling you is that NATO is helping the Taliban stage its comeback. NATO is botching the war in Afghanistan in ways remarkably similar to those the U.S. has employed in Iraq. It is conducting massive sweeps, bombing villages, and alienating locals. It may not be too late to turn it around; no one is better positioned to do so than yourself. But if you are to avoid presiding over one defeat while Pete Pace presides over another, you need to act along the following lines:

1. Stop fighting the Pashtun. The war in Afghanistan is in part a civil war, and the Pashtun always win Afghan civil wars. NATO's presence won't change that outcome, although it may delay it. If NATO doesn't want to end up on the losing side, it needs to make peace with the Pashtun, then if possible ally with the Pashtun. As NATO's supreme commander, that ought to be your main strategic objective.
2. Stop attacking the Taliban. Of course NATO forces must respond when attacked, but don't look for fights. Every engagement with the Taliban, won or lost, moves you farther away from peace with the Pashtun. Drop the sweeps, "big pushes," etc. Stop talking about body counts; those bodies are almost all Pashtun.

A story in today's *Washington Post* shows the right way to do it. It reports a deal between British troops and local elders:

Under the agreement reached in the small town of Musa Qala, in Helmand province, British troops will not launch offensives. In return, the elders will press the Taliban to stop attacks, a NATO spokesman said Monday.

"If we are not attacked, we have no reason to initiate offensive operations. The tribal elders are using their influence on the Taliban," NATO spokesman Mark Laity said.

U.S. forces in Afghanistan will hate this, but those forces are now under NATO command, which is to say your command, Jim. Make them stop doing things we know don't work, like sweeps.

3. Remember one of John Boyd's favorite admonitions: we don't want to be attacking the village, we want to be in the village. Operationally, NATO's focus should be a variant of the Vietnam CAP program. The units in the village should be backed by mobile reserves that can fight battles of encirclement (U.S. forces can't, but maybe someone else in your coalition can). When the Taliban hit a village, the object should be to encircle them and take prisoners, not kill them. One turned prisoner is better than many bodies.

4. Eliminate *all* airstrikes. Not only will they continue to hit civilians, they make NATO into a monster. Every airstrike, no matter how "successful," is a blow against NATO at the moral level of war.

5. Finally, accept that Afghanistan will remain Afghanistan. It will not become Switzerland. Stop promoting things like "womens' rights," i.e. Feminism, that tell the locals we want to force Hell down their throats. At best, NATO may be able to leave Afghanistan what it once was, a state with a weak central government, powerful local war lords, a narco economy and chronic, low-level civil war. It would probably help if the monarchy were restored. Anything more as a strategic objective is unattainable.

To accomplish any of this, you will need to tell the U.S. military and Washington to pound sand. Remember, you don't work for them any more. What are they going to do to you, shave your head and send you to Parris Island?

Best Regards,

Bill

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**On War #185**  
**September 28, 2006**

[The Sanctuary Delusion](#)

**By William S. Lind**

At America's behest, Pakistan sent its army into the tribal territories along its northwest frontier. Predictably, its army got beaten. The Pakistani government has now signed a truce with the tribes in North Waziristan, a wise move given that government's fragility. (On Sunday, when the power went out all over Pakistan, everyone assumed there had been a coup.)

Washington and its gentlemanly Afghan puppet, Mr. Karzai, are howling that this will give the Taliban a sanctuary, which is true. Every military force, including those of the Fourth Generation, needs some sort of secure rear area where its fights can relax, its wounded can receive treatment, and its new recruits can be trained. Such sanctuaries are vital for the Taliban, al Qaeda, Hamas, Hezbollah and all the rest.

Unfortunately, this need for sanctuaries is leading the "silver bullet" crowd, those who seek some magical single answer to the Fourth Generation threat, off on another detour to nowhere. They say that if we only put enough pressure on states such as Pakistan not to permit sanctuaries, and overthrow state governments that openly provide sanctuary such as Syria's, then the Fourth Generation will disappear. Sorry, but it won't.

The error is that, as usual, the silver bulleters are thinking in terms of states. They argue not only that Fourth Generation entities need sanctuaries, which is true, but that those sanctuaries have to be in states, which is not true. On the contrary, stateless regions provide the best sanctuary Fourth Generation forces can hope to find.

The best example is the stateless region of Mesopotamia, formerly the state of Iraq (minus Kurdistan). Despite the presence of 140,000 American troops, 20,000 mercenaries and the dwindling remains of the coalition of the shilling, Mesopotamia is now a happy hunting ground for more 4GW entities than Osama can count. In that stateless void, they have rich recruiting grounds, the best training available anywhere, ample funds, plenty of weapons and enough quiet places where tired or wounded mujaheddin can get their R&R. The former Iraq has become a Fourth Generation theme park. Six Hundred Flags, perhaps? Or maybe Bushworld.

Much of Afghanistan is rapidly going the same route. Far from needing friendly states for sanctuary, most 4GW forces can find it locally, often right under the occupiers' noses. While Pakistan's northwest territories do give the Taliban welcome sanctuary, I'd bet at least one goat that most Afghan Taliban find their sanctuary in Afghanistan, among their families, friends and fellow tribesmen. If some hapless NATO troops stumble into their village while they're on R&R, they can just smile and wave. Why travel for what you have at home?

The sanctuary delusion has two unfortunate consequences. First, like all silver bullet answers to 4GW, it leads us astray from the slow, painful and difficult task of understanding the Fourth Generation in all its evolving complexity. Second, as with Pakistan, it leads the American government to push friendly governments in weak states over the edge. By demanding they deny sanctuary on their territory to "terrorists" who have strong popular support, Washington exacerbates their crises of legitimacy. Washington then acts surprised and dumbfounded when those governments fall, as it discreetly folds away the pocket knife that cut their high wire. If their fall creates another stateless region, the Fourth Generation gets another ideal sanctuary.

As is so often the case in 4GW, the fact that Fourth Generation forces need sanctuaries means neither that they must obtain them from states nor that they can be targeted. Our troops in Afghanistan don't call their Taliban opponents "ghosts" for nothing.

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**On War #184**  
**September 18, 2006**

[Will the Trumpet Sound Uncertain?](#)

**By William S. Lind**

The endless and largely cynical blather about a "Global War on Terrorism," "Islamic extremism," "Islamofascism," etc. has served more to obscure than to reveal the strategic situation the West now faces. Islam is, and always has been, a religion of war. What has changed in recent times is that after about 300 years on the strategic defensive, following the failure of the second Turkish siege of Vienna in 1683, Islam has resumed the strategic offensive. It is expanding outward in every direction, and much of its expansion is violent, if not initially then once new Islamic bridgeheads are strong enough to sustain violence.

The most critical question, and it remains an open question, is whether what remains of Christendom will defend itself or simply roll over and die. Most Western elites, and almost all Western political leaders (including those who call themselves conservatives), accept and live according to the dictates of cultural Marxism, the Marxism of the Frankfurt School known commonly as "multiculturalism" or "Political Correctness." Because cultural Marxism's primary objective is the destruction of Western culture and the Christian religion, its adherents see Islam as a useful if somewhat troublesome ally. They will even go to war on behalf of Moslems against Christians, as the Clinton administration did twice in the Balkans. It is improbable, to say the least, that any Western political leader will rally Christendom to defend itself.

Last week, Pope Benedict XVI seemed to do exactly that. In a speech at Regensburg, Germany, the Pope told the truth about Islam. Moreover, he did so by quoting a Byzantine Emperor, Manuel II Paleologos. According to a story in the September 13 *Cleveland Plain Dealer*,

"The emperor comes to speak about the issue of jihad, holy war," the Pope said.

"He said, I quote, 'Show me just what Mohammed brought that was new, and there you will find things only evil and inhuman, such as his command to spread by the sword the faith he preached.'"

What the Emperor, and the Pope, said is precisely correct. If you read the Qur'an (and I have read it), you will find it is mostly a pastiche, some elements taken from Judaism, some from Christianity, some from the pagan polytheism common in Arabia before Mohammed (Allah was the name of the leading god of the pantheon, the equivalent of Zeus or Jupiter). The main ingredient Mohammed added to this stew was endless condemnations of "unbelievers," including repeated calls for violence against them, e.g., "slay them in every kind of ambush." It is not surprising that from its birth Islam has been at war with every other religion. The Qur'an mandates exactly that.

By telling the truth about Islam, the Pope appeared to offer Christendom the leader in its own defense that it must find if it is to survive Islam's latest onslaught. More, quoting a Byzantine Emperor, he suggested that defending Christendom was his intention. The Byzantine Empire was the Christian world's first line of defense against Islam for centuries. Its fall to the Turks in 1453 was a catastrophe, but by then the modern age was beginning in the West. Modernity soon gave Christendom a decisive advantage over Islam and all other cultures that endured until the 20th century, when the West fought three civil wars that largely destroyed it. (Another Pope bought the West the time it needed—by assembling the Christian galleys at Lepanto.)

The elevation of Cardinal Ratzinger to the Papacy brought joy to traditional Christians everywhere, Roman Catholic or not (I'm not). With his Regensburg address, Pope Benedict XVI signaled he might do more than defend traditional Christianity against the heresies that beset it sorely. He might give the West a fighting leader, and a fighting chance, in a Fourth Generation world where wars between cultures will mean far more than wars between states.

The Islamic world responded predictably to the Pope's speech, proving the truth of the Emperor's words. In Somalia, a Moslem shot a Catholic nun in the back four times, killing her. In the West Bank, Christian churches were burned. Crowds rioted, and Islamic clerics and governments demanded the Pope retract his words.

Sadly, it appears that on Sunday the Pope crumbled. According to the AP, he said, "This in fact was a quotation from a medieval text, which does not in any way express my personal thought." Yet what the Emperor Manuel II Paleologus said is plain fact, fact as clear as day to anyone who reads the Qur'an or knows the history of Islam.

The Holy Spirit is Truth. As men of the West, we can only pray that the Holy Spirit will strengthen the Pope to continue to speak the truth about Islam. If the trumpet sounds uncertain, who will follow?

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**On War #183**  
**September 14, 2006**

[General Puff](#)

**By William S. Lind**

During World War II, one of the Fuhrer's favorite sayings was, "All generals lie." Today, Washington prefers the word "spin" to lie, although the difference is often difficult to parse. As an eighteenth-century man, I prefer an eighteenth century word: puffery. If we consider some of the statements coming from our military leaders regarding the war in Iraq, we might think they are all clones of General Puff.

In recent days, a classified report on the situation in Anbar province, written by a senior Marine intelligence official in Iraq, has been widely reported on in the press. The report, which I have not seen, apparently paints a bleak picture of the situation there. According to a story by Tom Ricks of THE WASHINGTON POST, the Marine commander in Anbar, major General Richard Zilmer, said "I have seen that report and I do concur with that assessment." Score one for the Marine Corps in the honesty department.

But then, General Puff seems to have stolen General Zilmer's identity. According to Ricks' story, Zilmer

Also insisted that "tremendous progress" is being made in that part of the country....

"I think we are winning this war," he told reporters. "We are certainly accomplishing our mission...."

The 30,000 U.S. and allied troops are "stifling" the enemy in the province, Zilmer told reporters. But he wouldn't say the insurgents are being defeated. Puffery, you see, tries to avoid statements that might later be checked against facts. By puffing out nice-sounding words such as "stifling," it seeks to create an impression that is favorable but too nebulous to hold to account.

The *THE CLEVELAND PLAIN DEALER* reported a wonderful piece of military puffery on September 7. Speaking of a supposed turnover of command of the Iraqi armed forces to Iraq's government, U.S. Major General William Cladwell said,

"This is such a huge, significant event that's about to occur tomorrow. If you go back and map out significant events that have occurred in this government's formation in taking control of the country, tomorrow is gigantic."

In reality, the Iraqi government took control of just a single division; most troops in the Iraqi Army take their orders from militia leaders, not the government; and the Iraqi government itself takes its orders from the United States. This "huge, significant event" changed nothing.

According to a story in the September 13 *OREGONIAN*,

The U.S. military did not count people killed by bombs, mortars, rockets or other mass attacks—including suicide bombings—when it reported a dramatic drop in the number of killings in the Baghdad area last month, the U.S. Command said Monday....

That led to confusion after Iraqi Health Ministry figures showed that 1,536 people died violently in and around Baghdad in August, nearly the same number as in July.

The figures raise serious questions about the success of the security operation launched by the U.S.-led coalition. When they released the murder rate figures, U.S. officials and their Iraqi counterparts were eager to show progress in restoring security in Baghdad.

Sufficiently eager, it seems, to puff the numbers.

We expect puffery from politicians. But when General Puff represents the military to the American people, the military puts itself in a dangerous situation. The loss of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan will, at some point, have domestic political repercussions, perhaps of some magnitude. The U.S. military will rightly bear some of the blame for both failures. It cannot credibly claim that it was forced to fight two Fourth Generation wars with Second Generation tactics and doctrine, when it has rebuffed every effort to move beyond the Second Generation (the Marine Corps is a partial exception).

But the American people, I think, will be more forgiving of mistakes than of puffery, which in the end is a deliberate attempt to deceive. If the public comes to think that all generals lie, the American armed services may find it difficult to re-establish their good reputations.

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**On War #182**  
**September 7, 2006**

## **Down Mexico Way**

**By William S. Lind**

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

While Washington plays at fourth generation cabinet wars in far-off places, a genuine fourth generation threat is brewing up on America's southern border. After 70 years of stability under PRI dictatorship, Mexico drank deeply of the neo-cons' patent medicine, democracy, in the 1990s. At first, all hailed the seemingly happy results.

But Mexico's recent presidential vote resulted in a razor-thin victory for the conservative candidate, Felipe Calderón Hinojosa, over a far-left challenger, Andrés Manuel López Obrador. Obrador and his supporters now refuse to recognize Calderón's win. They have set up blockades in the streets of Mexico City, prevented the current President, Vicente Fox, from delivering his state of the union speech, and threatened worse, specifically that if Mexico's electoral commission certifies Calderón's victory this week, Lopez Obrador will declare himself the real President of Mexico and set up a parallel government. Isn't democracy wonderful?

In itself, this crisis is not a fourth generation phenomenon. It is an old story in Mexican history. Calderón and Obrador are battling within the framework of the state, for the prize control of the state brings, namely, endless riches squeezed from a poor country. If either wins, and wins quickly, American interests are probably safe.

The problem takes on a fourth generation nature if neither wins and Mexico descends into civil war and anarchy. This, too, is an old Mexican story: in Mexico as in most of the world, the only real alternatives are tyranny or anarchy. Democracy is merely a way-station between the former and the latter. The neo-cons' patent medicine, it seems, has arsenic as a principal ingredient. One suspects their successors will once again give stability the high rank it merits among political virtues.

One certain result of chaos in Mexico will be a vast increase in the rate of illegal Mexican immigration into the United States—the "big push" of all the "big pushes" 4GW has so far served up. Such an invasion will offer dire consequences to the U.S., in the form of disorder, crime, the expense of taking care of the "refugees," and perhaps most challenging of all, the necessity of sending them all back at some point. Any such repatriation would have to be, for the most part, forced.

Here we come face-to-face with one of 4GW's basic ingredients, the West's moral incapacity to defend itself. No one can doubt that the rapid arrival of tens of millions more Mexicans will be catastrophic. But no one can also doubt that the usual games will be played by the Politically Correct Establishment, with the usual results. We will get endless images of crying women and children, demands that we accept any and all "refugees," blather about "human rights" and "humanitarian principles," and in response we will cave and open the gates to the barbarians. The Establishment is morally incapable of manning the walls and repelling the invaders. Nor will it be able to send any of them back if they don't want to go, which means they will all stay. Perhaps Maine and New Hampshire will end up still speaking English.

Worse, if anything can be worse, the neocon-drugged Bush administration will bring Wilsonianism full circle and intervene in Mexico. One can almost hear President Bush solemnly informing the American people that we must teach the Mexicans to elect good men. The result will be the same kind of fiasco we are engulfed by in Iraq and Afghanistan, just a streetcar ride away from San Diego. (In 1945, a witty junior SS officer told Hitler that Berlin was the best place for his headquarters, since it would soon be possible to take a streetcar between the Eastern and Western Fronts.)

By this point, Wilsonianism will have gone from tragedy to farce and back to tragedy again. Fourth generation war will have arrived at our doorstep and crossed it in great strength. This will be not another cabinet war, but a war for national survival. Perhaps, just perhaps, the vast defeat we will suffer at the beginning of this war will bring the PC Establishment's eviction from Washington and its replacement with genuine national leaders, though where such are to be found is hard to imagine—President Buchanan, perhaps?

More is riding on a quick solution to Mexico's political crisis than anyone who does not understand 4GW can possibly imagine.

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**On War #181**  
**August 31, 2006**

[Regression](#)

**By William S. Lind**

Earlier this week, Israeli Prime Minister Ehud "Chopped Liver" Olmert announced that the planned inquiry into Israel's defeat in Lebanon would be indefinitely delayed. His hope, obviously, is also to delay his own departure from office, since the findings of any half-honest probe are not likely to redound to his glory. The fact that his likely eventual successor, "Bibi" Netanyahu, is Israel's most outspoken conservative will not save Olmert's seat after the fiasco he ordered and led. Israel seems to be unavoidably heading down the road from bad to worse, as far as its political leadership goes.

When the inquiry finally does move forward, what is it likely to conclude? Undoubtedly, it will point out failings in logistics, planning, and the training of reservists. Possibly, it will note the unwisdom of choosing an aviator as chief-of-staff, unless he is one of the few who understands the limits of air power. One of the many signs that heavier-than-air flight was spawned in Hell

is the number of military disasters traceable to faith in air power (the Zeppelin, in contrast, was obviously a Divine inspiration, intended to offer safe and serene travel at speeds suitable to the human condition). At the very outside, a thorough Israeli critique may conclude that fighting Fourth Generation enemies is different from fighting states.

It is, however, a virtual certainty that the Israeli inquiry will not address the most interesting question of all: how did the world's premier post-World War II Third Generation military regress to the Second Generation?

When I was in Israel several years ago, I said to my host, a retired Israeli general with several interesting books to his credit, that I thought the IDF had begun to regress to the Second Generation after the 1973 war. He told me I was wrong; the regression had begun after the war in 1967.

The question of how it happened, and why maintaining the culture of a Third Generation military is so difficult even for armed services that have attained it—the Royal Navy lost it after the Napoleonic Wars, for reasons brilliantly set forth in Andrew Gordon's *The Rules of the Game*, and the German Army lost it when the Bundeswehr was created, for political reasons—is of interest far beyond Israel. A number of Israelis have traced it in their case to the development of a large weapons R&D and procurement establishment, and I think there is a lot to that argument.

The virtues required in military officers involved in weapons development and procurement are the virtues of the bureaucrat: careful, even obsessive attention to process; avoiding risky decisions, and whenever possible making decisions by committee; avoiding responsibility; careerism, because success is measured by career progression; and generally shining up the handle on the big front door. Time is not very important, while dotting every i and crossing every t is vital, since at some point the auditors will be coming, and the politicians and the press will be waiting eagerly for their reports. Remunerative careers in the defense industry await those officers who know how to go along to get along. While the Israeli defense industry has produced some remarkably good products, such as the Merkava tank, getting the program funded still tends to be more important than making sure the weapon will work in combat. As time goes on, efficiency tends to become more important than effectiveness; not surprisingly, the simpler and more effective Israeli weapon systems came earlier, and more recent ones tend to reflect the American tendency toward complex and expensive ineffectiveness.

The Israeli inquiry into the Lebanon fiasco is unlikely to address this issue for the same reason it is not addressed in the United States: too much money is at stake. The R&D and procurement tail now wags the combat arms dog. Nor is the question of how to reverse the process and restore the virtues a Third Generation military requires in its officers an easy one. Those virtues—eagerness to make decisions and take responsibility, boldness, broad-mindedness and a spirit of intellectual inquiry, contempt for careerism and careerists—are not wanted in Second Generation militaries, and officers who demonstrate them are usually weeded out early. A Third Generation culture is difficult to maintain, and even more—impossible perhaps?—to restore once lost.

Yet, as I have said many times in these columns, a Second Generation military, no matter how lavishly resourced, has no chance against Fourth Generation opponents. In this conundrum lies the fate of the state of Israel, and the fate of states everywhere.

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**On War #180**  
**August 24, 2006**

[Beginning to Learn](#)

**By William S. Lind**

Of all the many disappointments of America's wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, perhaps the saddest has been the American military's seeming inability to learn, at least as institutions. Partly, this stems from the Bush Administration's proud refusal to learn and adapt; as the old Russian saying goes, a fish rots from the head. Partly, it has been the inward focus that characterizes Second Generation armed services. That inward focus, and the "not invented here" attitude it legitimizes, seems to lie behind the American services' rejection of the Four Generations framework (hilariously, the U.S. Army labeled it a "Marine Corps concept," while the Marines reject it because it is not).

Perhaps that is beginning to change. The Okhrana recently supplied me with a copy of a draft field manual, FM 3-24/FMFM 3-24, *Counterinsurgency*, which is being written jointly by the Army and the Marine Corps (which is no small achievement in itself). The draft is thoughtful, useful, and frank about the difficulties armed forces designed for conventional wars have when facing insurgencies.

The bulk of its contents is material drawn from the long history of counterinsurgency (more often than not a history of failure). Nothing wrong with that; history must always be the starting point in attempts to understand war, and most other things as well. The manual's authors have done their homework, and if one may lament how much of the manual represents a recovery of lessons learned at a painful price in Vietnam and then thrown away, at least they are here being restored. More than one chapter ends by stressing the need to learn and adapt, with a hint that we have not done too well at that.

The authors understand the imperative of a Third Generation culture for any armed service that hopes to fight insurgents with success. The manual stresses decentralization and initiative, as it should. One particularly good passage comes early in Appendix A:

A-8. Work the problem collectively with subordinate leaders. Discuss ideas and explore possible solutions. Once all understand the situation, seek a consensus on how to address it. If this sounds un-military, get over it. Such discussions help subordinates understand the commander's intent.... Corporals and privates will have to make quick decisions that may result in actions with strategic implications. Such circumstances require a shared situational understanding and a leadership climate that encourages subordinates to assess the situation, act on it, and accept responsibility for their actions. Employing mission command is essential in this environment.

General Hans von Seekt could not have put it better himself.

*Counterinsurgency*, while it does talk at times about an environment with multiple opponents, still falls into the common error of thinking that counterinsurgency and 4GW are the same, which they are not. That is no surprise.

But the draft does hold two surprises. The first is a remarkable discussion, in the first chapter, of the "Paradoxes of Counterinsurgency." This is a clear break with Second Generation thinking, which acknowledges only problems and solutions (the latter always kinetic). The paradoxes include "The More You Protect Your Force, The Less Secure You Are;" "The More Force Used, The Less Effective It Is;" "Sometimes Doing Nothing Is The Best Reaction;" "The Best Weapons For COIN Do Not Shoot;" and "Tactical Success Guarantees Nothing." The parallels here to the Austro-Hungarian *FMFM 1-A, Fourth Generation War*, [232 KB MS Word document] are clear and suggest someone has read it, although it is not listed in the bibliography (NIH again?). By the Pleistocene standards of American doctrine development, this is breathtaking progress.

The second surprise is less happy. As is to be expected, the manual draws heavily on the ongoing American experience in Iraq. While occasionally suggesting that mistakes have been made ("Programs should be developed to prevent the formation of a class of impoverished and disgruntled former officers and soldiers who have lost their livelihood"), it often prescribes more of what we are now doing. Uh, excuse me guys, but most of what we are doing is *not working*. Perhaps we will not be able to confront that fact until the Iraq war is over, but a field manual that does not confront it cannot be more than a way station along the road we must eventually travel to its bitter end.

A remarkable historical vignette on page 4-1 of the draft does recognize, between the lines, what that end will be. Titled "Napoleon in Spain," it reads in part,

Napoleon's campaign included a rapid conventional victory over Spanish armies but ignored the immediate requirement to provide a stable and secure environment for the people and the countryside.

The French should have expected ferocious resistance. The Spanish people were accustomed to hardship, suspicious of foreigners, and constantly involved in skirmishes with security forces. The French failed to analyze the history, culture, and motivations of the Spanish people, or to seriously consider their potential to support or hinder the achievement of French political objectives. Napoleon's cultural miscalculation

resulted in a protracted struggle.... The Spanish resistance drained the Empire's resources and was the beginning of the end of Napoleon's reign.

Sound familiar?

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**On War #179**

**August 17, 2006**

Beat!

**By William S. Lind**

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

With today's cease-fire in Lebanon, the second Hezbollah-Israeli War is temporarily in remission. So far, Israel has been beaten.

The magnitude of the defeat is considerable. Israel appears to have lost at every level—strategic, operational and tactical. Nothing she tried worked. Air power failed, as it always does against an enemy who doesn't have to maneuver operationally, or even move tactically for the most part. The attempts to blockade Lebanon and thus cut off Hezbollah's resupply failed; her caches proved ample. Most seriously, the ground assault into Lebanon failed. Israel took little ground and paid heavily in casualties for that. More, she cannot hold what she has taken; if she is not forced to withdraw by diplomacy, Hezbollah will push her out, as it did once before. The alternative is a bleeding ulcer that never heals.

But these failures only begin to measure the magnitude of Israel's defeat. While Hezbollah's leader, Sheik Hassan Nasrallah, is now an Islamic hero, Olmert has become a boiled brisket in the piranha pool that is Israeli politics. The cease-fire in Lebanon will allow camera crews to broadcast the extent of the destruction to the world, with further damage to Israel's image. Israel's "wall" strategy for dealing with the Palestinians has been undone; Hamas rockets can fly over a wall as easily as Hezbollah rockets have flown over Israel's northern border.

Most importantly, an Islamic Fourth Generation entity, Hezbollah, will now point the way throughout the Arab and larger Islamic world to a future in which Israel can be defeated. That will have vast ramifications, and not for Israel alone. Hundreds of millions of Moslems will believe that the same Fourth Generation war that defeated hated Israel can beat equally-hated America, its "coalitions" and its allied Arab and Moslem regimes. Future events seem more likely to confirm that belief than to undermine it.

The cease-fire in Lebanon will last only briefly, its life probably measured in days if not in hours. Neither Israel nor Hezbollah has genuinely accepted it. The notion that the Lebanese Army and a rag-tag U.N. force will disarm Hezbollah is absurd even by the usual low standard of diplomatic fictions. The bombing and the rocketing may stop briefly, but Israel has already announced a campaign of assassination against Hezbollah leaders, while every Israeli soldier in Lebanon will remain a target of Hezbollah.

Unfortunately for states generally, Israel appears to have no good options when hostilities recommence. It can continue to grind forward on the ground in southern Lebanon, paying bitterly for each foot of ground, and perhaps eventually denying Hezbollah some of its rocket-launching sites. But it cannot hold what it takes. It may strive for a more robust U.N. force, but what country wants to fight Hezbollah? Any occupier of southern Lebanon that is not there with Hezbollah's permission will face the same guerrilla war Israel already fought and lost. Most probably, Israel will escalate by taking the war to Syria or Iran, and what will be a strategy of desperation. That too will fail, after it plunges the whole region into a war the outcome of which will be catastrophic for the United States as well as for Israel.

Before that disastrous denouement, my Fourth Generation crystal ball suggests the following events are likely:

- Again, a near-term resumption of hostilities between Israel and Hezbollah, with Israel succeeding no better than it has to date. In the past, the IDF has been brilliant at pulling rabbits out of hats, but this time someone else seems to occupy all the rabbit holes.

- A fracturing of Lebanon, with a collapse of the weak Lebanese state and very possibly a return to civil war there (which was always the probable result of Syria's departure).
- A rise of Syrian and Iranian influence generally, matched by a fall of American influence. If Israel and America were clever, Syria's comeback could offer a diplomatic opportunity of a deal in which Syria changed sides in return for a peace treaty with Israel that included the return of all lands. The crystal ball says that opportunity will be spurned.
- A vast strengthening of Islamic 4GW elements everywhere.
- Finally and perhaps most discouragingly, a continued inability of state militaries everywhere, including those of Israel and the United States, to come to grips with Fourth Generation War. Inability may be too kind of a word; refusal is perhaps more accurate.

Are there any brighter prospects? Not unless Israel changes its fundamental policy. Even in the unlikely event that the cease-fire in Lebanon holds and Lebanese Army and U.N. forces do wander into southern Lebanon, that would buy but a bit of time. Israel only has a long-term future if it can reach a mutually acceptable accommodation with its neighbors. So long as those neighbors are states, a policy of pursuing such an accommodation may have some chance of success. But as the rise of Fourth Generation elements such as Hezbollah and Hamas weaken and in time replace those states, the possibility will disappear. Unfortunately, Israeli politics appear to be moving away from such a course rather than toward it.

For America, the question is whether Washington will continue to demand that we go down with the Israeli ship.

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#### **On War #178**

**August 10, 2006**

#### [Collapse of the Flanks](#)

**By William S. Lind**

In Iraq and Afghanistan, the "coalition" defeats continue slowly to unroll. In Lebanon, it appears Hezbollah may win not only at the moral and mental, strategic and operational levels, but, astonishingly, at the physical and tactical levels as well. That outcome remains uncertain, but the fact that it is possible portends a revolutionary reassessment of what Fourth Generation forces can accomplish. If it actually happens, the walls of the temple that is the state system will be shaken world-wide.

One pointer to a shift in the tactical balance is the comparative casualty counts. According to the Associated Press, as of this writing Lebanese dead total at least 642, of whom 558 are civilians, 29 Lebanese soldiers (who, at least officially, are not in the fight) and only 55 Hezbollah fighters. So Israel, with its American-style hi-tech "precision weaponry," has killed ten times as many innocents as enemies. In contrast, of 97 Israeli dead, 61 are soldiers and only 36 civilians, despite the fact that Hezbollah's rockets are anything but precise (think Congreves). Israel can hit anything it can target, but against a Fourth Generation enemy, it can target very little. The result not only points to a battlefield change of some significance, it also raises the question of who is the real "terrorist." Terror bombing by aircraft is still terror.

Understandably, these events keep Americans focused on the places where the fighting is taking place. But more important developments may be occurring on the flanks, largely unnoticed. An analysis piece in the Sunday *Cleveland Plain Dealer* by Sally Buzbee of AP notes:

Anger toward America is high, extremists are on the upswing, and hopes for democracy in the Middle East lie dashed...

"America, we hate you more than ever," Ammar Ali Hassan wrote in the independent Egyptian daily *Al-Masry Al-Youm*, in the kind of visceral, slap-in-the-face rhetoric boiling across the region...

Even many Arab reformers now believe the United States cares more about supporting Israel than anything else, including democracy.

Egypt is one of the three centers of gravity of America's position in the Middle East, the others being Saudi Arabia and Pakistan. An article by Michael Slackman in the Sunday *New York Times* suggests that Egyptians' anger is turning on their own government:

For decades, the Arab-Israeli conflict provided presidents, kings, emirs and dictators of the region with a safety valve for public frustration ...

That valve no longer appears to be working in Egypt...

"The regular man on the street is beginning to connect everything together," said Mr. (Kamal) Khalil, the director of the Center for Socialist Studies in Cairo. "The regime impairing his livelihood is the same regime that is oppressing his freedom and the same regime that is colluding with Zionism and American hegemony."

Today, in an interview with the BBC, Jordan's King Abdullah warned that the map of the Middle East is becoming unrecognizable and its future appears "dim."

Washington, which in its hubris ignores both its friends and its enemies, refusing to talk to the latter or listen to the former, does not grasp that if the flanks collapse, it is the end of our adventures in both Iraq and Afghanistan. It is also, in a slightly longer time frame, the end of Israel. No Crusader state survives forever, and in the long term Israel's existence depends on arriving at some sort of *modus vivendi* with the region. The replacement of Mubarak, King Abdullah and the House of Saud with the Moslem Brotherhood would make that possibility fade.

To the region, America's apparently unconditional and unbounded support for Israel and its occupation of Iraq are part of the same picture. For a military historian, the question arises: will history see Iraq as America's Stalingrad? If we kick the analogy up a couple of levels, to the strategic and grand strategic, there are parallels. Both the German and the American armies were able largely to take, but not hold, the objective. Both had too few troops. Both Berlin and Washington underestimated their enemy's ability to counter-attack. Both committed resources they needed elsewhere and could not replace to a strategically unimportant objective. Finally, both entrusted their flanks to weak allies—and to luck.

Let us hope that, unlike von Paulus, our commanders know when to get out, regardless of orders from a leader who will not recognize reality.

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## **On War #177**

**July 31, 2006**

### [The Prussian Monarchy Stuff](#)

**By William S. Lind**

A bright young man who served on a panel with me at an intelligence conference earlier this year said during a break, "A lot of us read your *On War* columns, but there are two things we don't get. We don't get your dislike of technology and we don't get the Prussian monarchy stuff." Readers interested in the former may turn to my piece in an early issue of *The American Conservative*. But with the shadow of 1914 looming ever larger over us, I thought this might be a good time to explain "the Prussian monarchy stuff."

Of course, like all real conservatives, I am a monarchist. The universe is not a republic. My specific attachment to the House of Hohenzollern grew as I began to comprehend the Prussian/German way of war and its vast difference from the Franco/American approach. Maneuver warfare, aka *Third Generation* war, was created and developed under the Prussian monarchy; it was conceptually complete by 1918. That is not a mere accident of history. The Prussian monarchy was willing to trust its officer corps – and allow officers who were difficult subordinates to rise – to a far greater degree than most other governments. It understood that Prussia, a poor country, needed to be rich intellectually, including in ideas about war. There was an intimate connection between the Prussian virtues, which have vanished from the Brave New Federal Republic, and the evolution of maneuver warfare. Old Kaiser Wilhelm I represented those virtues well: though Emperor of Germany, when he wanted to go somewhere, he went down to the railway station and bought a ticket.

Given the centrality of maneuver warfare to my work, this might be explanation enough. But there is more. As both a cultural conservative and an historian, I realize that the last chance of survival our Western, Christian civilization may have had was a victory by the Central Powers in World War I.

To most non-historians, World War I is a vague and distant memory, faded photographs of guys in tin hats standing around in mud-filled trenches. In fact, it was one of two cataclysmic disasters of Western civilization in the modern period (the other was the French Revolution). In 1914, the West put a gun to its collective head and blew its brains out. No, it wasn't the fault of Kaiser Wilhelm II, whom history has treated most unfairly. As Colonel House wrote to President Woodrow Wilson after meeting with the Kaiser in 1915, it is clear he neither expected nor wanted war. A World War became inevitable when Tsar Nicholas II, not Kaiser Wilhelm, very reluctantly yielded to the demands of his War and Foreign Ministers and declared general mobilization instead of mobilization against Austria alone.

Once war occurred, and the failure of the Schlieffen Plan guaranteed it would be a long war, a disaster for Western civilization was inevitable. Still, had the Central Powers won in the end, the destruction of civilization might not have been so complete. There would have been no Communism, nor a republic in Russia; a victorious Germany would have never tolerated it, and unlike the Western Allies, Germany was positioned geographically to do something about it. Hitler would have remained a non-entity. Prior to World War I, the best major European countries in which to be Jewish were Germany and Austria; Kaiser Wilhelm would never have allowed a Dreyfus Affair in Germany. The vast Jewish communities of Central and Eastern Europe would have held their traditional places in multi-nation-empires, instead of becoming aliens in new nation-states. It should not surprise us that in World War I, American Jews attempted to raise a regiment to fight for Germany.

Even more importantly, the Christian conservatism – more accurately, perhaps, traditionalism – represented by the Central Powers would have been greatly strengthened by their victory. Instead, the fall of the German, Austro-Hungarian and Russian monarchies let the poisons of the French Revolution loose unchecked upon the West and upon the world. The Marxist historian Arno Mayer is correct in arguing that in 1914, the United States represented (as a republic, with France) the international left, while by 1919 it was organizing the international right. America had not changed; the spectrum had shifted around it.

Thus, when Americans and Europeans wonder today how and why the West lost its historic culture, morals and religion, the ultimate answer is the Allied victory in 1918. Again, the fact that World War I occurred is the greatest disaster. But once that had happened, the last chance the West had of retaining its traditional culture was a victory by the Central Powers. The question should not be why I, as a cultural conservative, remain loyal to the two Kaisers, Wilhelm II and Franz Josef, but how a real conservative could do anything else.

Nor is this all quite history. Just as the defeat of the Central Powers in 1918 marked the tipping point downward of Western civilization and the real beginning of the murderous Twentieth Century, so events in the Middle East today may mark the beginnings of the 21st Century and, not so much the death of the West, which has already occurred, but its burial. The shadows of 1914, and of 1918, are long indeed, and they end in Old Night.

Note: In response to an earlier column, a reader asked for recommendations of some books on the *fin de siecle* and Kaiser Wilhelm II. From the military perspective, the two best works on the former are Barbara Tuchman's *The Guns of August* and Alexander Solzhenitsyn's *August 1914*. The most balanced biography in English of Kaiser Wilhelm II is *The Last Kaiser: The Life of Wilhelm II* by Giles MacDonogh.

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**On War #176**  
**July 28, 2006**

[Welcome to My Parlor](#)

**By William S. Lind**

Welcome to my parlor, says the Hezbollah spider to the Israeli fly. The Israeli high command continues to express its faith in the foxfire of air power to destroy Hezbollah, but, as always, it's not working. Lebanon is taking a pounding, to be sure, but Lebanon is not Hezbollah. Slowly, reluctantly, Israel is edging toward a ground invasion of Lebanon, for which Hezbollah devoutly prays. When air power fails, what other choice will Israel have?

A story in the July 24 *Cleveland Plain Dealer* gives a good idea of what awaits the IDF once it crosses the border in earnest. Israeli ground forces have been fighting for days to take Maroun al-Ras, a small village less than 500 yards into Lebanon. The battle has not gone well. Israel has lost five or six troops dead, with undoubtedly more wounded. It still does not control the whole village. According to the *Plain Dealer* piece by Benjamin Harvey of AP, Officers at the scene confirmed there was still fighting to do.

"They're not fighting like we thought they would," one soldier said. "They're fighting harder. They're good on their own ground...."

"It will take the summer to beat them," said (Israeli soldier) Michael Sidorenko....

"They're guerrillas. They're very smart."

"Guerrillas" may not be exactly the right term here. As best I can determine from the wilds of Cleveland, Ohio, Hezbollah thus far seems to be waging a conventional light infantry fight for Maroun al-Ras. The line between guerrilla and light infantry tactics is thin, but Hezbollah seems to be putting up a determined fight for a piece of terrain, which guerrillas usually don't do, because they can't. The fact that Hezbollah can points to how far this 4GW entity has evolved.

Operationally, Hezbollah's rocket attacks on Israel are the matador's cape. That too is working. What of the strategic level? The Arab street is cheering for Hezbollah, often across the Sunni-Shiite divide, while the governments of states such as Egypt hide under the bed. The goal of Islamic Fourth Generation forces is the destruction of most, if not all, Arab state governments, so Hezbollah is winning strategically as well. One can almost watch the legitimacy drain away from the region's decrepit states, with incalculable consequences for American interests.

Not that Washington is doing anything to protect those interests. On the contrary, it has rushed more bombs and aviation fuel to Israel, lest there be any unwelcome let-up in the destruction of Lebanon. In no previous Israeli-Arab war has the United States revealed itself so nakedly as a de facto political satellite of Israel. Perhaps the neo-cons have convinced President Bush that Israeli olive oil can substitute for Arab petroleum as fuel for America's SUVs.

An interesting theoretical speculation is whether, if Hezbollah's 4GW success continues, some Middle Eastern governments might try adopting Fourth Generation techniques themselves. Lebanon's fictional government has suggested the Lebanese Army may join Hezbollah in defending southern Lebanon from an Israeli invasion. Militarily, such an action would be meaningless, and it probably reflects a desperate desire to keep the Lebanese Army (which is 40% Shiite) from fractioning, along with Lebanon itself. But what if instead the government called for a million marchers, mostly women and children, to head toward the Lebanese-Israeli frontier, waving palm branches and singing songs? That's how Morocco took the Spanish Sahara, and it would present Israel with a sticky wicket indeed.

Similarly, the Iraqi puppet government, whose impotence is now almost total, may call for a complete domestic cease-fire so it could order the "New Iraqi Army" to Lebanon. Even al-Qaeda would have trouble saying no. The U.S. would howl bloody murder, but such an open breach with the Americans is exactly what the Green Zone regime needs if it is to gain even a shred of legitimacy. The possibility is far-fetched, but an emerging Hezbollah victory over Israel will make many far-fetched possibilities real.

A Hezbollah success against the hated Israelis will give governments throughout the Islamic world a stark choice. They can either snuggle up as close to Hezbollah and other Islamic 4GW entities as they can get, hoping to catch some reflected legitimacy, or they can become Vichy to their own peoples. Since the first rule of politics is to survive, I think we can look forward to a great deal of the former.

From that perspective, the Tea Lady, aka U.S. Secretary of State Condi Rice, may just have uttered the most significant words of her remarkably empty career. Departing on her meaningless "shuttle diplomacy," meaningless because we will only talk to one side, she said current events mark "the birth pangs of a new Middle East, and whatever we do, we have to be certain that we are pushing forward to the new Middle East, not going back to the old one." Don't worry; we are, we are.

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**On War #175**

**July 18, 2006**

[The Summer of 1914](#)

**By William S. Lind**

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

With Hezbollah's entry into the war between Israel and Hamas, Fourth Generation war has taken another developmental step forward. For the first time, a non-state entity has gone to war with a state not by waging an insurgency against a state invader, but across an international boundary. Again we see how those who define 4GW simply as insurgency are looking at only a small part of the picture.

I think the stakes in the Israel-Hezbollah-Hamas war are significantly higher than most observers understand. If Hezbollah and Hamas win—and winning just means surviving, given that Israel's objective is to destroy both entities—a powerful state will have suffered a new kind of defeat, again, a defeat across at least one international boundary and maybe two, depending on how one defines Gaza's border. The balance between states and 4GW forces will be altered world-wide, and not to a trivial degree.

So far, Hezbollah is winning. As Arab states stood silent and helpless before Israel's assault on Hamas, another non-state entity, Hezbollah, intervened to relieve the siege of Gaza by opening a second front. Its initial move, a brilliantly conducted raid that killed eight Israeli soldiers and captured two for the loss of one Hezbollah fighter, showed once again that Hezbollah can take on state armed forces on even terms (the Chechens are the only other 4GW force to demonstrate that capability). In both respects, the contrast with Arab states will be clear on the street, pushing the Arab and larger Islamic worlds further away from the state.

Hezbollah then pulled off two more firsts. It responded effectively to terror bombing from the air, which state think is their monopoly, with rocket barrages that reached deep into Israel. Once can only imagine how this resonated world-wide with people who are often bombed but can never bomb back. And, it attacked another state monopoly, navies, by hitting and disabling a blockading Israeli warship with something (I question Israel's claim that the weapon was a C-801 anti-ship missile, which should have sunk a small missile corvette). Hezbollah's leadership has promised more such surprises.

In response, Israel has had to hit not Hezbollah but the state of Lebanon. Israel's Prime Minister, Ehud Olmert, referring to the initial Hezbollah raid, said, "I want to make clear that the event this morning is not a terror act but the act of a sovereign state that attacked Israel without reason." This is an obvious fiction, as the state of Lebanon had nothing to do with the raid and cannot control Hezbollah. But it is a necessary fiction for Israel, because otherwise who can it respond against? Again we see the power 4GW entities obtain by hiding within states but not being a state.

What comes next? In the short run, the question may be which runs out first, Hezbollah's supply of rockets or the world's patience with Israel bombing the helpless state of Lebanon. If the latter continues much longer, the Lebanese government may collapse, undoing one of America's few recent successes in the Islamic world.

The critical question is whether the current fighting spreads region-wide. It is possible that Hezbollah attacked Israel not only to relieve the siege of Hamas in Gaza but also to pre-empt an Israeli strike on Iran. The current Iranian government is not disposed to sit passively like Saddam and await an Israeli or American attack. It may have given Hezbollah a green light in order to bog Israel down locally to the point where it would not also want war with Iran.

However, Israel's response may be exactly the opposite. Olmert also said, "Nothing will deter us, whatever far-reaching ramifications regarding our relations on the northern border and in the region there may be." The phrase "in the region" could refer to Syria, Iran or both.

If Israel does attack Iran, the "summer of 1914" analogy may play itself out, catastrophically for the United States. As I have warned many times, war with Iran (Iran has publicly stated it would regard an Israeli attack as an attack by the U.S. also) could easily cost America the army it now has deployed in Iraq. It would almost certainly send shock waves through an already fragile world economy, potentially bringing that house of cards down. A Bush administration that has sneered at "stability" could find out just how high the price of instability can be.

It is clear what Washington needs to do to try to prevent such an outcome: publicly distance the U.S. from Israel while privately informing Mr. Olmert that it will not tolerate an Israeli strike on Iran. Unfortunately, Israel is to America what Serbia was to Russia in 1914. That may be the most disturbing aspect of the "summer of 1914" analogy.

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## **On War #174**

**July 13, 2006**

### [Two Signposts](#)

**By William S. Lind**

The Bush Administration delights in finding "turning points" in Iraq so often that by now we must have turned our way through a maze, though not out of it. The events to which it points are nothing more than new acts in the kabuki offered by Iraq's government and security forces. Real turning points would be evidence that a state is coming into being in Iraq. Two recent signposts suggest the contrary – namely, that any possibility of recreating an Iraqi state is receding.

The first report is from the June 28 (unhappy day! Franz Ferdinand, you took the world with you) *Washington Times* in a piece by Rowan Scarborough titled, "Shi'ite Iraqi militia regroups into 'gang of thugs.'"

Prominent Shi'ite cleric Muqtada al-Sadr, a foe of the U.S. military presence in Iraq, has lost control of his Mahdi Army, which has embarked on a wide range of criminal activity, defense officials said.

The officials said the Mahdi Army...has become a criminal organization that commits homicides, kidnappings and robberies in the Baghdad area.

As usual, our "defense officials" show their lack of understanding of Fourth Generation situations, where "both/and" is more common than "either/or." As to whether the Desert Fox, Mr. al-Sadr, has lost "control" of his Mahdi Army, control generally being loose in 4GW, time will tell. But like every other militia in Iraq, the Mahdi Army is also a criminal gang, doing what criminal gangs do. The same individual can be and often is a Mahdi Army militiaman, a criminal and a member of the Iraqi police or army. Maybe Americans would get it better if they thought of 4GW as the world's biggest all-you-can-eat buffet.

If American military intelligence is accurate in this instance (the blind pig finding the occasional acorn?) the news that "Sadr has lost control" is not good. The more frequently Iraqi entities, of whatever sort, fraction and fragment, the farther Iraq moves away from becoming a state. Because Mr. al-Sadr opposes the American occupation, Washington sees him as an enemy. But if he controls his militia he is someone who can deliver if we make a deal with him. If he has lost control of the Mahdi Army with whom can we or someone make a deal that would incorporate that militia into a state?

The second signpost is a story in the July 5 *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, "Port city of Basra now a haven for rival oil-smuggling gangs."

This once-placid port city is looking a lot like the mob-ruled Chicago of the 1920's, an arena for settling scores between rival gangs, many with ties to the highest echelons of local and national political power.

Basra's sudden political troubles and violence are rooted in a bloody competition for control of millions of dollars in smuggled oil, residents and officials say...

"The amount of actual terrorism in Basra is very limited," said the Iraqi defense minister, Gen. Abdul-Qader Mohammed Jassim Mifarji.

"The dominating struggle is between armed gangs and political groups."

Here again, we see fractioning where restoring an Iraqi state requires unifying. Basra is Shi'ite-controlled, and the fact that the fighting there is almost all among Shi'ite factions points to fractioning of the Shi'ite community. Money garnered from criminal activity is a powerful divisive force, and also a common one in 4GW situations, because the absence of a state makes legitimate economic activity difficult. The more the real economy comes to depend on illegal, gang-controlled enterprise the further away

any restoration of the state moves.

It is difficult to find anything in Iraq that points to a successful restoration of an Iraqi state. The Iraqi Government's ongoing attempt at "national reconciliation" seems to hold little promise because that government is a creature of a foreign occupier and remains under its control. Nothing illustrated that fact better than the immediate American veto of the Iraqi Government's desire to offer amnesty to resistance fighters who have killed American troops. Obviously, such amnesty would have to be part of any deal with the resistance. That would be true even if the resistance were losing; it is all the more so when the resistance is winning. Winners seldom surrender and allow themselves to be put on trial.

In the end, the Iraqi resistance, in all its many dimensions, represents reality, "flip-flops on the ground." Iraq's government and state security forces, in contrast, are kabuki. And no kabuki performance goes on forever.

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## **On War #173**

**July 5, 2006**

### [To Be or Not To Be a State?](#)

**By William S. Lind**

When Hamas won the Palestinian elections, a highly successful Fourth Generation entity became a state. No doubt that was one of Hamas's highest aspirations. But by becoming a state, it became far more vulnerable to other states than it was as a non-state entity. How Hamas deals with this problem may say a great deal about the future of Fourth Generation war.

Hamas may have presumed that once it won a free election, other states, including the United States and Israel, would have to recognize its legitimacy. Great expectations are seldom fulfilled in the amoral world of international politics. When the Washington Establishment calls for "free elections," what it means is elections that elect the people it wants to deal with. Hamas does not fall in that category. Washington therefore greeted Hamas's electoral victory with a full-court press to destroy the new Hamas leadership of the Palestinian Authority, a "state" that bears a state's burdens with none of a state's assets. Both Machiavelli and Metternich were no doubt delighted by this act of Wilsonian hypocrisy, a variety that often exceeds their own and does so with a straight face, an act they could never quite master, being gentlemen.

In cooperation with Israel (can Washington now do anything except in cooperation with Israel?), the U.S. imposed a starvation blockade on the Palestinian territories. Instead of British armored cruisers, the blockaders this time are U.S. banking laws, plus Israeli withholding of Palestinian tax receipts. As the government of a quasi-state, Hamas found itself with no money. PA employees went unpaid and PA services, such as they were, largely collapsed. The burden, as always, fell on average Palestinians.

In the past week, Israel has upped the ante by threatening a full-scale military attack on Gaza. The Israelis had already been escalating quietly, a raid here, a missile there, artillery shells somewhere else. With Palestinian civilians dying, Hamas had to respond. It did so with a raid on an Israeli army post, a legitimate military target. (Attacks on military targets are not "terrorism.") The well-planned and brilliantly conducted raid (so well done as to suggest Hezbollah assistance) killed two Israeli soldiers and captured one.

Normally, that captured Israeli would be a Hamas asset. But now that Hamas is a state, it has discovered Cpl. Gilad Shalit is a major liability. Israel is refusing all deals for his return. If Hamas returns him without a deal, it will be humiliated. If it continues to hold him, Israel will up the military pressure; it is already destroying PA targets such as government offices and arresting PA cabinet members. If it kills him, the Israeli public will back whatever revenge strikes the Israeli military wants. Hamas is now far more targetable than it was as a non-state entity, but is no better able to defend itself or Palestine than it was as a Fourth Generation force. 4GW forces are generally unable to defend territory or fixed targets against state armed forces, but they have no reason to do so. Now, as a quasi-state, Hamas must do so or appear to be defeated.

Does the sign really say "No Exit" for Hamas? It may – so long as Hamas remains a state, or has aspirations to be one. Washington's and Tel Aviv's obvious goal is to push the Hamas government to the point where it must choose between a humanitarian catastrophe for the Palestinian people and resignation, with the return of corrupt and complaint Fatah to power. Either way, Hamas will have suffered an enormous defeat, to the point where it is unlikely to be a serious alternative ever

again.

There is, however, another way out for Hamas. It can call and raise Washington's and Tel Aviv bets. How? By voting to dissolve the Palestinian Authority. Ending the PA would dump the Palestinian territories and their inhabitants' right back in Israel's lap. Under international law, as the occupying power, Israel would be responsible for everything in the territories: security, human services, utilities and infrastructure, the economy, the whole megillah (oy!). Israel could try to restore the PA in cooperation with Fatah, but if Fatah joined Israel in doing so, it would destroy what legitimacy it has left. Hamas could meanwhile return to a 4GW war against Israel, unencumbered with the dubious assets of a state, and with lots more targets as Israel attempted to run the Palestinian Territories itself.

Hamas faces what may be a defining moment, not only for itself but for Fourth Generation entities elsewhere. Does it want the trappings of a state so much that it will render itself targetable as a state, or can it see through the glitter of being "cabinet ministers" and the like and go instead for substance by retaining non-state status? To be or not to be a state, that is the question – for Hamas and soon enough for other 4GW entities as well.

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**On War #172**  
**June 28, 2006**

[Neither Shall the Sword](#)

**By William S. Lind**

Chet Richards is the spider of the DNI web site, which is the best source for material on Fourth Generation war. He is also the only person authorized to give Col. John Boyd's famous "Patterns of Conflict" briefing. Given that background, it is not surprising that he has produced a useful and important discussion of Fourth Generation strategy, in the form of a short book titled *Neither Shall the Sword*. If Washington were interested in strategy, which it is not (its only genuine interest is in court politics), it would give this small volume large attention.

The book begins by asking whether Third Generation maneuver warfare is passé. As the *Urvater* of maneuver warfare theory in this country, I must agree with Richards that it is. As glorious as the *Blitzkrieg* was, it now belongs to history; wars between state armed forces, while they may now and then still occur, will be jousting contests more than real wars. The institutional culture of Third Generation armed services, with its outward focus, decentralization, initiative and self-discipline, remains vital to any fighting organization. But unless they are relieving an inside-out Islamic siege of Brussels, Panzer divisions will no longer be streaming through the Ardennes.

Rightly, Richards recognizes that the challenge of the present and the foreseeable future is Fourth Generation war. America's most pressing need is for a grand strategy suitable to a Fourth Generation world. In *Neither Shall the Sword*, Richards examines and compares the suggestions of five strategists: myself, in my cover story "Strategic Defense Initiative" in the November 22, 2004 issue of *The American Conservative*; Martin van Creveld and his book *The Transformation of War*; Tom Hammes, *The Sling and the Stone*; Michael Scheuer, *Imperial Hubris*; and Thomas Barnett in *The Pentagon's New Map and Blueprint for Action*.

Richards groups these five positions in two major camps, containment and rollback, terms which go back to the early days of the Cold War. Van Creveld and I represent containment, which I can accept; Barnett represents rollback (on steroids); and Hammes and Scheuer are somewhere in the middle. Richards's comparison and analysis of all these positions is thorough and insightful. For those who suspect I may be tooting my own horn here, let me note that he does not end up where I do.

Beyond this comparison, Richards makes additional valuable points. One is that the Bush administration has fundamentally miscast the nature of the conflict we now face. He argues that

war is terrorism, so a "war on terrorism" is a war on war. We are not in a war on "terrorism" or engaged in a "struggle against violent extremism." Instead, we are faced with an evolutionary development in armed conflict, a "fourth generation" of warfare that is different from and much more serious than "terrorism"...

to see the difference between 4GW and "terrorism," run this simple thought experiment: suppose bin Laden and al-Qaida were able to enforce their program on the Middle East, but they succeeded without the deliberate killing of one more American civilian. The entire Middle East turns hostile, Israel is destroyed, and gas goes up to \$15 per gallon when it is available. Bin Laden's 4GW campaign succeeds, but without terrorism. Do you feel better?

This applies to situations like Iraq and Afghanistan:

It's *not* a war followed by a blown peace. That is conventional war thinking, even if the war is waged and quickly won by 3GW. Instead, it will be an occupation against some degree of resistance, followed by the real, *fourth generation* war.

Much of *Neither Shall the Sword* is devoted to considering what kinds of armed forces the U.S. would require for 4GW, which varies depending on the grand strategy we adopt. He recognizes that the current Department of Defense, and the bulk of our forces, are untransformable.

Practitioners of real transformation agree that in such circumstances it is better not to transform but to start over... The sooner these fossils are put to rest, the sooner new enterprises can rise to create innovative business models for satisfying customer desires.

Here is where Richards and I part company. DOD is, as he recognizes, Gosplan. But his alternative, at least for a rollback force, includes privatizing the fighting function. The problem with this is that as the state privatizes security functions, for foreign wars or here at home, it strikes at its own reason for being and thus accelerates its crisis of legitimacy, which lies at the heart of 4GW. Once security is privatized, why have a state at all?

Conveniently, private armies have a long history of overthrowing states. There is good reason why the rising state of the 17th century abolished private armies and forcefully asserted a monopoly on violence.

Even here, *Neither Shall the Sword* promotes creative thinking on the most important military question of our time: how can states come to grips with Fourth Generation war? Copies are available from the Center for Defense Information in Washington, D.C. (<http://www.cdi.org>). You might want to send one to your Senator or Congressman. If you enclose a check for at least \$1000, they might even pay some attention to it.

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**On War #171**  
**June 19, 2006**

[Aaugh!](#)

**By William S. Lind**

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

This Sunday's sacred ritual of Mass, bagels and tea with the Grumpy Old Men's Club was rudely disrupted by the headline of the day's *Washington Post*: "U.S. Airstrikes Rise In Afghanistan as Fighting Intensifies." Great, I thought; it's probably cheaper than funding a recruiting campaign for the Taliban and lots more effective at creating new guerrillas.

Getting into the story just made the picture worse:

As fighting in Afghanistan has intensified over the past three months, the U.S. military has conducted 340 airstrikes there, more than twice the 160 carried out in the much higher-profile war in Iraq, according to data from the Central Command...

The airstrikes appear to have increased in recent days as the United States and its allies have launched counteroffensives against the Taliban in the south and southeast, strafing and bombing a stronghold in Uruzgan

province and pounding an area near Khost with 500-pound bombs.

One might add, "The Taliban has expressed its thanks to the U.S. Air Force for greatly increasing its popular support in the bombed areas."

At present, the bombing is largely tied to the latest Somme-like "Big Push," Operation Mountain Thrust, in which more than 10,000 U.S.-led troops are trying another failed approach to guerrilla war, the sweep. I have no doubt it would break the Mullah Omar Line, if it existed, which it doesn't. Even the Brits seem to have drunk the Kool-Aid this time, with the June 19 *Washington Times* reporting that "British commanders declared for the first time yesterday that their troops were enjoying success in the restive south of Afghanistan after pushing faster than expected into rebel territory." Should be in Berlin by September, old chap.

Of course, all this is accompanied by claims of many dead Taliban, who are conveniently interchangeable with dead locals who weren't Taliban. Bombing from the air is the best way to drive up the body count, because you don't even have to count bodies; you just make estimates based on the claimed effectiveness of your weapons, and feed them to ever-gullible reporters. By the time Operation Mountain Thrust is done thrusting into mountains, we should have killed the Taliban several times over.

Icing this particular cake is a strategic misconception of the nature of the Afghan war that only American generals could swallow. According to the same *Post* story,

U.S. officials say the activity is a response to an increasingly aggressive Taliban, whose leaders realize that long-term trends are against them as the power of the Afghan central government grows.

"I think the Taliban realize they have a window to act," Army Maj. Gen. Benjamin Freakley, commander of the 22,000 U.S. troops in the country, said in a recent interview. "The enemy is working against a window that he knows is closing."

Except that the power of the U.S.-created Afghan government is receding, not growing, and the Taliban's "window" only closes when Christ comes again.

Aaugh! The last time a nation's civilian and military leadership was this incapable of learning from experience was under the Ching dynasty.

Perhaps it's time to offer a short refresher course in Guerrilla War 101:

- Air power works against you, not for you. It kills lots of people who weren't your enemy, recruiting their relatives, friends and fellow tribesmen to become your enemies. In this kind of war, bombers are as useful as 42 cm. siege mortars.
- Big, noisy, offensives, launched with lots of warning, achieve nothing. The enemy just goes to ground while you pass on through, and he's still there when you leave. Big Pushes are the opposite of the "ink blot" strategy, which is the only thing that works, when anything can.
- Putting the Big Push together with lots of bombing in Afghanistan's Pashtun country means we end up fighting most if not all of the Pashtun. In Afghan wars, the Pashtun always win in the end.
- Quisling governments fail because they cannot achieve legitimacy.
- You need closure, but your guerilla enemy doesn't. He not only can fight until Doomsday, he intends to do just that—if not you, then someone else.
- The bigger the operations you have to undertake, the more surely your enemy is winning.

The June 19 *Washington Times* also reported that

The ambassador from Afghanistan traveled to America's heartland to promote his war-torn country as the "heart of Asia" and a good place to do business...

In his region, "all roads lead to Afghanistan," he said...

Asia doesn't have any heart, and Afghanistan doesn't have any roads, not even one we can follow to get out.

**On War #170**  
**June 13, 2006**

[Blood Stripes](#)

**By William S. Lind**

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

David Danelo's new book, *Blood Stripes*, comes on the market at exactly the right time. Just as Americans are trying to understand what might have happened at Haditha, where Marines may have killed as many as fifteen Iraqi civilians, Danelo offers a thoughtful and insightful look into the Iraq war through the eyes of enlisted Marines. Until recently a Marine Corps infantry captain, Danelo served at Fallujah and obviously thought a great deal about what he saw there.

Unusually for a first-hand, "live reporter" style author, Danelo picks up quickly on one of the most important issues in military theory, the contradiction between the military culture of order and the disorderliness of war. In *Blood Stripes'* first chapter, he writes,

Non-commissioned officers...assume responsibility for imbuing the (Spartan) Way's sacred tenets of Order and Disorder into every young boot that crosses their path. Finding the balance within this dichotomy is tricky; both cultures exert a strong pull on Marines. The twins call like sirens from opposite banks of a river, singing for the Marine to listen to their virtues and ignore their vices.

The culture of Order is the Marine in dress blues, spotless and pristine, medals perfectly measured, hair perfectly trimmed...these types of things comprise the culture that is Orderly, functional, prepared and disciplined

However,...combat is filled with uncertainties, half-truths, bad information, changing directives from seemingly incompetent higher headquarters, and unexplained explosions. War is chaos, the ultimate form of Disorder.

*Blood Stripes* quickly immerses its reader in the chaos of infantry combat in Iraq, which, too often, is combat against an unseen enemy.

Barely three weeks into their deployment, 3rd Platoon had already discovered several IEDs throughout Husaybah. Thus far, they had managed to find a couple of them using an unconventional, dangerous, and effective technique: kick them....

(Sgt.) Soudan approached the plywood. He was standing about eight feet away.

BOOM!!!

Everything went black...

Because the explosion was close to the base, the medical evacuation (MEDEVAC) happened quickly....

The patrol stepped off. They were heading east, father away from base camp.

Three minutes passed.

BOOM!!!

From the sound of the explosion, Soudan knew this latest IED had hit south, on the street 3rd Squad

was patrolling....

Link called Soudan. "We're on our way."

Ten seconds passed.

BOOM!!!

Link's squad.

Experiences like these at the small unit level—by the end of the patrol, these Marines had been hit by five IEDs—provide some context in which those of us stateside can put events like the supposed massacre in Haditha. So does a story later in the book, where Marines engaged mujahideen in a prolonged and vicious fire-fight:

Sergeant Soudan, Corporal Link, and Lieutenant Carroll were standing in the back of a humvee. After triaging the wounded from the dead, they had placed the bodies of Gibson, Valdez, and Smith in the humvee with VanLeuven. The Recon Marines ran up, muscling the body of the other dead Marine into the vehicle.

Soudan, Link, and Carroll looked at their fallen comrade.

Their faces went white.

Captain Gannon.

Lima Six was dead.

*They killed our company commander. Pain switched to fury and an immediate demand for vengeance. These ----- killed Captain Gannon.*

*Blood Stripes* does not paint a picture of an easy war. As a Marine officer said to me many years ago, "If your unit is the one getting ambushed, it's not low intensity war." The Marines whose stories Danelo ably chronicles, and the thousands of others like them, have gone through hell in Iraq, a Fourth Generation hell where enemies are nowhere and everywhere. No military, not even the Marine Corps, can endure that kind of hell endlessly without beginning to crack, at least around the edges. It should not surprise us that cracks are now appearing, three years into the war.

One personal note: Danelo rightly reports that Marines, inspired by Steven Pressfield's brilliant novel *Gates of Fire*, like to see themselves as Spartans, which in some ways they are. As an Athenian, I have to point out that the battle of Themopylae, however deathless a tale of valor, was nonetheless a Persian victory in the end. In contrast, at Salamis, Persia was decisively defeated by Athenian deception and maneuver. Sometimes, it helps to think as well as fight.

## **On War #169**

**June 7, 2006**

### [The Power of Weakness, Again](#)

By William S. Lind

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

The investigations of Marines for possible murders of Iraqi civilians in Haditha last November and, more recently, in Hamdaniyah, seem set to follow the usual course. If anyone is found guilty, it will be privates and sergeants. The press will reassure us that the problem was just a few "bad apples," that higher-ups had no knowledge of what was going on, and that "99.9%" of our troops in Iraq are doing a splendid job of upholding, indeed enforcing, human rights. It's called the "Abu Ghraib precedent."

The fact that senior Marine and Army leaders don't seem to know what is going on in cases like this is a sad comment on them.

Far from being exceptional incidents caused by a few bad soldiers or Marines, mistreatment of civilians by the forces of an occupying power are a central element of Fourth Generation war. They are one of the main reasons why occupiers tend to lose. Haditha, Hamdaniyah and the uncountable number of incidents where U.S. troops abused Iraqi civilians less severely than by killing them are a direct product of war waged by the strong against the weak.

There are, of course, lesser causes as well, and it is on the lesser causes that we tend to focus. Poor leadership in a unit easily opens the door to misconduct. Overstretched, overtired units snap more easily. Every military service in history has included a certain percentage of criminals, and a larger percentage of bullies. The fact that in both Iraq and Afghanistan, the insurgencies are getting stronger, not weaker, generates increasing frustration among our troops: nothing they do seems to yield any real progress. The enemy's highly effective use of IEDs leads units that have been hit often and hard to take their frustrations out on the civilian populations, since they cannot find, identify or shoot back at the people who are hitting them.

But all of these factors are secondary to the power of weakness itself. We may find it easier to grasp what the power of weakness is and how it works on us by first imagining its opposite. Imagine that instead of facing rag-tag bands of poorly equipped and trained insurgents, our Marines and soldiers in Iraq were in a very difficult fight with an opponent similar to themselves, but somewhat stronger.

What would fighting the strong do for them? Being David rather than Goliath, they would see themselves as noble. Every victory would be a cause for genuine pride. Defeats would not mean disgrace, but instead would demand greater effort and higher performance. Even after a failure, they could still look at themselves in the mirror with pride. Knowing they faced a stronger enemy, their own cohesion would grow and their demand for self-discipline would increase.

If the enemy's overmatch were too great, it could lead our units to hopelessness and disintegration. But a fight with an enemy who were stronger but still beatable would buck us up more than tear us down on the all-important moral level.

Now, to see the situation as it is, turn that telescope around. Every firefight we win in Iraq or Afghanistan does little for our pride, because we are so much stronger than the people we are defeating. Every time we get hit successfully by a weaker enemy, we feel like chumps, and cannot look ourselves in the mirror (again, with IED attacks this happens quite often). Whenever we use our superior strength against Iraqi civilians, which is to say every time we drive down an Iraqi street, we diminish ourselves in our own eyes. Eventually, we come to look at ourselves with contempt and see ourselves as monsters. One way to justify being a monster is to behave like one, which makes the problem worse still. The resulting downward spiral, which every army in this kind of war has gotten caught in, leads to indiscipline, demoralization, and disintegration of larger units as fire teams and squads simply go feral.

Again, this process is fundamental to Fourth Generation war. Martin van Crevald has stressed the power of weakness as one key, if not the key, to 4GW, and he is correct. It shows just how far America's military leadership is from grasping Fourth Generation war that its response in Iraq has been to order all troops to undergo a two to four-hour "refresher course in core values."

They are caught in a hurricane, and all they can do is spit in the wind. The rest of us should get ready for the house to blow down.

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## **On War #168**

**June 3, 2006**

### [The Perils of Threat Inflation](#)

By William S. Lind

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

In the 1980s, when I was on the staff of Senator Gary Hart of Colorado, I traveled regularly to Maxwell Air Force Base (whose claim to fame is not one, but two golf courses) to give the slide-show briefing of the Congressional Military Reform Caucus to

Squadron Officers' School. After one such session, an Air Force captain, an intelligence officer, came up to me and asked, "Does military reform mean we can stop inflating the threat?"

The Defense Department's annual report to Congress, *Military Power of the People's Republic of China*, 2006, released last week, shows that threat inflation remains a growth industry in Washington. Though the report is written in a careful tone, its message is that China is a growing military threat to the United States. Subheads in Chapter Five, "Force Modernization Goals and Trends," point to "Emerging Area Denial Capability," "Building Capacity for Precision Strike," and "Improving Expeditionary Operations." One can almost hear the threat inflation engines pumping away, puffing the dragon up to a fearsome size.

China is, to coin a Rumsfeldism, the threat we want, not the threat we face. By dint of much puffery, China can be made into the devoutly prayed for "peer competitor," an opponent against whom our "transformed," hi-tech, video-game future military can employ its toys, or more importantly, justify their acquisition. Our real enemy, the thousand faces of the Fourth Generation, fails to meet that all-important test and is therefore deflated into "rejectionists" and "bad guys."

In fact, China's conventional forces are a long way from being able to take the United States on, especially at sea or in the air. The issue is less equipment—not that China has much of it—but personnel. Chinese ships spend little time at sea, its fighter pilots get few flight hours, and one can hardly speak of a Chinese "navy": it's really just a collection of ships. In a naval and air war with the United States, China would have little choice but to go nuclear from the outset, which is what I suspect it would do.

A close read of DOD's China report reveals an interesting twist, one all too typical of the "American Empire" advocates who dominate the Washington Establishment. The main Chinese "threat" the report identifies is defensive, not offensive, namely an improving capability to repel outside intervention in a crisis between China and Taiwan. The report states,

Since the early- to mid-1990s, China's military modernization has focused on expanding its options for Taiwan contingencies, including deterring or countering third-party intervention....

Simultaneously, the (U.S.) Department of Defense, through the transformation of the U.S. Armed Forces and global force posture realignments, is maintaining the capacity to resist any effort by Beijing to resort to force or coercion to dictate the terms of Taiwan's future status.

Under its "one China" policy, the U.S. recognizes that Taiwan is part of China. So the "Chinese threat" is that China may be able to deter or counter American intervention in a Chinese civil war. Who is the attacker here? If Britain or France had intervened on behalf of the Confederacy after the American South declared its independence, would the Union have seen such action as defensive?

This points to the grand folly DOD's China report represents, namely America allowing Taiwan, a small island of no strategic importance to the United States, to push it into a strategic rivalry with China. Taiwan is vastly important to China, because the great threat to China throughout its history has been internal division. If one province, Taiwan, can secure its independence, why cannot other provinces do the same? It is the spectre of internal break-up that forces China to prevent Taiwanese independence at any cost, including war with America.

But America has no corresponding interest. A war with China over Taiwan would be, for the U.S., another "war of choice," not of strategic necessity. We are currently fighting two other "wars of choice," and neither is going particularly well.

A strategic rivalry between the U.S. and China points to an obvious parallel, the strategic rivalry between England and Germany before World War I. That parallel should give Washington pause. If the rivalry—completely unnecessary in both cases—leads to war, as it then did, the war will have no victor. Germany and Britain destroyed each other. While Britain finally won, the British Empire died in the mud of Flanders.

A war between China and the United States could easily result in a similar fatal weakening of the U.S. (perhaps after a strategic nuclear exchange), while a defeated Chinese state may dissolve, with China becoming a vast region of stateless, Fourth Generation instability. Is Taiwan worth risking such an outcome? Was Belgian neutrality worth the Somme, Bolshevism and Hitler?

In a 21st century where the most important division will be between centers of order and centers or sources of disorder, it is

vital to American interests that China remain a center of order. America needs to handle a rising China the way Britain handled a rising America, not a rising Germany. From that perspective, the proper place for DOD's China report, the threat inflation it represents and the strategic rivalry it stokes is in the trash can marked "bad ideas."

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## **On War #167**

**May 25, 2006**

### [The Boys From Brazil](#)

By William S. Lind

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

A point I have made repeatedly in these columns is that Fourth Generation war includes far more than America's current battle with Islamic "terrorists." Last week, events in Brazil offered us a timely reminder of that fact. There, a gang, the PCC or First Command of the Capital, launched a full-scale military attack on the Brazilian state.

The PCC's actions illustrated a number of ways in which non-state forces deal with opposing states. The first is penetration. When a top-level meeting of Brazilian officials decided to act against the gang by transferring some of its leaders to a high-security prison, the gang immediately knew of the decision. How? It had a mole in the meeting, a contractor employed as a court reporter.

Then, the gang showed that flat, networked organizations can move far faster than a state, with its bureaucratic hierarchy. As a story in the May 21 *Washington Post* reported, "Within hours of that meeting, news of the transfer plan had spread through the gang's prison-based network..." How? The *Post* story says, "After word of the planned transfer was passed to the gang's leaders, coordinating the uprisings was easy. They simply called each other on their cellphones." Their cellphone security is simple but effective: "According to police, the gang often clones legitimate cellphone numbers for illegal use."

While prison riots are common in Brazil, the PCC demonstrated an ability to reach far beyond the prisons. In the city of Sao Paulo, they launched military-style attacks on police and civilian infrastructure targets. *The Post* reports that

Riots broke out in more than 70 state penitentiaries. Gang members outside prisons attacked police stations, burned more than 60 public buses and whipped up a general state of terror that paralyzed Brazil's Sao Paulo...

As of Saturday (May 20), the death count totaled 41 police officers, 18 inmates, 107 suspected PCC members outside prisons and four civilians.

Demonstrating the often-excellent intelligence capabilities of non-state organizations, "The gang members also know where the police live...Some of the officers who died during the outbreaks were killed near their homes while off duty."

The PCC does what gangs do, namely use violence and make money off crime, especially the drug trade. But its origins illustrate the role non-state entities have in providing services states fail to offer. The *Washington Post* story notes that

(The PCC's) strength had been feeding on the weakness of government for years. The PCC was founded in 1993 as a response to the abysmal conditions in Sao Paulo's prisons, where inmates lived in fear of each other, sleeping in overcrowded cells with no beds, no blankets, no soap, no toothbrushes.

By offering protection and basic necessities to new inmates, the gang won the loyalty of most prisoners in a population that now numbers 124,400...the PCC has repeatedly won minor improvements in conditions in some facilities. That has earned them favor not only with the inmates, but with the family members who provide the basic goods that PCC members distribute inside the prison blocs.

Nor does the PCC work only in ways that are illegal. The *Post* writes that "the gang also employs a network of attorneys..."

The PCC emerges from the *Post* account and from its uprising in Sao Paulo as almost a model Fourth Generation organization, operating a network of structures parallel to those of the state that work more effectively than the state's institutions. As the state retreats into ever-greater corruption and incapacity, the PCC has advanced by filling in the widening gaps. It has now reached the point where it can confront the state directly, while I think it is safe to say that the state cannot defeat much less destroy the PCC.

Not only does this offer us a Fourth Generation model very different from what we confront in al Qaeda (it is more like Hamas and Hezbollah), it may also present a picture of what America will face coming out of its own prisons. Most American prisons are run not by the state but by racially-defined gangs. A prisoner's well-being, even his survival, depends on his gang, not on the prison authorities. How long will it be before those gangs, like the PCC, will be able to reach outside the prisons and confront the American state? Police in cities such as Los Angeles might say that is happening now.

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## **On War #165**

**May 17, 2006**

[More Contradictions](#)

By William S. Lind

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

I recently wrote about a contradiction in our strategy in Afghanistan, where we are simultaneously attempting to draw the rural population away from the Taliban and eradicating opium poppy crops, which drives farmers toward the Taliban. An article in the May 14 *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, "U.S. shift in fighting insurgency stirs debate," points to a different kind of contradiction in Iraq, a contradiction between the requirements of the strategic and tactical levels of war.

The article, by reporters Solomon Moore and Peter Spiegel, notes that in Anbar Province, the Marines are adopting the "ink blot" approach to counter-insurgency, which is the only tactic that has a chance of working:

In the region surrounding Al Qaim, a northwestern Iraqi town near the Syrian border, Marines are fanning out from their main base and moving into villages...

The deployment follows a strategy favored by a new generation of counterinsurgency experts: disperse, mingle with the population and stay put. The idea is to break out of an endless cycle that allows insurgents to move back into the key areas as soon as U.S. forces move on.

The ink blot approach is a tactic, not a strategy, and it has been recommended by anyone who has studied insurgency, not just a "new generation" of experts. But the U.S. military threw away every lesson from Vietnam as soon as that war ended, so the old has become new again.

However, the article goes on to note that at the strategic level, what we are doing in Iraq directly contradicts the requirements of the ink blot tactic.

But the shift comes as the Pentagon appears to be moving the overall U.S. military effort in the opposite direction across much of the country. Army units are being concentrated in "super bases" that line the spine of central Iraq, away from the urban centers where counterinsurgency operations take place.

The two approaches underscore an increasingly high-profile divergence – some say contradiction – in how best to use U.S. forces in Iraq.

U.S. forces are being pulled back into fortresses not because fortresses are effective against insurgents, but because at the strategic level, the Bush administration is desperate to reduce casualties and get the American people thinking about something other than the war in Iraq. A short piece in the May 16 *Plain Dealer* stated that

Presidential advisor Karl Rove said Monday that the Iraq war is responsible for the "sour" mood of American voters, but he predicted that the Republican Party would do "just fine" in the congressional elections in the fall.

Rove may be proven right, but at the moment Republicans in Congress are in a state of near-panic at the prospect of a political bloodbath in November, and Iraq lies at the heart of their fears.

If such a bloodbath occurs and Democrats take the House, much less the House and Senate, even the gutless Dems will get the message, and we will get out of Iraq in short order (which we should do anyway). Pulling our troops back into fortresses is a half-step along that road. Unfortunately, like most half-steps taken too late (and in this case in the wrong direction in terms of fighting an insurgency), it will fail. American casualties will not drop, because we still have to run lots of convoys, and public dismay over the Iraq debacle will continue to grow. Political processes by their nature attempt to bridge contradictions with half measures, but in war, half measures usually make things worse.

The history of war brims with contradictions between the tactical and strategic levels, with unhappy outcomes. Two classic examples are the French and German war plans in 1914, Plan XVII and the Schlieffen Plan. Both required fast-moving strategic offenses at a time when the defensive had become tactically dominant. Both failed, with enormous casualties.

Had U.S. forces in Iraq adopted the ink blot approach at the outset, we would still face insurgency today, and we would still find ourselves unable to attain our stated strategic objectives. Not even Merlin could turn Iraq into a secular, liberal parliamentary democracy. But the situation would probably not have been as bad as it is, we might have managed a half-graceful exit from Iraq and strategic requirements might not have demanded we withdraw our troops into fortresses. As it is, what the Marines are doing is right, but too late. The strategic level trumps the tactical, and the pullback of U.S. troops into "super bases" is just a prelude to a super skedaddle.

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**On War #164**  
**May 9, 2006**

[The Other War](#)

By William S. Lind

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

As rising U.S. and NATO casualty counts attest, the war in Afghanistan is heating up. It is doing so on Afghan time, which is to say slowly. When you have all the time in the world, why hurry?

An April 7, 2006 study by the London-based Senlis Council, "Insurgency in the Provinces of Helmand, Kandahar and Nangahar," paints a somewhat alarming picture. I do not know who or what the Senlis Council represents, or what axes it may grind. The style of the report suggests English is not the first language of those who wrote it. But facts are still facts, and its report tracks with what I've seen elsewhere. The study states,

The Insurgency Assessment Report collates notes, evidence and facts gathered during a field visit of the three provinces...during the months of February/March 2006.

The visit was conducted by an independent field team, which met with civil, military and religious leaders in each of the provinces but also gained access to farming communities and other grassroots actors, with whom interviews and group meetings were conducted.

Speaking of all three provinces, the study says in its Executive Summary,

government control over the Pashto Belt, even at a limited level, is rapidly diminishing, with political volatility now reaching urban areas.

Volatility indicators – such as the free movement of insurgent groups in daylight and in the main cities – reveal that increasingly large areas of the South are falling under the influence of non-state actors.

At the core of this failure by the U.S., NATO and the Afghan government is a common and often fatal military phenomenon: conflicting objectives. On the one hand, the U.S. and its allies want to defeat the Taliban and other “terrorists.” But at the same time, they also want to stop opium production. If the Senlis Council’s analysis is accurate, attempts to pursue the second objective are pushing us away from attaining the first.

Looking at Helmand province, the report says,

In eliminating the sole survival strategy of many of the farming families, eradication in Helmand is fueling the insurgency. Anti government forces are winning over the dilapidated farmers by offering economic assistance including the cancellation of debts and providing military protection from eradication.

The Coalition forces mandate covers counter insurgency and support to counter narcotics activities. It is being widely reported that eradication activities are being supervised by the US and British military... Eradication is blunting counter insurgency efforts by pushing the local population toward the extremists...

The local population has now come to identify international troops with eradication activities rather than with reconstruction efforts.

The situation in the other two provinces is similar. Speaking of Kandahar province, the report states,

The majority of the Kandahar population are farmers living in rural areas. The farming communities of Kandahar are very actively involved in the cultivation and production of opium. The soil, weather patterns and limited water supply make opium one of the few viable crops in the region, and Kandahar farmers admitted that (they) would rather die than forgo their families’ only means of survival...

According to many farmers, the US and Canadian alternative livelihoods plans are farcical...

Determining strategic objectives, and ensuring that those objectives are not contradictory, is the job of the most senior level of command, in this case the White House. By demanding that U.S. and allied troops pursue two conflicting objectives simultaneously, the Bush administration has created a no-win situation. Efforts to defeat the Taliban only work if they can gain the support of the rural population, but poppy eradication pushes the rural population toward the Taliban and its allies. (One could add a third incompatible objective, promoting women’s rights in a conservative Islamic culture.)

President George W. Bush likes to say, “I’m the decider; I decide.” The role of being the “decider” includes making sure that decisions are logically consistent. Mr. Bush is, from that perspective, a failed “decider” in Afghanistan. He failed similarly in deciding to invade Iraq as part of a global war against “terrorism,” when the destruction of the Iraqi state proved, predictably, to work in favor of the “terrorists.” He is failing yet again in picking quarrels with Russia and China when we need an all-states alliance against anti-state forces.

President Harry S. Truman said, “The buck stops here,” in the Oval Office. When it comes to deciding on strategic objectives, President George W. Bush has torn the buck into confetti and tossed it to the winds of chance.

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## **On War #163**

**May 2, 2006**

### [A Left-Right Anti-war Alliance?](#)

By William S. Lind

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

One of the more amusing aspects of the debacle in Iraq has been the performance of the anti-war Left. Far from "mobilizing the masses for peace," it has had about as much impact as a slingshot on a Kaiser-class dreadnought. Seldom does it amount to more than a few aging hippies trying to relive their youth by resurrecting the Vietnam-era anti-war movement. Their attempts recall Marx's comment that history occurs as tragedy, then repeats itself as farce.

In response to this failure, a few voices from both the Left and the Right are suggesting an anti-war alliance. Given its impotence to date – nowhere more evident than in Congress, where few Democrats dare call for a withdrawal from Iraq – it is not clear exactly what the Left would bring to the table. The strongest and most thoughtful voices against the Iraq War have come from real (as opposed to neo-con) conservatives, starting well before the war began. Further, because the Right is President Bush's base, conservative anti-war voices have more political meaning than do those on the Left, which will never vote Republican under any circumstances.

Let us say, nonetheless, that such an alliance is worth exploring. It is unlikely to get us out of Iraq before the roof there falls in, but it just might manage to obstruct the next act in the neo-cons' play, a war with Iran. If it could be kept out of the hands of the crazies, it might also give some encouragement to Members of Congress of both parties who, at least behind closed doors, realize that the whole "American Empire" madness is leading the country to destruction. Abandoning that strategy and returning to a policy of prudence should be the strategic goal of any serious "anti-war" effort, and it might also be a point on which Left and Right could agree.

But what about the many other matters on which conservatives and the Left cannot agree? In an article in *The American Conservative* advocating a Left-Right anti-war alliance, "Grand Coalition," Neil Clark writes,

This Peace Party would (be) a high-profile pressure group where all opponents of war would feel at home, regardless of their views on abortion, public ownership, smoking in public places, or capital punishment.

That's fine as far as it goes, especially since it means the Left will have to breathe my pipe-smoke. Unfortunately, it ignores the elephant in the parlor, namely Political Correctness. To the Left, anyone who dares contradict the dictates of the cultural Marxism of the Frankfurt School, which is what Political Correctness and "multi-culturalism" really are, is not just wrong. They are evil, "another Hitler."

So let me put some questions to those on the Left who advocate a "Grand Coalition" against more wars in pursuit of American Empire: Are you prepared to work with people who

- Believe America's (and Britain's) culture should remain Anglo-Saxon?
- Think men and women are inherently different, and that their traditional social roles reflect those inherent differences?
- Acknowledge distinctions between races, and among ethnic groups within races?
- Reject egalitarianism and think differences between classes both natural and beneficial?
- Believe all sexual relations outside marriage are sinful, and homosexual acts especially so?
- See Victorian America and Britain as models to be emulated rather than examples of "oppression?"

Insist not only on believing all these things, and more like them, but also on expressing their beliefs publicly, as representing what is right, true and good?

Frankly, I doubt the culturally Marxist Left can accept any of this. To do so, it would have to acknowledge that its ideology is an ideology and not objective reality. In other words, those who argue that truth is relative would have to accept that their truths are relative, too.

For my part, as a conservative, I am willing to participate in a Grand Coalition against imperial folly even with cultural Marxists; if they want to believe the Frankfurt School crap, more the fools they. But I will do so puffing my pipe and reading Mencken as a frolicsome Irish serving wench makes sure my glass stays full. The Politically Correct Left can put that in their pipes, but if they try to smoke it, I suspect they will turn a delightful shade of green.

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## On War #162

### Off With His Head!

By William S. Lind

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

On the surface, the question raised by six (at last count) retired generals of whether Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld should resign has an obvious answer: of course he should. He was a key man in the cabal that lied us into the war in Iraq, and he may have been the key man in losing that war. What happens to the COO of a major corporation who swindles his company into a risky deal, then blows the deal so the company faces bankruptcy? In today's business world he probably pops his golden parachute and leaves with \$100 million. But at least he does leave. So should Rumsfeld. Off with his head!

At that point, the picture grows murkier. Who replaces him? Almost certainly, someone no different. He is, after all, the COO, and this company's problem is that it has a dunce for a CEO. Far from learning any lessons from the previous failed venture, he wants to repeat it, this time in Iran. A fish rots from the head, as the old Russian saying goes, and until this head falls the rot will spread. Where is the Queen of Hearts when we really need her?

Then there is the question of why so many generals (not all of them retired) want Rummy gone. That varies general to general, but when Rumsfeld's defenders argue that some of his critics are dinosaurs who resent "Transformation" because it disrupts business as usual, they have a point. As anyone who has dealt with the higher ranks of the U.S. military knows, they put the La Brea tar pits in the shade as a dinosaur graveyard. As wedded to old ways of doing things – Second Generation war to be specific – as any other group of senior Gosplan apparatchiki, they hate any hint of change. Years ago, when an unconventional Air Force Chief of Staff had me give my Fourth Generations of Modern War talk to the Air Force's "Corona" gathering of three- and four-stars, I felt like Milton Friedman speaking to the Brezhnev Politburo.

But here too the story is not so simple. While Rumsfeldian "Transformation" represents change, it represents change in the wrong direction. Instead of attempting to move from the Second Generation to the Third (much less the Fourth), Transformation retains the Second Generation's conception of war as putting firepower on targets while trying to replace people with technology. Its *summa* is the Death Star, where men and women in spiffy uniforms sit in air-conditioned comfort zapping enemies like bugs. It is a vision of future war that appeals to technocrats and lines industry pockets, but has no connection to reality. The combination of this vision of war with an equally unrealistic vision of strategic objectives has given us the defeat in Iraq. Again, Rumsfeld lies at the heart of both. But, again, his removal and replacement contain no promise of improvement in either.

At least one of Rumsfeld's retired general critics, Greg Newbold, understands all this. I've known and respected Greg since he was a captain teaching at The Basic School, and many of us hoped he would be Commandant some day, the first Commandant since Al Gray who would try to move the Marine Corps beyond Second Generation war (in more than its doctrine manuals).

But the Imperial Court gets what it wants, and what it wants are not generals like Greg Newbold. It wants senior "leaders" who are, above all, compliant, and it finds no shortage of candidates. They may growl about Rumsfeld in private, but in public they bow and scrape, not only to the SecDef and the catastrophic policies of a failed Presidency, but even more to "high tech" and its magical ability to expand defense budgets. At some point they will make a break, because the military does not want to wear the albatross of (two) lost wars. But not until they have extracted the uttermost farthing.

The play is titled, "No Exit." Unless, unless . . . Rumsfeld's head should not be the only one to roll.

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## ON WAR #161

### Sweeping Up

By William S. Lind

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

As recognition of the defeat in Iraq spreads, so also does the process of sweeping up the debris. Both civilian observers and a few voices inside the military have begun the "lessons learned" business, trying to figure out what led to our defeat so that we do not repeat the same mistakes. That is the homage we owe to this war's dead and wounded. To the degree we do learn important lessons, they will not have suffered in vain, even though we lost the war.

Most of the analyses to date are of the "if only" variety. "If only" we had not sent the Iraqi army home, or overdone "de-Baathification," or installed an American satrap, or, or, or, we would have won. The best study I have thus far seen does not agree. "Revisions in Need of Revising: What Went Wrong in the Iraq War," by David C. Hendrickson and Robert W. Tucker, puts it plainly:

Though the critics have made a number of telling points against the conduct of the war and the occupation, the basic problems faced by the United States flowed from the enterprise itself, and not primarily from mistakes in execution along the way. The most serious problems facing Iraq and its American occupiers – "endemic violence, a shattered state, a nonfunctioning economy, and a decimated society" – were virtually inevitable consequences that flowed from the breakage of the Iraqi state.

It is of interest, and a hopeful sign, that this blunt assessment was published by the U.S. Army War College's Strategic Studies Institute.

One target the study hits squarely is the American assumption, still regnant in the Pentagon, that superior technology guarantees our Second Generation forces victory over technologically primitive Fourth Generation enemies. Hendrickson and Tucker write,

It is now clear that the insurgency enjoys advantages on its own terrain that are just as formidable as the precision-guided weaponry deployed with devastating effect by the United States. Because U.S. forces can destroy everything they can see, they had no difficulty in marching into Baghdad and forcing the resistance underground. Once underground, however, the resistance acquired a set of advantages that have proved just as effective as America's formidable firepower. Iraq's military forces had no answer to smart bombs, but the United States has no answer – at least no good answer – to car bombs.

Recognition that war is not dominated by technology but by human factors is an important counter to what will inevitably be claims by the U.S. military that it performed brilliantly; it was the politicians who lost the war (the Vietnam War claim repeated). As the authors note, this reflects an overly narrow definition of war:

Other lessons are that the military services must digest again that "war is an instrument of policy." The profound neglect given to re-establishing order in the military's prewar planning and the facile assumption that operations critical to the overall success of the campaign were "somebody else's business" reflect a shallow view of warfare. Military planners should consider the evidence that occupation duties were carried out in a fashion – with the imperatives of "force protection" overriding concern for Iraqi civilian casualties – that risked sacrificing the broader strategic mission of U.S. forces.

Nor could the Iraq war have been won if we had sent more troops. More troops would not have helped us deal with the problems of bad intelligence, lack of cultural awareness, and the insistence on using tactics that alienated the population. As the authors state, "The assumption that the United States would have won the hearts and minds of the population had it maintained occupying forces of 300,000 instead of 140,000 must seem dubious in the extreme."

The most important point in this excellent study is precisely the one that Washington will be most reluctant to learn: "Rather than 'do it better next time,' a better lesson is 'don't do it at all.'" What we require is a "national security strategy (I would say grand strategy) in which there is no imperative to fight the kind of war that the United States has fought in Iraq."

For most of America's history, we followed that kind of grand strategy, namely a defensive grand strategy. If the fallout from the defeat in Iraq includes our return to a defensive grand strategy, then we will indeed be able to say that we have learned this war's most important lesson.

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## On War #160

### The Fourth Plague

By William S. Lind

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

In Exodus, the Fourth Plague sent upon the Egyptians was a plague of flies. A similar plague of flies has settled on the U.S. military, in the form of a swarm of retired senior officers working as contractors. Not satisfied with their generous pensions, they wheedle six-figure contracts out of senior officer "buddies" still on active duty. In return for steam shovel loads of the taxpayers' money, they offer "advice" that is, overwhelmingly, flyspeck.

The problem is that these contractors are businessmen, and business is a whore. The goal of business is profit, not truth. Profit requires getting the next contract. Getting the next contract means telling whomever gave you the current contract what he wants to hear. If what he wants to hear isn't true, so what? Just start the "study" by writing the desired conclusion, then bugger the evidence to fit. The result is endless intellectual corruption, billions of dollars wasted and military services that, as institutions, can no longer think.

The plague of senior officer contractors has effectively pushed those still in the military out of the thought process. Meeting after meeting on issues of doctrine on concepts are dominated by contractors. The officers in the room know that if they wave the BS flag at the contractors, they risk angering the serving senior officers who have given their "buddies" the contract. Junior officers, who have the most direct experience with the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, are completely excluded. They have no chance of being heard in meetings dominated by retired generals and colonels.

Not only does contracting out thinking bring intellectual corruption, it adds a whole new layer of dinosaurism to the thought process. Most retired senior officers' minds froze in the Fulda Gap many years ago, and that remains their vision of war. Further, any change is automatically an attack on their "legacies," which they are quick to defend. Twenty years ago, once the dinosaur retired, you could push him into the tar pit and move on. Now he is back the next day in a suit, with a six-figure contract. The plague of contractors reinforces one of the military's (and other bureaucracies') worst habits, formalizing thinking. Concepts and doctrine are now developed through layer after layer of formal, structured meetings, invariably organized around PowerPoint briefings. Most attendees are there as representatives of one or another bureaucratic interest, and their job is to defend their turf. PowerPoint briefings not only disguise a lack of intellectual substance with glitzy gimmicks, they inherently work against the concept of *Schwerpunkt*. Slides usually present umpteen bulletized "points," all co-equal in (lack of) importance. In the end, what is important is the briefing itself: the medium is the message.

One of the great intellectual successes of the American military, the Marine Corps' development of maneuver warfare doctrine from the 1970s through the early 1990s, offers an interesting contrast. The process was almost all informal. The key people were mostly junior officers. Meetings were after-hours, in someone's living room over beer and pizza. Many outsiders were involved, but none of them were paid. In the end, most of the new manuals were written by a Marine captain, who took them directly to the Commandant for approval. Tellingly, since that time the Marine Corps has formalized its doctrine development process, and the quality of its manuals has declined.

Of course, contractors hate informal processes, because they have no role in them. There is no money to be had. In contrast, the current formal process gives them what they seek most, opportunities to kiss the backsides of bigwigs with bucks to obtain still more contracts.

As I told one senior Marine Corps general last fall, the present system is terminally constipated by too many people and too

much money. The money draws contractors the way an outhouse draws other kinds of flies. If the U.S. military wants to start thinking again, it needs to can the senior officer contractors, outlaw PowerPoint and give younger officers time and encouragement to meet in informal seminars, write and publish.

Scharnhorst's *Militaerische Gesellschaft*, from the time of Napoleon, remains the right model. The problem is that it doesn't cost very much.

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## On War #159

### The Self-Proclaimed Other

By William S. Lind

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

The ongoing demonstrations and riots against a change in French labor laws are as normal for France as snails for dinner. Most Frenchmen agree that France is, and should remain, a mercantilist rather than a capitalist country. Every so often, a French government unwisely ignores this consensus and attempts to fire Monsieur Colbert from his permanent post as Minister of Economics. French workers take to the streets in protest, and after huffing and puffing for a while, the government gives in and restores Colbert to his honored post. It is one of the rites of spring, and no cause for genuine alarm.

But this year is different. A new, Fourth Generation presence has manifested itself. Roving gangs of young Islamics, many of them black, have joined the festivities. They have come not to march shoulder-to-shoulder with French students and workers, demonstrating the Left's *fraternité*, but to assault, beat, kick and rob them. The Left, it seems, has a problem.

The European cultural Left, which includes most of the nominal European Right, has for decades proclaimed the desirability of "multi-culturalism." Religion, culture, race, those basic ingredients of human history, were no longer to matter. Beneath such superstructures, all people were to be seen as the same, wanting material things, sharing warm feelings toward one another, united by class consciousness far more than they could ever be divided by mere accidents of birth. "Diversity" would unite the best from all cultures, while the worst would magically vanish.

In this culturally Marxist world view, the most heinous of sins was to suggest that someone else was "the Other." That was racism, classism, fascism, and every other ism under the sun. Anyone who dared view another religion, culture or race as in any way unwelcome or even problematic was supposed to look in the mirror and see "another Hitler."

In the case of the young Moslems who are attacking French demonstrators, however, it is not Le Pen and his followers who are labeling them "the Other." They are proclaiming themselves "the Other," and they are doing so forcefully. Their Other, in turn, is not the Right, but simply Frenchmen. Any man, woman or child of French ancestry is a target, an enemy, regardless of how impeccable their Leftist credentials. European distinctions of Left and Right mean nothing to this self-proclaimed Other. What matters to these products of multi-culturalist immigration policies is exactly the realities multi-culturalism was supposed to abolish, the ancient identities of religion, culture and race. The New sought to replace the Old, but the Old is reemerging to displace the New.

The root issue, as usual in the Fourth Generation, is primary loyalty. Most French workers and students, however Leftist their politics, are Frenchmen first. The Moslem hooligans – or should we say warriors? – attacking them will never give their primary loyalty to France. They are the Other by choice and by pride, not by economic or any other circumstances. No schools, no housing projects, no jobs programs will take their loyalty away from the Other. As the Other, and as young men, they will look, not for economic opportunities, but for opportunities to fight.

The French Left is now painfully discovering that "diversity" is a synonym for taking a swim in the shark tank. For those of us who are cultural conservatives, the situation has its amusing aspects. We did tell them so, over and over again. They stopped their ears and yelled "ism! ism! ism!" back at us. Now, they are finding it is easier to block their ears than to keep their asses from being kicked in the streets of Paris, by the people they welcomed to France.

Regrettably, the colossal mess created by "multi-culturalism" affects all Europeans and Americans, Right as well as Left. I will say again what I have said before: in a Fourth Generation world, invasion by immigrants who do not acculturate is more dangerous than invasion by the army of a foreign state. In America, a similar invading army took to our streets last week, demonstrating against any attempt to stem the invasion. Few of the flags they carried were American.

What has to happen before the rest of us get the message?

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## **ON WAR #158**

### [The Army's Truth in Advertising](#)

By William S. Lind

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The Army has made it official. What those who work in Washington have long known -- that the Pentagon is about money, not war -- is now Army policy. According to the March 10 draft of the Army Campaign Plan, "The Army's center of gravity is the resource process."

Yep, it sure is, as the cost of the Future Contract System readily attests. Still, the Army deserves some sort of award for its truth in advertising. How about a medal showing a hand with a West Point ring on it reaching for someone else's wallet?

Of course, money has always been important in war. For centuries, a king who wanted to go to war had first to trot down to his Schatzkammer and see how many thaler he had piled up. If the cupboard was bare, he wasn't going anywhere.

But saying, as the U.S. Army has, that its center of gravity is the resource process is going a great deal further. Clausewitz defines a center of gravity as "the hub of all power and movement, on which all depends." If that were true of money, then the current wars in Iraq and Afghanistan would not be happening. The U.S. Army's resources, not to mention those of the rest of the Defense Department, are so vastly greater than those of our Fourth Generation opponents that they would not be able to stand against us for an hour.

The Military Reform Movement of the 1970s and 80s put it differently. It said that for winning in war, people are most important, ideas come second and hardware is only third. How does the Army affect its people, ideas and hardware by making resources its center of gravity? In each case, negatively.

Within the officer corps, the focus on acquiring and justifying resources corrupts, not in the sense of people taking money under the table but in the more profound sense of corruption of institutional purpose. Officers whose focus and expertise is combat are shunted aside while those who are most adept at the resources game are promoted. Worse, a swarm of vultures is drawn by the resources, in the form of a secondary army of contractors. Because their goal is not truth but the next contract, intellectual corruption is added to corruption of purpose. At its higher levels, the whole system becomes Soviet, Gosplan in or out of uniform. The outside world, the battlefield, is an irrelevant and unwelcome distraction.

Ideas are similarly corrupted. In general, poverty begets ideas, while an excess of resources brings intellectual laziness. The illusion that the organization can simply buy its way out of problems spreads. The ideas that are valued are those that justify still more resources, while ideas that promise battlefield results with small resources are dismissed or seen as threats. Again, the FCS is a wonderful example. From a military standpoint it is a joke, a semi-portable Maginot Line doomed to collapse of its own complexity. But in terms of justifying resources, it is a tremendous success because for the first time the Army has a program that costs even more than Navy or Air Force programs.

That leads to hardware, where complexity becomes the rule because simplicity does not cost enough. The more complex a system, the less it is able to deal with threats not envisioned by its designers. Thus we see what Iraq has illustrated time and again, expensive, complex systems nullified by imaginative, simple countermeasures based on people and ideas. Worse, because hardware best justifies more resources, hardware becomes the Army's top priority with both people and ideas left far

behind. In the end, the Army loses to opponents who have kept their priorities straight.

The Army should not be blamed for coming out of the closet and stating up front that resources are its center of gravity. The scandal is that for all the American armed services, the resource process is the center of gravity and has been for a long time (the most recent to make it so was the Marine Corps, in the mid-1990s). To return to Clausewitz's definition, one might say that when a military defines resources as its center of gravity, it creates a hub of all weakness and stasis, on which all fatally depends.

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## On War #157

### [Through the Postern Gate](#)

By William S. Lind

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

The Bush administration argues that by staying in Iraq, we keep "terrorists" attention and efforts focused there rather than on America's homeland. It could more plausibly be posited that by keeping America's eyes riveted on Iraq, the war allows a variety of Fourth Generation elements to creep in through our postern gate.

On our southern border, the mestizo invasion is taking on more overtly military overtones. According to an article by Jerry Seper in the March 13 *Washington Times*,

Law-enforcement officials along the Mexican border say they are outgunned and outmanned by drug smugglers armed with automatic weapons and grenades, and who use state-of-the-art communications and tracking systems.

"We recently received information that cartels immediately across our border are planning on killing as many police officers as possible on the United States side" ... said Zapata County Sheriff Sigifredo Gonzalez Jr., head of the 16-member Texas Border Sheriffs Coalition.

"They have the money, equipment and stamina to do it," the sheriff said . . .

Profits made by the drug cartels also have allowed them to hire and develop what Sheriff Gonzalez described as "experts" in explosives, wiretapping, countersurveillance, lock-picking and Global Positioning System technology.

Most of the components of what Sheriff Gonzalez and his colleagues are facing are not new to those who follow the evolution of Fourth Generation war. Several, however, are worth closer attention.

Why are the drug and immigration smugglers on our southern border escalating the conflict? Because when they probe, they find weakness. Here we see another carry-over from the Third to the Fourth Generation, in the form of "soft spot tactics." Our border defenses are weak at the physical level, and at the mental and moral levels as well. Those weaknesses are intended by the Washington Establishment and its unholy alliance of cultural Marxists and big business/cheap labor "conservatives."

The cops understand the origin of the problem. *The Washington Times* piece notes that

He (Sheriff Gonzalez) does not blame the law-enforcement agents; rather, "we criticize the policies that they have to adhere to."

Not only have Mexican drug gangs transferred their allegiance away from the state, so have America's elites.

A normal phenomenon at a time of generational change in war is that the new generation gets far more bang for the buck. 9/11 cost al Qaeda about \$500,000, while America is spending about \$5 billion a month to lose in Iraq and Afghanistan. On our southern border, we see Fourth Generation opponents buying simple, effective equipment on the open market, while the U.S.

national security establishment pours hundreds of billions of borrowed dollars into rococo systems and bureaucratic structures.

But in Sheriff Gonzalez's testimony, we see something more: some of our Fourth Generation enemies are acquiring a lot of money. Money has always been one of the sinews of war, and it always will be. As their financial resources increase, 4GW opponents will be able to leverage their vastly greater procurement efficiency to face us first with parity, then with superiority in technologies and systems that actually matter. The all-pervasive American belief that wars are decided by technology is false to start with, but it remains the basis of American soldiers' and cops' faith in themselves. How will they fight when it becomes evident to them that they do not have technological superiority?

Patton said that one of the most basic tactics in war is to grab the enemy by the nose and then kick him in the ass. In Iraq and Afghanistan, we have willingly allowed one Fourth Generation enemy to grab our nose. On our southern border, other 4GW entities are kicking our ass. What passes for the Bush administration's strategy is to maintain this posture. One has to search the historical record with some diligence to find parallels of sheer strategic imbecility.

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## **On War #156**

### Reorganization or Reform?

By William S. Lind

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

A controversy appears to be brewing over the U.S. Army's plan to move away from the division as its basic unit and toward the brigade, or Brigade Combat Team (BCT) as the Army buzzwords it. On the surface, it appears there should be little to argue about. Most other armies abandoned the division or downsized it long ago, recognizing that it is simply too big to be commanded effectively on dispersed modern battlefields.

The controversy, it seems, is less over the move to brigades than over the question of how many maneuver battalions the Army will have left once the reorganization is complete. Here, the answer is the usual answer where numbers are concerned: it depends on what you count. An IDA study says maneuver battalions are cut by 20%, which if true, is certainly a bad move. The Army's leadership responds that IDA is not counting the recon battalion in each BCT, which is also a maneuver battalion. That may or may not be true, depending on the military situation. Like combat engineer battalions, reconnaissance battalions are sometimes used just like other maneuver battalions, because the situation demands that everyone be thrown into the fight. When the demand for cannon fodder is less intense, however, commanders usually want to avoid using units with special skills as infantry, because soldiers with special skills are harder to replace.

Far more serious than the question of whether recon battalions are or are not maneuver battalions is the matter of creeping headquarters' growth. The IDA study found that with the new BCT organization, brigade headquarters grew by about 11%. I met with the Army's "transformation task force" on force structure twice, and my strong impression from those meetings was that headquarters grow both in number and in size.

Why is this a problem? Because more headquarters and larger headquarters inevitably mean more centralization. Centralization is one of the key characteristics of Second Generation militaries, just as decentralization is a defining quality of the Third Generation. Decentralization permits outward focus and encourages initiative, which in turn together speed up Boyd's OODA Loop and improve accuracy of orientation. Centralization, in contrast, slows the OODA Loop down and blurs orientation because the picture that is the basis for decisions is many layers removed from the actual observation.

One of the reasons none of America's armed services has yet transitioned from the Second to the Third Generation is the vast number and size of their headquarters. All those headquarters' officers are continually looking for something to do, and for some scrap of information that will give them 30 seconds of face time in the endless PowerPoint briefings that are American headquarters' main business. The result is that they impose endless demands on the time and energy of subordinate units. One Army battalion last year told me they had to submit 64 reports to their division every day.

Here we come to the central question, not only about the Army's move from divisions to brigades, but about its whole "transformation" program: is it reform, or is it just reorganization? To count as real reform, it needs to move the Army out of the Second Generation and into the Third. If all it amounts to is reorganization within a Second Generation framework, then, frankly, it's not worth the umpteen-thousand PowerPoint slides it's printed on.

If the Army's senior leadership wants reform and not mere reorganization, here's a suggestion to move the "transformation" process in that direction. Order that at the end of the day, when the new BCT structure is in place, the Army may have only half as many officers in headquarters (at all levels) as it did under the previous structure. And no, the officers cut may not be replaced by contractors. That would at least encourage decentralization, without which no reform is possible. It might also give however many maneuver battalions the Army ends up with a little room to breathe.

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## **On War #155**

### [Unholy Alliance](#)

By William S. Lind

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On the face of it, the port security issue now roiling Washington is simple enough. An Arabian company, Dubai World Ports, is about to take over management of several major U.S. ports, thanks to a corporate buy-out. While the Bush administration supports the deal, Congress is queasy. On March 6, the Chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, Congressman Duncan Hunter, introduced legislation to block the deal. His bill would also require that any "national defense critical infrastructure" be American-owned.

Congressman Hunter is obviously right. What would foreigners, in this case Arabs, get by owning ports or other critical American infrastructure? Detailed plans of both the infrastructure itself and how it is operated. That's probably not the kind of information we want Abdul selling in the Kandahar bazaar.

The rejection of this deal should be automatic. So why isn't it? Because an unholy alliance between the Politically Correct Left and the Golden Calf-worshipping Right has rallied in its defense. The nature of this Left-Right alliance is worth exploring, because one of its purposes is making sure America remains open to Fourth Generation invaders.

To understand the Left's insistence on leaving the drawbridge down, one has to know what "Political Correctness" and "multi-culturalism" really are. They are code words for the cultural Marxism of the Frankfurt School, the Marxist think tank that, beginning around 1930, undertook the intellectually difficult task of translating Marxism from economic into cultural terms (it had to break with both Moscow and Marx on some important points to do it.) Cultural Marxism's purpose is the destruction of Western culture and the Christian religion. Any ally helpful in reaching those goals is to be welcomed, including allies who would slit the cultural Marxists' own throats. So long as the West can be brought down, any price is worth paying.

The culturally Marxist Left has thus run to the defense of the Dubai ports deal, screaming "Islamophobia" at the top of its lungs. Like most words in the PC vocabulary, "Islamophobia" is itself a lie; in view of the way non-Islamics are treated in most majority-Moslem countries, fear of Islam is anything but irrational.

Joining the cultural Marxists on the barricades are the *Wall Street Journal* "conservatives," conservatives who define conservatism as "whatever makes me richer." To them, any impediment to free trade is anathema, as they get richer by selling off pieces of America. Note: these are not people who real conservatives, from Edmund Burke to Russell Kirk, would recognize as compatriots. They are, however, the kind of people who define "conservatism" for the imposter Bush regime.

What has been particularly interesting about the ports question is the way *WSJ* conservatives have grabbed and employed the rhetoric of the cultural Marxists, who are real conservatives' number one public enemy. One right-wing columnist after another has picked up the "Islamophobia" word, happily employing the vocabulary and frame of reference of the PC Left. How can they

do that? As the street would say, "It's easy, hon. Pimps ain't got no principles."

At issue here is far more than the security of our ports, as important as that is. The same Left-Right unholy alliance is what keeps our borders open to millions of illegal immigrants, our stores filled with products made in Third World countries and our police unable to profile on the basis of real indicators. In other words, it leaves America a doormat on which the rest of the world is invited to wipe its feet.

In a Fourth Generation world, we need legislation like Chairman Hunter's proposal (his bill would also mandate inspection of all cargo coming into the United States, which just might prevent that suitcase nuke Washington and New York are waiting for). Let us hope Congress has the moral courage to tell both the PC/WSJ alliance and Woodrow II to stuff it.

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## On War #154

### Army Wins One

By William S. Lind

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If the Army's record against Navy in football has not been too encouraging in recent years, West Point has nonetheless scored a big upset in a contest that counts for rather more. West Point's Combating Terrorism Center, a project of the Military Academy's Department of Social Sciences, has just published one of the most thoughtful and potentially most useful papers anyone has written on the so-called "War on Terrorism." *Harmony and Disharmony: Exploiting al-Qa'ida's Organizational Vulnerabilities* – the title echoes John Boyd – offers a far more sophisticated approach to terrorism than the "kill or capture" method currently in vogue with the U.S. government.

The bulk of the paper is summaries of translations of some of al Qaida's own key documents, materials that allow other analysts to see al Qaida as it sees itself. As the study notes, "Any external assessment of al-Qa'ida's weaknesses will have inherent limitations. The Combating Terrorism Center at West Point believes an *internal* assessment – from actual members of the al-Qa'ida organization – is the best method to accurately assess their own true vulnerabilities." That is correct, and providing materials that offer such an internal assessment would alone make this a valuable paper.

But in fact *Harmony and Disharmony* does a great deal more. For the first time in any U.S. Army materials I have seen, it offers an approach to fighting al Qaida that might actually work. As the paper's authors state right up front, "Our analysis emphasizes that effective strategies to combat threats posed by al-Qa'ida will create and exacerbate schisms within its membership." In other words, instead of trying to win a jousting game al Qaida is too smart to play, we need to follow the old Roman rule, *divide et impera*.

The question, of course, is how to do this, and most of *Harmony and Disharmony* is devoted to answering this question. It does so in a variety of intelligent and imaginative ways. Working from the Fourth Generation war framework first laid out in the 1989 *Marine Corps Gazette* article, it offers an intellectual model for identifying exploitable fissures within al Qaida and similar Fourth Generation organizations. The paper accepts that al Qaida is a networked rather than a hierarchical organization, but instead of stopping where most such efforts do, with identifying the strengths of networked organizations, it goes on to probe their inherent weaknesses.

In doing so, *Harmony and Disharmony* notes that

The key insight is that terrorist groups, and other covert organizations, face two fundamental trade-offs. The first is between operational security and financial efficiency . . . The second trade-off is between operational security and tactical control . . . Strategies to mitigate these problems through greater control entail security costs for groups as a whole. . . There are strong theoretical reasons to believe these problems are inescapable for all terrorist groups; .

. .

As to how these inherent tensions in networked, Fourth Generation organizations might be exploited, the paper goes on to say,

The problems outlined above fall into the larger category of "agency problems." Such problems arise when three conditions exist: (1) a principal needs to delegate certain actions or decisions to an agent; (2) the principal can neither perfectly monitor the agent's actions, nor punish with certainty when a transgression is identified; and (3) the agent's preferences are not aligned with those of the principal. . . Understanding why groups face preference divergence, and when preference divergence creates operational challenges, facilitates government actions intended to exacerbate internal organizational problems of the terrorists.

After looking at how agency problems led the Muslim Brotherhood in Syria to fail, *Harmony and Disharmony* compares Zarqawi's Al-Qa'ida in Mesopotamia with its Syrian counterpart. It then goes on to an extremely valuable discussion of "Organizational Vulnerabilities and Recommendations to Exploit Them." Of critical importance, this discussion grasps that "kinetic solutions" are often the worst. For example, at one point the paper recommends that counter-terrorism forces

Refrain from actions that encourage preference alignment. Al-Qa'ida members who appear less committed should not necessarily be removed from the network if they can be reliably observed, even if they present easy targets. By leaving them in place, the probability that the group will identify agency problems and hence adopt security-reducing measures increases.

*Harmony and Disharmony* is too rich in substance for me to attempt to summarize it here. Let me instead just recommend that anyone and everyone who is seriously interested in 4GW get a copy and read it closely. The Combating Terrorism Center says the best way to obtain a copy is from their web site, [www.ctc.usma.edu](http://www.ctc.usma.edu).

My copy, of course, came from Zossen, in cipher, by telegraph, so there could be minor differences.

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## **On War #153**

### **Paking It In**

By William S. Lind

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The riots in Pakistan are hardly news anymore: if they appear in the paper at all, it is on page C17, between a story on starvation in the Sudan and a report that Mrs. McGillicuty fell down the stairs. The riots continue nonetheless, seemingly unconcerned that the rest of the world is no longer watching.

Perhaps it should. Periodic riots are normal in parts of the world; England was famous for them in the 18th century. But when rioting continues day after day, it can serve as a sort of thermometer, taking the temperature of a population. Pakistan, it would seem, is running a fever, one that shows little sign of breaking.

On the surface, the rioting is a protest against cartoons of Mohammed. Throughout the Islamic world, the anti-cartoon demonstrations are both an expression of rage at Islamic states' impotence and a demonstration of Islam's power outside the state framework. But in Pakistan, the immediate target of the riots is all too evident: Pakistani President Musharraf and his working relationship with America's President Bush (in Pakistan, Musharraf is often called Busharraf).

After 9/11, when Bush announced that anyone in the world who was not with us was with the terrorists, Musharraf had to make a strategic choice. He had to make it fast, since America wanted to attack Afghanistan, and it needed Pakistan's help to do so. Musharraf chose to ally with Bush. That choice has paid Pakistan dividends internationally, but at a price: Musharraf's legitimacy at home became dependent on the Pakistani people's view of America. In effect, Musharraf reincarnated himself as a political satellite of Bush.

Not surprisingly, America's popularity among Pakistanis was not helped by our invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq. The Taliban was largely a Pakistani creation, and its fall was not welcomed in Pakistan, especially when Afghanistan's American-installed President, Mr. Karzai, quickly cozied up to India.

Then, the strong American response to Pakistan's disastrous earthquake turned Pakistani opinion around. Only America really came through for the tens of thousands of people de-housed by the catastrophe, and other people noticed; when mullahs in radical mosques denounced the Americans, their congregations told them they were wrong.

Of course, America blew it in classic American fashion, with the Predator strike on homes in a Pakistani border town. As always, the target wasn't there, because, as always, we depended on intelligence from "systems" when only humint can do the job. The resulting Pakistani civilian deaths threw away all the good will we earned from the earthquake response and made America the Great Satan once more. Musharraf paid the political price.

If the riots continue and grow, the Pakistani security forces responsible for containing them will at some point go over and join the rioters. Musharraf will try to get the last plane out; perhaps he will find Texas a congenial place of exile. If he doesn't make that plane, his head will serve as a football, not just of the political variety.

A new Pakistani government, in quest of legitimacy, will understand that comes from opposing Bush's America, not getting in bed with it. Osama will be the new honorary President of Pakistan, de facto if not de jure. Our, and NATO's operation in Afghanistan will become strategically unsustainable overnight. That nice Mr. Karzai will, one hopes, find a seat on a C-17.

The fall of Pakistan to militant Islam will be a strategic disaster greater than anything possible in Iraq, even losing an army. It will be a greater disaster than a war with Iran that costs us our army in Iraq. Osama and Co. will have nukes, missiles to deliver them, the best conventional armed forces in the Moslem world and an impregnable base for operations anywhere else. As North Korea's Dear Leader has shown the world, nobody messes with you if you have nukes. Uncle Sam takes off his battle rattle and asks Beijing, or somebody, if they can possibly sponsor some talks.

That ticking sound Mr. Bush hears is not Mr. Cheney's pacemaker. It's the crocodile, and he's getting rather close.

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