

IF WE CAN KEEP IT

A National Security Manifesto for the Next Administration

CHET RICHARDS

We the People of
insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common Defence
and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution

Article I.

Section 1. All legislative Powers herein granted shall be vested in a Congress of the United States, which shall consist of a Senate and House of Representatives.

Section 2. The House of Representatives shall be composed of Members chosen every second Year by the People of the several States, and in each State shall have Qualifications requisite for Senators of the next numerous Branch of the next Legislature.

No Person shall be a Representative who shall not have attained to the Age of twenty five Years, and been seven Years a Citizen of the United States, and who shall not, when elected, be an Inhabitant of that State in which he shall be chosen.

Representatives and direct Taxes shall be apportioned among the several States which may be included within this Union, according to their respective Numbers, which shall be determined by adding to the whole Number of free Persons, including those bound to Service for a Term of Years, and including not taxed, three fifths of all other Persons. The actual Enumeration shall be made within three Years after the first Meeting of the Congress of the United States, and within every subsequent Term of ten Years, in such Manner as they shall by Law direct. The Number of Representatives shall not exceed one for every thirty thousand, but each State shall have at least one Representative; and until such Enumeration shall be made, the State of New Hampshire shall be entitled to three, Massachusetts eight, New York thirteen, and Pennsylvania six Representatives; and until such Enumeration shall be made, the State of New Hampshire shall be entitled to three, Massachusetts eight, New York thirteen, and Pennsylvania six Representatives; and until such Enumeration shall be made, the State of New Hampshire shall be entitled to three, Massachusetts eight, New York thirteen, and Pennsylvania six Representatives.

There shall be no Ex post facto Laws, nor Laws impairing the Obligation of Contracts, nor Laws which shall have the effect to retroactively annul Licenses or other Grants of Privileges or Immunities.

Section 3. The Senate of the United States shall be composed of two Senators from each State, chosen by the Legislature thereof, for six Years; and there shall be one from each State.

Immediately after they shall be assembled in Consequence of the first Election, they shall be divided as equally as may be into three Clauses; the first Clause shall have the Election of the second Year, the second Clause at the Expiration of the fourth Year, and the third Clause at the Expiration of the sixth Year, so that one third may be chosen every second Year; and if Vacancies happen by Resignation, or otherwise, the Senate of the United States may, in the Interval between such Elections, fill such Vacancies by their Choice, but they shall hold only until the next Election of the United States, which shall be on the first Monday in December, unless they appear a different Day.

No Person shall be a Senator who shall not have attained to the Age of thirty Years, and been seven Years a Citizen of the United States, and who shall not, when elected, be an Inhabitant of that State in which he shall be chosen.

The two thirds of the Senators elected shall be President of the Senate, but shall have no Vote, unless they be equally divided.

The Senate shall choose their other Officers, and also a President pro tempore, in the Absence of the President of the Senate, when he shall exercise the Powers of the United States.

The Senate shall have the sole Power to try all Impeachments. When sitting for that Purpose, they shall be on Oath or affirmation. The Oath or affirmation shall be administered by the President of the Senate. And no Person shall be convicted without the Concurrence of two thirds of the Members present. Judgment in Cases of Impeachment shall not extend further than to removal from Office, and disqualification to hold and enjoy any Office of Profit or Trust under the United States; but the Party convicted shall nevertheless be liable and subject to Indictment, Trial, Judgment, and Execution according to Law.

Section 4. The Times, Places and Manner of holding Elections for Senators and Representatives, shall be prescribed in each State by the Legislature thereof; but the Congress may at any time by Law make or alter such Regulations, except as to the Places of choosing Senators.

The Congress shall assemble at least once in every Year, and such Meeting shall be on the first Monday in December, unless they appear a different Day.

Section 5. Each House shall be the Judge of the Elections, Returns and Qualifications of its own Members, and a Majority of each shall constitute a Quorum to do Business, but a smaller Number may adjourn from day to day, and may be authorized to compel the Attendance of absent Members, and under such Penalties as each House may provide.

“If We Can Keep It” is the latest in the series of monographs sponsored by the Straus Military Reform Project of the World Security Institute’s Center for Defense Information. Unlike other publications now coming out on the Iraq War and the counterinsurgency campaign there, retired Air Force Col. Chet Richards rejects the notion that policy-makers can predict how well any such effort will work. The track record of military occupations in culturally and religiously alien lands in modern times is not good in terms of the end result for the occupier, the effects on the indigenous population, and the standing of the occupying nation and army in the eyes of the rest of the world. The next U.S. administration, whether Republican or Democrat, should not think that we have discovered, with the Pentagon’s counterinsurgency doctrine, an effective policy tool for reshaping the world, or even the rogue nations in it. Richards explores alternatives to the invade-occupy-fight paradigm and draws some surprising, important and instructive conclusions about what future forces and weapons should look like if America is to survive on its own terms in the world.

The views expressed in CDI publications are those of the authors.

World Security Institute’s
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1779 Massachusetts Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20036-2109

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for the Next Administration*

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THE WORLD SECURITY INSTITUTE'S
CENTER FOR DEFENSE INFORMATION

Washington, D.C.

January 2008

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many people helped with encouragement and suggestions. Bill Lind, Chuck Spinney, Greg Diorio, Ginger Richards, and Fabius Maximus read the various drafts of the manuscript and their suggestions were invaluable (their suggestions were not always taken, so any errors are mine alone). Theresa Hitchens, the director of the Center for Defense Information, kept the project moving and her suggestions for the final draft improved it considerably. I would also like to thank Deniz Ozdemir at CDI for enduring my complaints about formatting and producing a truly professional product. Jeannine Addams, owner of J. Addams & Partners in Atlanta, generously provided facilities for much of the writing, and Kristin Wohlleben at J. Addams created the layout for the cover. Finally, Winslow Wheeler, who runs the Straus Military Reform Project at CDI, was the indispensable man. As the publisher of this book, his support, encouragement, feedback, and constant cajoling were the only reason this project reached fruition.

PREFACE

In early 2001, after I had finished a piece on the defense industry for CDI, the project officer, Marcus Corbin, suggested that I do a monograph on “something unusual, like, what if Sun Tzu and John Boyd did a national defense review?” I thought it was the dumbest idea I had ever heard, but this was right in the middle of the second Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) process, and Marcus was persuasive, so the result was *A Swift, Elusive Sword*. Its big idea was that since something called “maneuver warfare” was the best way to fight conventional wars, the United States should optimize around forces for that capability and eliminate everything else – essentially keep the Marine Corps and the special operators, like U.S. Army Special Forces and Navy SEALs, and retire the rest of the Army and most of the Navy and Air Force.

About three months after *Sword* was published, Sept. 11 hit and then a couple of years later, we invaded Iraq. As I had predicted, our maneuver warfare forces sliced through their Third World opponents with minor losses and Baghdad soon fell (a best-selling account of that campaign was not entitled “Invasion of Iraq” or “The Battle of Baghdad,” but simply “The March Up”). Then what happened was what everyone who could find Iraq on a map had predicted would happen: The local population began to resist this foreign, Christian, Israel-allied army of occupation. Sometime around the middle of 2005, Winslow Wheeler, who runs the Straus Military Reform Project, suggested taking a relook at the conclusions in *Sword* in light of the events of the preceding two years.

The military conclusions did not change – our forces will still penetrate and destroy any Third World army that stands and fights. The big question, though, was “What next?” and for this there were two schools of thought. One, popular with those who had supported the initial invasion, was that it is possible to occupy and rebuild countries in the developing world, but we just botched it. Probably the most eloquent proponent of this position is Tom Barnett, who criticized the administration for grossly underfunding and undermanning the reconstruction effort. On the other hand, there were a lot of people, of whom Bill Lind is probably the best known, who advocated avoiding any significant incursions into developing countries because we don’t know how to rebuild them once we’ve destroyed them. The book that emerged in early 2006, *Neither Shall the Sword*, sort of came down on Lind’s side, but did not take his strong position against virtually any contact with lesser-developed countries. On the question of force structure, it made a case for privatizing much of our current military establishment in order to unleash the creativity of competition.

By the middle of 2007, “counterinsurgency” theory had become all the rage and a panacea for all our global ills. The problem is that when you look at the data, there were only a couple of cases where outsiders had applied it effectively since the end of WW II — Malaya and Northern Ireland — and those two differed in many ways, both from each other and from any situation we were likely to encounter. This book describes what seems to me like a better approach: Rely more strongly on our non-military strengths and our alliances to ensure that we don’t go occupying other countries in the first place. At the same time, there are a few things back home that we need to fix, and by so doing we will improve our strength as a nation.

Chet Richards
Atlanta, Georgia
December 17, 2007

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Executive Summary

After five years, our defense establishment has suffered some 4,000 fatal casualties, forced the Army into offering enlistment bonuses of \$40,000 to raw recruits, begun a program of buying armored jeeps that cost a million dollars each, and run up a generational spending obligation that will likely top two trillion dollars.

We did all this not while engaging some worthy foe armed with tanks, missiles and aircraft similar to ours, nor while contending with massed armies of skilled troops on fields of battle. No, we incurred these costs while trying to suppress resistance to our occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan, resistance by lightly armed civilians and poorly equipped militias.

For our efforts, we will obtain *at best* an Iraq that is worse off than it was before our invasion. As such, it will be a breeding ground of resentment against American interests for as long into the future as we can imagine. At worst, our withdrawal from Iraq could result in hundreds, possibly thousands, of additional American casualties, the permanent loss of billions of dollars of equipment, and the emergence of powerful and determined entities allied with Iran in the case of the Shiites, and in the case of the Arab Sunni population, with the most regressive political and religious forces in the Middle East.

How we got ourselves into this isn't the subject here. Each circumstance is unique, and what we might have done differently in Iraq, even if we could somehow prove that it would have led to more favorable outcomes, would be of limited use elsewhere. Similarly, how we might avoid failure in the next

incursion — by, for example, following Army's and Marine Corps's new Counterinsurgency Manual — is nothing more than speculation. Some ideas might work, but the record of foreign occupations since the end of WW II is dismal indeed, and each of the instigators were confident that they had the formula for success.

A better path, argued here, is to refashion our entire approach to foreign policy, and in particular, our use of force to solve problems in the developing world. As a first principle, the temptation to invade and occupy other countries should not arise. If we can do that, and still achieve our national goals, then we don't have to worry about how to conduct occupations without suffering the fates of practically all occupiers in recent times.

This book proposes an approach along two paths:

First, base our conduct of international affairs around a robust *grand strategy*. Grand strategy is the art of making more friends and allies than enemies. Grand strategy is why Hitler lost World War II — many more people were willing to fight him than wanted to join him.

Second, dismantle the Department of Defense (DOD) and create a new structure to fund and train military forces that would be consistent with an effective grand strategy. Today's DOD and its budget have grown beyond any useful or appropriate size, and the system has evolved over the years to ensure its growth is immune to reform. To illustrate: This is a system that consumes almost three-quarters of a trillion dollars every year — more in constant dollars than at any time since the end of WW II — yet there is no military threat to speak of. The system has strong bipartisan support, and as this book is being written, the leading presidential candidates of both parties are promising to spend even larger sums.

If the next administration is to go down in history as recovering from the mistakes of the early 21st century and setting the nation back on the path to prosperity and improved standards of living for the vast majority of our citizens, then it must make progress in these two areas. We cannot go on creating more enemies, year after year, than we can handle, and we cannot pretend that we have unlimited resources to spend on military forces designed to defeat armored Red hordes on the plains of Europe and which have proven of little use elsewhere.

To put defense spending in perspective, if we could refund three quarters of a trillion dollars to the taxpayers, we would put \$6,000 back into the pocket

of every household that filed a tax return for 2005. And, we would be doing that every year as far into the future as the budget-eye can see, and it would grow 10 percent or more each year, just as the defense budget has for the last several years.

While eliminating the entire defense budget is not realistic, you can get an idea of what is by looking at what we spend on the Marine Corps. This force, which exceeds the capability of any opponent we might confront (i.e., excluding major nuclear powers and U.S. allies), costs about \$30 billion per year. The Marine Corps budget, in fact, exceeds the combined military budgets of all the members of the “axis of evil” plus all the countries of the Middle East that are not U.S. allies. Although the Marine Corps by itself would not constitute a complete Department of Defense — because it would require additional ships and aircraft to move and support it and there are some missions, such as nuclear deterrence, anti-piracy and some special missions, that it cannot perform — it lends credence to the idea that a budget in the \$100 billion to \$150 billion range could be both reasonable and effective. And, it would still be the largest national defense budget in the world — by a long shot.

Reducing the defense budget to rational proportions does not mean that we withdraw to our North American sanctuary and hope for the best. It does mean that we work to grow the family of nations that share a common view of security and place a high value on trade and other interactions with each other, a family that political scientist Thomas P. M. Barnett called the “functioning core.” And it means that we contain the dangers offered by the rest of the world — states and non-states — through means appropriate to the danger they represent.

Our everyday tools for this purpose include intelligence, law enforcement, trade, personal interaction (tourism, student exchanges, etc.) and diplomacy. Can military force be ruled out? Of course not. On rare occasions, the core nations acting in concert may supplement these “soft” means with military actions that are — and are seen to be — unavoidable, rapid, daring and successful.

Introduction

The story is told that in September 1787, when Ben Franklin was leaving the Constitutional Convention to which he had been a delegate from Pennsylvania, a group of citizens approached him and asked of the form of government the Convention had proposed.

“A republic,” Franklin is supposed to have answered, “if you can keep it.”

In our attempts to deal with the problems of the early 21st century, Americans have acquired three convictions, akin to religious dogma, that are shaping both our national objectives and how we pursue those objectives. The purpose of this book is to explain why all three are false and so are dangerous. Near the end, I offer advice for the administration that will take office in January 2009 not so much for fixing our current problems but for making changes to ensure that we do not find ourselves in situations like Iraq again.

Three national myths

The first is that “terrorism” poses the most serious threat to our survival and our way of life. In fact, the physical damage that terrorism does is small compared to other threats to our national well-being. The greatest threat of “terrorism” is the damage we do to ourselves in sincere but misguided attempts to deal with it.

The second national misperception is that the United States still requires a defense establishment whose cost exceeds not just that of the next most powerful nation or of the next three, but of all the rest of the world, combined. Most of this expense goes into conventional (non-nuclear) forces that are no longer needed or even useful because nuclear weapons have made conventional wars between major powers impossible. States that are not nuclear powers, on the other hand, are either U.S. allies or are far too weak to pose any kind of military threat, and our attempts to use military force against *non-state* op-

ponents, such as the “terrorists” mentioned in the previous paragraph, have not proven particularly successful.

The third, and perhaps the most dangerous because it seduces many of us into thinking that we can make military force into a normal tool of policy, is the notion of counterinsurgency theory. The problem is not that insurgencies cannot be defeated but that proponents of this theory sometimes fail to distinguish between different meanings of the term “insurgency.” Several observers, recognizing this limitation, have proposed classifications: Biddle distinguishes between “people’s wars,” where groups try to overthrow the government, and “communal civil wars,” in which ethnic or religious communities are fighting to avoid genocide.¹ Metz classifies insurgencies based upon whether a legitimate government exists or can be created.² These are both valuable and help explain why some insurgencies succeed where others do not.

The present work, however, is concerned with the specific question of when foreign, particularly U.S., troops could be effective in ending insurgencies. “Fabius Maximus”³ proposed a differentiation of insurgency types that addresses this issue, and this book adopts his scheme:

- ▶ **Classical insurgency:** a revolution, in other words, in which a sizable fraction of the population opposes what they consider to be an illegitimate or oppressive government, as the American colonies did in 1776-1781. The goal of the insurgent groups may be either to take control of the central government or to achieve independence for a portion of the population.
- ▶ **War of national liberation:** in which a sizable fraction of the people in a country throws out an occupying foreign power, as Vietnam did to us in 1965-1975.

When people claim that counterinsurgency is feasible, the examples they

1 Stephen Biddle, “Seeing Baghdad, Thinking Saigon,” *Foreign Affairs* 85, no. 2 (March/April 2006).

2 Steven Metz, *Rethinking Insurgency* (Carlisle, Pa.: Strategic Studies Institute, United States War College, 2007).

3 Fabius Maximus, “Why we lose,” Part four of a series about the U.S. expedition to the Middle East, January 4, 2007, http://www.d-n-i.net/fcs/fabius_iraq_series_2006_part_IV.htm.

offer are generally of the first type, and history does show that governments can often defeat or defuse insurgencies in their own countries.

Problems arise when trying to suppress groups that oppose occupation by foreign troops. If future administrations continue to view military force as a tool of policy, we will again find ourselves in this second type of insurgency. Unfortunately, the historical record suggests that occupations are difficult to maintain because the conditions for applying classical counterinsurgency theory — such as gaining the support of the population — are virtually impossible for an occupier to achieve. Even the use of outside military forces to support an endangered local government is risky and succeeds for the most part in those cases where insurgency is not defeated so much as avoided.⁴ Chapter IV will examine this problem in detail.

Recommendations

The next administration should focus on reclaiming the heritage that made this country great. It should fix the flaws in our national system — in particular, the self-inflicted wounds of the ill-conceived “war on terrorism” — and, where the Department of Defense is concerned, redirect our national resources into uses more productive for our well-being than forces designed to defeat the Soviet Union. As the legacy forces stand down, the Department of Defense can be downsized to the current U.S. Marine Corps plus special operations forces and the naval and tactical air forces required to support them. This force structure would be more than adequate to deal with any military threat. Concerning strategic — nuclear — forces, 10,000 weapons are more than we need to preserve the proven doctrine of mutually assured destruction.⁵ Some reduction in this arsenal is clearly feasible.

Such a reordering of priorities towards our real problems implies a restructuring of the federal government. We should immediately disband the terrorism bureaucracy, particularly the Transportation Security Administration and its parent, the Department of Homeland Security, and should review the roles and functions of the other agencies and departments.

Over time, as the Defense Department assumes its natural size, as has

4 Patricia Sullivan, “War aims and war outcomes: Why powerful states lose limited wars,” *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 51, no. 3: 496-524.

5 Bruce Blair, “New Project to Eliminate Nuclear Weapons,” *The Defense Monitor* XXXVI, no. 3 (May/June 2007): 8-9.

already happened with most of our European allies,⁶ intelligence will assume a more important function. Although military operations in the future will be rare, our friends and allies must perceive them as justified, and when they do occur, they must be rapid, daring and successful. Achieving this standard requires a step-function improvement in the integration of intelligence, diplomacy and operations, so it will make sense to consolidate these functions in a single body where the controlling function is intelligence.

A new direction

This book aims for a modest goal, to describe and make palatable a direction for national security policy that will not only provide as much security as military forces can — most things that threaten our quality of life, such as decaying infrastructure, deteriorating public health, narcotics and the crime that accompanies their distribution, and persistent budget and trade deficits — are not amenable to solutions by military force. To illustrate this direction, I have included recommendations that should be taken in just that spirit, to illustrate the possibilities and differentiate my direction from the status quo.

My model is the famous “Long Telegram” written by a senior American diplomat, George Kennan, in 1946 from his vantage point in Moscow. In it, Kennan made the case that communism suffered from such incurable internal contradictions that if the West could just contain it long enough — not doing anything really stupid in the meantime — it would collapse of its own accord. And so it came to pass.

My advice on implementation, then, is conceptually the same as Kennan’s:

Finally we must have courage and self-confidence to cling to our own methods and conceptions of human society. After all, the greatest danger that can befall us in coping with this problem of Soviet communism is that we shall allow ourselves to become like those with whom we are coping.⁷

Ultimately, implementation can only be done by the American people, and

6 Andrew J. Bacevich, *The New American Militarism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005).

7 George Kennan, Telegram from the chargé in the Soviet Union (Kennan) to the U.S. secretary of state, February 22, 1946, <http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/coldwar/documents/episode-1/kennan.htm>.

the first thing we must do is stop voting for demagogues — few of whom have served in the military — who puff out their chests, pound the podium, and spit out tough guy slogans. Otherwise, we will elect our democracy right out of existence. Unfortunately, this is not an uncommon fate for representative governments, from Rome to Revolutionary France to Italy in 1922 and Germany in 1933.

A note on “terrorism”

I use the word “terrorism,” *faute de mieux*. As far as I know, there are no true terrorist groups operating in the world today. These would be organizations in the business of killing civilians, presumably for fun or profit. All so-called terrorist groups have other aims, ranging from crime to national, ethnic, or religious liberation. They all kill innocent people from time to time, as do state militaries, but they use the violence to serve their primary purposes. Lumping them together as “terrorists” is a form of mental laziness, and failure to think clearly about their various purposes will not serve us well.⁸

8 Research does indicate that there is a tendency not to observe if the consequences could be negative. Labeling, a common resort in such situations, often makes the problem appear simpler but ultimately makes it more difficult to solve. See, for example, Dietrich Dörner, *The Logic of Failure: Recognizing and Avoiding Error in Complex Situations* (Reading, Mass: Perseus Books Group, 1997) esp. pages 55 and 178-9.

I: Is This The Post-Iraq Era?

The concept “of prolonged, irregular campaigns — whatever the level of combat intensity or security cooperation it might be — does appear to be out there in the future.”

— Ryan Henry, Principle Deputy
Undersecretary of Defense for Policy, April 2007.

Looking back on the events of the past 40 years, one can see a pattern: Vietnam, Beirut, Mogadishu, now Iraq, and it appears increasingly likely, Afghanistan. A trend is beginning to emerge wherein application of military force in order to drive events in another country produces something other than the desired outcome. As you can see from the above quote, we do not seem to be learning from these events, but instead appear to have developed a national case of gambling addiction. We keep losing and losing, but on the next roll, we're going to win it all back.

This book is not an effort to dissect the military disasters of the last generation but rather offers an examination of what the next administration could do to break the pattern. It is based on the idea that given such a string of reverses against enemies that our military establishment expected to defeat quickly and simply, there must be underlying causes more fundamental than failure to learn a military lesson or execute some point of doctrine. What could cause the mightiest military power of all times, one that outspends the rest of the world, combined, to fail? And what can we do to change this situation?

Pre post-Iraq

Although the subject of this book is the post-Iraq era, at the time it is written, we are still very much in the Iraq period. At least three aspects of that conflict will have strong impact on the next administration.

Money

The first of these is financial. Appropriations for the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan through the end of fiscal year 2008, which began on Oct. 1, 2007, exceed \$750 billion. There are those who predict a military involvement for the United States in Iraq for decades,⁹ and even the leading candidates from the Democratic Party have been vague on exactly when they would end the occupation.¹⁰ One can safely predict, therefore, that the war's total costs will exceed \$1 trillion, and it could be much more.

As expensive as the war ultimately turns out to be, its cost will not end with the fighting, even if the new administration were to order an immediate and total withdrawal. Every dollar we spend on the war casts a shadow composed of the costs of replacing the equipment destroyed and healing the people injured. The National Guard is already warning that it will need \$21 billion to replace what it lost, and the active forces are using the phrase "death spiral" to describe a conflict that has gone through more than 40 percent of their equipment.¹¹ And nobody yet has, nor until the fighting ends can give, a final cost for treating service members who suffer from debilitating injuries. Professor Linda Bilmes of the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard has estimated that the cost could ultimately reach \$700 billion dollars, which is a sizable fraction of the cost of the war itself.¹²

Equipment

Early in its tenure, the next administration will confront the question of how to retrieve as much as or our equipment as possible from Iraq. The dimensions

9 John Philip Abizaid and Sarah Sewall, "The Long War," transcript from a speech at Harvard University, November 17, 2006, http://www.iop.harvard.edu/pdfs/transcripts/abizaid_11.17.06.pdf; Thomas Ricks, "Military Envisions Longer Stay in Iraq," *Washington Post*, June 10, 2007.

10 Matthew Yglesias, "The War's End," *TheAtlantic.com*, June 12, 2007, http://matthewyglesias.theatlantic.com/archives/2007/06/the_wars_end.php; Andrew Bacevich, "More Troops, More Troubles," *Los Angeles Times*, June 18, 2007, <http://www.latimes.com/news/opinion/la-oe-bacevich18jun18,0,7510324.story?coll=la-opinion-center>.

11 Ann Scott Tyson, "Military Is Ill-prepared For Other Conflicts," *Washington Post*, March 19, 2007.

12 Linda Bilmes and Joseph Stiglitz, "The economic costs of war: An appraisal three years after the beginning of the conflict," National Bureau of Economic Research, February 2006; Brad Knickerbocker, "Wounded Troops Overwhelm Care," *The Christian Science Monitor*, October 22, 2007, <http://www.csmonitor.com/2007/1022/p01s06-usmi.html>

of this problem defy comprehension — at first blush, one might expect that departing soldiers would just pick up their stuff and drive out with it. This they will, for personal items, some ammunition, and light equipment that can be loaded on trucks or towed behind them. But the United States has also built up a huge inventory of equipment too large and/or too heavy for troops to lug back. In addition to driving out 1,000 tanks and 20,000 Humvees, departing forces will have to crate or wrap and ship more than 300,000 other pieces of large and expensive equipment.¹³

The Department of Defense estimates that even an emergency evacuation could take 20 months,¹⁴ probably under increasingly violent attack by insurgent groups that smell victory or want their share of the spoils. A considerable amount of our equipment may have to be abandoned in Iraq or destroyed so that it does not fall into the hands of potentially hostile organizations, and repairs to remove the sand — and fix the damage it has caused — from sophisticated engines and electronics will take years to complete.¹⁵

The financial obligations, however painful, are temporary and should not affect the aims of national security policy, although debt accumulated from the war will make it more difficult to implement policies that require much spending and could add to the stresses on the international financial system.

Neighbors

Increasing external involvement in Iraq, though, could pose immediate policy dilemmas for the next administration. Iraq is surrounded by states, particularly Turkey, Saudi Arabia, and Iran, that have reasons to intervene in Iraqi affairs and who have relationships with the United States that range from treaty obligations to hostility. The longer that the conflict drags on, the more complex these relationships will become and, in particular, the greater the strain on our alliance system. If Turkey, for example, a NATO ally, has begun large-scale operations in northern Iraq, escalating from the occasional

13 Arnaud de Borchgrave, "Iraq exit logistics," *The Washington Times*, October 7, 2007.

14 Ibid.

15 Martin van Creveld, "The Fall: Consequences of U.S. Withdrawal From Iraq," *New Perspectives Quarterly* 24, no. 1 (Winter 2007). William Lind also raises the possibility of a retreat under fire in "Operation Anabasis," *Defense and the National Interest*, March 27, 2007, http://www.d-n-i.net/lind/lind_3_29_07.htm. A withdrawal under contact is one of the most difficult of military operations.

incursions they already conduct,¹⁶ the next administration may have to make difficult choices about how much emphasis to place on the existing alliance structure. How should the administration respond, for example, if the Iraqi government makes a public and official plea for help in repelling this foreign invader?

Spillover

A third aspect of Iraq that will linger on in policy discussions concerns the effect of the fighting on the wider world situation, the “spillover” as Byman and Pollack¹⁷ term it. The civil war in Iraq has given a new lease on life to al-Qaida and to violent ideological groups based in the Middle East. As veterans of the conflict return to their home countries or spread to other Muslim lands, they provide a recruiting and training cadre for promulgating their struggle, and there are indications that al-Qaida has made significant progress in reestablishing its infrastructure in northern Pakistan and southern Afghanistan.¹⁸ It is possible to make too much of this — the problem is weak or illegitimate local governments that cannot contain the what are in reality criminal gangs with an ideological veneer — but for a while, the potential for violence will increase.

The United States in the post-Iraq world

Some commentators have concluded that unfavorable results in Iraq would mean a loss of American exceptionalism. By this they usually mean a form of the emperor’s new clothes fairy tale, where the clothes were our status as the world’s last remaining superpower or the only “global hegemon.”¹⁹ The idea that the United States could stride the globe working its will on evil-doers,

16 Michael Howard, “Turkey Warns of Plans to Invade Northern Iraq,” *The Guardian*, June 30, 2007, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/international/story/0,,2115272,00.html>.

17 Daniel L. Byman and Kenneth M. Pollack, “Things fall apart: Containing the spillover from an Iraq civil war,” Analysis Paper No. 11, Saban Center for Middle East Policy, Brookings Institution, January 2007, http://media.brookings.edu/MediaArchive/fp/jan2007iraq_civilwar.pdf.

18 Yassin Musharbash, “Al-Qaida Reloaded: Five years after 9/11, Bin Laden’s network is back,” *Spiegel*, April 12, 2007, <http://www.spiegel.de/international/world/0,1518,476324,00.html>; Declan Walsh, “Pakistan’s soldiers ‘huddling in the bases’ in tribal regions,” *The Guardian*, June 16, 2007.

19 Colin S. Gray, *Transformation and Strategic Surprise* (Carlisle, Pa.: Strategic Studies Institute, United States War College, 2005).

however we defined them, was never realistic. While it is true that the United States outspends the rest of the world put together on military matters, it is not true that we are stronger than the rest of the world put together. So, if “exceptional” meant “invincible,” then the myth, which was always somewhat silly, of American exceptionalism has already been fatally damaged.

However, in a larger sense, the United States is exceptional:

- ▶ one of only two large republics continually in existence for more than 100 years. With the exception of the United Kingdom, which is one-fifth the size of the United States, the large democracies of Western Europe date from the end of WW II (counting French democracy as restarting with the Fourth Republic in 1946);
- ▶ an exception to the rule that population growth rate falls off as wealth increases. The U.S. population is growing at about 1 percent per year, while Japan’s rate, for example, is less than 0.5 percent, and Germany’s and the United Kingdom’s are less than 0.33 percent.²⁰ Of the rich democracies of the world, only New Zealand (population 4 million) and Israel (6.4 million) have higher growth rates;²¹
- ▶ by far the most overtly religious of the major industrialized states;
- ▶ the only large state that feels it has a mandate to spread its philosophy of life (“democracy”), a trait we share with some of our non-state “terrorist” opponents; and
- ▶ the only entity that has ever used nuclear weapons.

It is easy to understand, after looking over this list, why states and non-states alike might feel threatened, especially when America’s leaders act as if they have a right to pursue their goals:

[B]y means of internationally illegal, unilateralist, and preemptive attacks on other countries, accompanied by arbitrary imprisonments and the practice of torture, and

20 The World Bank Group, “Population Growth Rate,” 2001, <http://www.worldbank.org/depweb/english/modules/social/pgr/data.html>.

21 NationMaster, “Population Growth Rate by Country,” 2007, http://www.nationmaster.com/graph/peo_pop_gro_rat-people-population-growth-rate.

by making the claim that the United States possesses an exceptional status among nations that confers upon it special international responsibilities, and exceptional privileges in meeting those responsibilities.²²

One policy alternative, therefore, for the new administration might be to try to downplay these elements, in hopes of not alienating our friends and not manufacturing more animosity than we absolutely need. Such a policy would be unnecessary, though, because exceptionalism can be inclusive, once the counterproductive and jingoistic aspects are abandoned. No society has the answer to universal happiness, and so arguments can also be made for Russian exceptionalism and Chinese exceptionalism and German exceptionalism.

The only thing we have to fear ...

There is a widening perception that no matter what happens from this time on in Iraq, the United States has lost.²³ When the strongest power in the world takes on one of the weakest and the conflict drags on for four years (as of this writing), it is easy to see how people could get that idea. But they are wrong. The military phase of that conflict was over in a few weeks, that is, our forces beat the “power” that we took on and did it quickly and surgically. “Power” appears in quotes because as a conventional military force, Saddam’s Iraq was on life support: It never had much capability against a modern military, and it had been decimated first by the 1991 Gulf War and then by the dozen years of sanctions. After the military phase, however, something strange happened, what political scientist Tom Barnett presciently called “Blackhawk Down: The Series” when he was enumerating possible outcomes for our Iraqi incursion.²⁴

Because things don’t seem to be improving, no matter how hard we try, the next administration will inherit an environment of increasing fear on behalf of the American public. If we spent a trillion dollars to protect ourselves from terrorism, and it didn’t protect us from terrorism, then what will? A national atmosphere of fear and frustration will be one of the most significant facts of life for the new administration in its early days. It has already led to the

22 William Pfaff, “Manifest Destiny: A New Direction for America,” *New York Review of Books* 54, no. 2 (February 15, 2007).

23 Anthony Cordesman, “The New Strategy in Iraq: Uncertain Progress Towards an Uncertain Goal,” Center for Strategic and International Studies, March 14, 2007.

24 Thomas Barnett, *The Pentagon’s New Map* (New York: Putnam, 2004).

weakening of our own democracy in an attempt to bolster security, and as a result, we now have less of both.²⁵ Reversing this trend through logic, deed, and moral leadership will be the most important national security task for the next several administrations.

What's not different?

When we woke up in April 1975 after our decade-long nightmare of Vietnam, everything seemed about the same: The Soviet Union still threatened nuclear holocaust or at least blitzkrieg against Western Europe, communist China was still in the shadow of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, and Arabs were still fighting Israelis.

What could not be appreciated at the time was that many important things had changed. China, in particular, had split from the monolithic communist bloc led by the Soviet Union and was taking its first steps that would lead to frenetic capitalism, and the USSR itself had entered a terminal phase that would end in its peaceful demise a mere 15 years later.

The same situation holds today. We can speculate on what has changed in the last five years, which will be nearly six when the next administration is inaugurated, but we have no way of knowing what will prove to be important. So, let's not worry about it. It's like flying, or controlling any other large system that is subject to perturbations. When you run into turbulence, you don't fight every gust. Instead, you try to keep the plane on an even attitude and heading in the right direction.

25 For descriptions of how this fear affects the lives of ordinary Americans, see Robert Fisk, "The crushing fear that stalks America," *The Independent*, March 24, 2007.

II: The World After Iraq

The world after our occupation of Iraq will see the continuation of a long list of trends since the decline of the Soviet Union became apparent in the late-1980s. Table I, below, shows one such list:²⁶

Table I: What's new in the world

- **explosion in drug trafficking**, with associated money flows and corruption to the extent that trafficking organizations are the de facto governments in a growing number of areas
- **worsening income inequities** combined with a general decline in standards of living in many developing countries, particularly in Africa and Central/South America
- continued exponential **increase in the world population**
- a **growing "demographic youth bulge"** in developing countries, and even among minorities in Western nations, composed increasingly of youths who are difficult to employ and who may easily turn to violence²⁷
- **escalating sectarian violence** as evangelizing religions (Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, etc.) clash over influence in developing countries
- **survival of non-representative governments** in the developing world that use religious and ethnic animosities and anti-American sentiments to distract from their own corruption and economic mismanagement
- **insertion and maintenance of the American Army**, consisting largely of Christians and regarded by locals as allies of Israel, into the heart of the Muslim Middle East

26 This is the enumeration of global trends that I maintain on my website, *Defense and the National Interest*, <http://www.d-n-i.net>. It's one thing to agree that "yes, the world has changed," and another to actually write out the changes. Readers should give this a try before going on.

27 The theory of potential consequences from a demographic youth bulge among minorities in Europe is, perhaps, most closely associated with the German sociologist Gunnar Heinsohn. For a summary of his views, see Lars Hedegaard, "Interview: A continent of losers," Sappho (Denmark), <http://www.sappho.dk/Nr.%206%20maj%202007/kontinent-english.html>.

Table I: What's new in the world (continued)

-
- **accelerating AIDS epidemic** in parts of the developing world (example: ~30 percent of adults in Botswana are HIV-positive)
 - **rise of mega-cities** in developing countries with populations exceeding 20 million
 - **growth of worldwide connectivity** (CNN and the Internet, for example)
 - **ease of global transportation** (24 hours between any two points)
 - **increasing scarcity of arable land and water:** By next year, according to a study by the international consulting firm Deloitte & Touche, more than a billion people will lack access to clean water,²⁸
 - **increasing world demand for petroleum** as China and India increase their consumption and the growing realization that oil production may be near its peak
 - **disintegration of the Soviet Union** and continued instability in that region
 - **end of the bipolar world order** and of the interpretation of events through a Cold War filter
 - **ready availability of small arms** and other weapons from the end of the Cold War
 - **growing use of pre-adolescent children as combatants**
 - **resurgence of violent ethnic and ideological groups** (e.g., Rwandan Interahamwe, and of course al-Qaida), which are becoming increasingly transnational
 - **safe havens for these groups** in areas of Africa, Asia and South America where any effective government (even if corrupt and incompetent) is lacking
 - **beginning of cooperation** between transnational ideological groups and traditional criminal organizations such as narcotics trafficking cartels
 - **continued growth in wealth and influence** of multinational corporations that sometimes have incentives to perpetuate corrupt, non-democratic regimes
 - **creation of large and effective private military** companies that recruit from elite military units
-

The changes in the world and the interactions among these changes form a complex and hence fundamentally unpredictable system. We cannot manage such a system. Instead we are one of many players at the table, and we have more influence than the other players in some areas, but less in others. One area where our ability to influence events seems to be fading is in the use of conventional (that is, non-nuclear) military forces. This may seem odd, because the United States remains the only country in the world that still develops and fields the most high-technology weapon systems — stealth fighters, nuclear-powered submarines and aircraft carriers, and land warfare

28 Richard Wachman, "Water becomes the new oil as world runs dry," *The Observer*, December 9, 2007.

systems so futuristic that we don't even have names for them yet, just calling them "future combat systems."²⁹

But the problem is not in the developing and deploying of such weapons. It is the effect, or lack of effect, that their use has on other players. In other words, the United States still hold the cards, but they are no longer trumps. In fact, for most purposes, they are no longer even face cards. There are two reasons for this, one at the high end of the spectrum of military activity and the other at the very lowest. At the high end, the issue is the invention and subsequent proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

The only real WMDs are nukes

There is one and only one category of weapons that deserves the category "mass destruction:" nuclear weapons. What about chemical and biological weapons? Aren't they also WMDs?

No, they are not. Chemical weapons were originally proposed as a humane alternative to massed artillery, it being thought better to die quietly in your sleep than be torn to bits by shards of red hot metal. Although death by real chemical weapons was often protracted and painful — drowning in one's own fluids, for example — relatively few soldiers suffered it. Of the perhaps 10 million soldiers on all sides killed in World War I, estimates of fatalities from chemical weapons range from 50,000 to 100,000.³⁰ They have been even less effective as terrorist devices. When the Japanese cult Aum Shinrikyo set off five simultaneous attacks against the sardine-like Tokyo subway system — presumably one of the world's best targets for chemical weapons — on March 20, 1995, they killed a grand total of 12 people.³¹ Although they employed sarin gas, a proven chemical agent, they could have killed many times that number with hand grenades or AK-47s.

It is not that chemicals cannot kill — they can be quite effective against unprotected people who can be confined in an area while sufficient agent is

29 Jack Smith, "The Next War and The Next, Part 1: The futuristic battlefield," *Asia Times Online*, March 9, 2007, http://www.atimes.com/atimes/Front_Page/IC09Aa01.html. Russia inherited much of the Soviet Union's ability to design advanced weaponry. It has not developed the manufacturing infrastructure, however, to produce high-tech weapons in quantity.

30 For a discussion, see Brian Blodgett, "Germany's Use of Chemical Warfare in World War 1," *First World War.com*, August 11, 2001, http://www.firstworldwar.com/features/chemical_warfare.htm.

31 Kyle Olson, "Aum Shrinrikyo: Once and Future Threat?" *Emerging Infectious Diseases* 5, no. 4 (July-August 1999): 513-516.

introduced — gas chambers such as those used by the Nazis — or against civilians unaware of the threat who can be subjected to multiple attacks, such as those in the Kurdish town of Halabja. But this doesn't qualify chemicals as weapons of mass destruction any more than it does water, which can have much the same effect if used under similar conditions. The Royal Air Force's raid against the Ruhr dams on May 16, 1943, for example, drowned approximately 1,300 civilians.³²

A different argument can be made against considering biological devices as WMDs. Unlike chemicals, biological agents have a proven ability to kill a lot of people. Jared Diamond³³ estimates that some 95 percent of the indigenous population of North and South America were eliminated by smallpox and other diseases for which the Indians had limited immunity. Without this inadvertent use of biological agents, the European conquest and occupation of these continents would have been impossible, as one can see by contrasting the conquest of the Americas with the unsuccessful occupations of Africa and Asia.

The problem with biological agents lies in converting them into useful weapons, in particular, into systems that kill the enemy but not one's own people. How, in other words, does one aim a biological "weapon?" Accidents of pre-history solved this problem for the Europeans, as Diamond describes, but it would be much harder today. The great Spanish Influenza pandemic of 1918 and 1919 killed upward of 40 million people worldwide, which was more than died in the Great War itself. It also killed more soldiers than died by enemy action, thereby proving the raw effectiveness of biologicals. But once the epidemic got rolling, it quickly spread all around the globe including to the United States, where it killed 675,000 people.³⁴

Creating an effective biological device, however, is not as simple as unleashing new germs. Of the myriads of species of viruses and bacteria in the world — you have more than 600 species of bacteria on your teeth every

32 M. Gilligan, "Does the Dambusters Raid Deserve its Growing Reputation as Operationally Daring but Strategically Futile?" *Royal Air Force Airpower Review* 9, no. 1: 36.

33 Jared Diamond, *Guns, Germs and Steel* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1999).

34 Molly Billings, "The Influenza Pandemic of 1918," Stanford University, June 1997, <http://virus.stanford.edu/uda/>.

morning³⁵— it is extremely rare that one mutates into a form that causes a pandemic (otherwise our own species would have been long extinct). There are also technical problems: The organisms may not survive in the wild or may mutate to a form that is not contagious or dangerous or may propagate so slowly that effective treatments or vaccines can be developed. Quarantine or other countermeasures may prove effective — neither AIDS nor SARS have yet become the civilization-ending plagues that were once predicted — and the population may contain enough people with natural immunity to slow the progress of the disease. Perhaps even more aggravating from the standpoint of the would-be bioterrorist, creating and testing such agents — without killing oneself in the process — requires sophisticated laboratories, which implies the cooperation of reasonably advanced states, and these are vulnerable to intelligence, preemption and retaliation.

In fact, if a violent ideological group, a “terrorist” organization, were to figure out how to release biological agents into the environment in such a way as to cause mass infection, the developed countries of the world with their advanced medical and pharmaceutical systems are the entities most likely to survive. The group’s followers, huddled in teeming Third World slums, are the ones who would perish in the largest numbers.

Any organization that attempted to use chemical or biological devices would bring the spotlight of unwanted attention on itself, removing constraints on massive international intervention but probably without accomplishing its goals, which was what happened to Aum Shinrikyo. Intelligence and law enforcement efforts toward groups that might try to develop such weapons should continue, as well as funding research into epidemiology — which will prove useful as mass overcrowding accelerates new natural pandemics, such as drug-resistant strains of tuberculosis,³⁶ and for the release of known pathogens such as smallpox³⁷ — but chemical and biological weapons are not cause for inflating the dangers from non-state groups.

35 Public Broadcasting Station, “Bacteria Talk,” *NOVA Science Now*, July 17, 2007, <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/sciencenow/3401/04.html>

36 Peter Finn, “Virulent new strain of TB raising fears of pandemic,” *Washington Post*, May 3, 2007.

37 Thomas Hammes, “Fourth Generation Warfare Evolves, Fifth Emerges,” *Military Review* LXXXVII, no. 3 (May-June 2007): 14-23.

Proliferation

The spread of weapons of mass destruction, therefore, means the proliferation of nuclear weapons. There is no doubt about their destructiveness, and for this reason these weapons have changed the nature of warfare more than any other event: For the first time in the history of the human species, war is not an option for settling disputes among the major powers.³⁸ Although minor skirmishing every now and then cannot be ruled out, nuclear powers are careful about even how much saber-rattling they do with each other.

The idea of a nuclear-armed government allowing itself to be defeated and overthrown by another state purely through conventional military force seems fanciful to say the least. A country such as China or Russia could use tactical nuclear devices against American forces approaching their shores or borders, while holding America's cities hostage to their strategic missiles.³⁹ Those strategists, such as Robert Kaplan and Colin Gray, who have postulated major conventional wars between nuclear states, base their arguments on the undeniable fact that anything is possible. In a world of limited resources, though, "anything is possible" is not a justification for spending enormous sums of money and perhaps precipitating the very crises we hope to deter.⁴⁰

As for the non-nuclear states, those that are also not members of NATO or some other alliance with the United States are all very weak. This presents the leaders of such states with a dilemma: They will have to join the club themselves, or, should push come to shove, they must accede to the demands

38 Although there are a few significant non-nuclear powers, they tend either to be members of alliances, such as NATO, or be in Latin America. Occasional spats between non-NATO countries are possible from time to time, but unless they lead to war among the great powers, they should not be cause for great concern. As for the great powers, so far, they have not been willing to risk escalation to a nuclear exchange, the result of which would be annihilation of one or both countries and probably of the human species in any recognizable form. This is not war, which is concerned with the survival of states.

39 A possibility mentioned a couple of years ago by William Lind in "War with China," *Defense and the National Interest*, May 18, 2005. Unless American forces could land and occupy a major Russian city before the Russians figure out what's going on, the same tactic should work for them as for China. The nuclear forces of either China or Russia would overwhelm any missile defense system.

40 For especially cogent arguments of why this is so, see Thomas Barnett, *The Pentagon's New Map* and Martin van Creveld, *The Transformation of War* (New York: Free Press, 1991). For Kaplan, see any of his writings in *The Atlantic*, most recently "America's elegant decline" in the November 2007 issue. For Colin Gray, see his 2005 book, *Another Bloody Century: Future Warfare* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2005).

of the nuclear states. Pakistan had to have the bomb or be forever at the beck-and-call of India. North Korea asserts that its on-again-off-again program to acquire nuclear weapons is to deter invasion and occupation. Likewise, a similar reasoning is thought to be the motivation for the Iranian program (if there is such a program, which the Iranians themselves predictably deny). So, as leaders ranging from Vladimir Putin to Lee Kwang Yew have warned, one reality of the post-Iraq world is that the war has given certain states an increased motivation to bring their nuclear weapons programs to fruition.⁴¹

If war between powerful states has disappeared in the post-Cold War era, and if war between weak states, while tragic, is of little geopolitical significance, then what about war between states and non-states?

“War” against non-states

At the low end of the conflict spectrum, in the “little wars” where states contend with various non-state entities, the changes have been as profound as between the nuclear-armed states. It may be difficult, at first, to accept this because a war between a state, particularly a major power, and any group that isn’t a state would seem to be an even greater mismatch than a war between states. That is a logical conclusion, because non-states typically do not have navies or air forces — there are a few exceptions, most notably the Tamil Tigers — and so how can they fight states?

In fact, until the end of World War I, non-states didn’t have much success fighting states, whether it was the plains and desert Indian tribes fighting the U.S. Cavalry, pirates fighting the Royal Navy, or any of the myriad insurgencies that were suppressed by the colonial powers. This began to change during the interwar period and reversed after World War II as four broad geopolitical factors improved the potency of non-state actors:

- ▶ the decline of state power in parts of the world;
- ▶ the rise of transnational, non-state groups;
- ▶ globalization; and
- ▶ population growth and urbanization.

41 “Putin Attacks ‘Very Dangerous’ US,” BBC, February 10, 2007, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/6349287.stm; Lee Kuan Yew, “The United States, Iraq, and the War on Terror,” *Foreign Affairs* 86, no. 1 (January/February 2007): 2-7.

The next four sections will examine these factors.

Decline of states

Perhaps the most powerful of these trends is the breakdown of the state system in parts of the world, which has allowed non-state groups to replace states in these areas as the entities for which most people are willing to fight.

Many of today's failed or failing states are legacies of the colonial era, when European countries drew artificial boundaries to define their colonies.⁴² After World War II, the European overlords withdrew, voluntarily or otherwise, and, in order to hold power, many of the local rulers sought money and support from one or the other of the superpowers. With the end of the Cold War, even this source of sustenance has largely ended, and as many as 30 states have either failed, as have Somalia, Afghanistan and Zimbabwe, for example, or are failing in the sense that they cannot provide even the most basic services to their citizens.⁴³ In their place, people have turned to a variety of non-state groups to help them meet the basic necessities of life. Some of these are traditional and benign, such as families, clans and tribes. Others, including armed groups like local militias and gangs, may be violent but not represent a direct threat to other countries. But there is the risk that failed states could follow the model of Afghanistan and harbor violent transnational groups that project their operations around the world.⁴⁴

42 Burma falls into this category, which explains much of the violence and repression as the governing junta attempts to hold the country together, and enrich themselves, by brute force. For demographics, consult the *CIA World Factbook* entry on Burma, which shows that ethnic Burmese make up only 68 percent of the population of 47 million. Some 17 of the other ethnic groups have their own militias/armies and support themselves by a range of illegal activities. See Eric Margolis, "The next Iraq?" *International Herald Tribune*, October 4, 2007, <http://www.iht.com/articles/2007/10/04/news/edmargo.php>.

43 The Fund for Peace, *Failed Index Scores 2007*, 2007, http://www.fundforpeace.org/web/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=229&Itemid=366.

44 Not everybody accepts this as a significant risk. Some analysts argue that it is easy to create such amorphous threats in order to justify other actions, such as inserting U.S. forces in order to secure energy resources. See, for example, Edmond Andrews, "A Disappointed Greenspan Lashes Out at Bush's Economic Policies," *New York Times*, September 17, 2007 and Paul Lubeck, Michael Watts and Ronnie Lipschutz, "Convergent interests: U.S. Energy Security and the 'Securing' of Nigerian Democracy," Center for International Policy report, February 2007, particularly page 13. It should be pointed out that both sides in this argument may, from time to time, be correct.

There have always been powerful non-state groups in the world. During World War II, Stalin is reported to have asked how many divisions the Pope had. The answer, as it turned out, was enough to drive the Soviet Union out of Poland. A few years after Stalin made his quip, Ghandi's largely nonviolent movement ended British rule in India. Every successful insurgency also represented the triumph of a non-state actor over its state opponent.

The rise of potent non-state groups is not limited to Muslim areas of the Middle East (none of the major groups causing so many problems in India and Sri Lanka are Muslim), nor necessarily to states in danger of collapse. In Brazil — a country that produces commercial jet aircraft and has developed an alternative fuels program that actually works — large sections of the major cities, particularly the *favelas* of Rio and São Paulo, are run by “militias” that are nothing more than evolved street gangs. Even the police forces in many developing countries, including relatively advanced ones such as Mexico and Brazil, might best be considered as officially sanctioned gangs that engage in much the same business as other gangs but happen to wear uniforms.⁴⁵ However, the problem is not just found in lesser-developed countries. The National Police Agency of Japan counts 84,700 “known members” of its *yakuza*s, violent gangs roughly analogous to the Mafia in the United States, and the actual number of members and sympathizers is likely much higher.⁴⁶

To make matters worse, in even relatively strong states there are non-state groups that control territory. It often surprises people in the West to learn that various guerrilla groups, many espousing a form of communism or Maoism, have an armed presence in about 25 percent of the administrative districts in the world's most populous democracy, India, and control 40 percent of its forests.⁴⁷ Their Maoist brethren recently played a large role in bringing down the monarchy in neighboring Nepal. Similarly, a resurgent Taliban and its

45 “Top Brazilian Policeman Suspended,” BBC News, February 6, 2007, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/6337147.stm>; Steve Kingstone, “Nine Killed in Rio Slum Shootout,” BBC News, February 12, 2007, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/world/americas/6352759.stm>.

46 Martin Fackler, “Mayor’s Death Forces Japan’s Crime Rings Into the Light,” *New York Times*, April 21, 2007.

47 Randeep Ramesh, “Inside India’s Hidden War,” *The Guardian*, May 9, 2006, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/india/story/0,,1770612,00.html>; “Turkmenistan: Meet your new father,” *Economist.com*, February 11, 2006, http://www.economist.com/daily/news/displaystory.cfm?story_id=8686930&top_story=1.

allies control such a large swath of northern Pakistan that Osama bin Laden and his lieutenants have been able to hide there for more than five years. These groups now appear to be on the verge of reclaiming control of much of southern Afghanistan, areas that they abandoned in late 2001.⁴⁸

The main geopolitical impact of the rise of non-state groups is not that states are going to disappear. In Russia, for example, the state system is becoming stronger, which is raising their standard of living and is probably a good development for the world's strongest nuclear power in terms of number of warheads.⁴⁹ States will continue to be the dominant form of political organization in Europe, the Americas and in most of Asia, although, as is the case in Brazil and India, they may cede control of inner cities or rural areas to non-state groups. State boundaries may also adjust nonviolently, as with the former Czechoslovakia, or through war, as happened in the former Yugoslavia, producing new states. The state system will survive, but it will share power with the evolving mélange of non-state groups that are the target of what the current administration calls the "war on terrorism."

Violent transnational ideological groups: al-Qaida and its kith and kin

One lesson reinforced yet again by our experience in Iraq is that small, poorly financed but highly motivated organizations can cause huge problems for even the best equipped and trained state armed forces if those forces try to engage them with military means. Because members of these non-state groups are civilians, albeit violent criminals, they can step aside, blend into the population, and refuse to fight on the military's terms. Today, the rise of the Internet, the ability to travel to any spot in the world in hours, the wide availability of small arms, and the other factors listed in Table I are providing new options to non-state groups, other than confronting heavily armed soldiers on battlefields.

One option that non-state violent groups seem to be exercising with increased competence is propaganda, or more specifically, trying to reduce the

48 "Interview with Terrorism Expert Bruce Hoffman," *Speigel Online*, October 10, 2006, <http://www.spiegel.de/international/0,1518,441695,00.html>. For an update, see Syed Saleem Shahzad, "Taliban poised for a big push," *Asia Times Online*, October 5, 2007, http://www.atimes.com/atimes/South_Asia/IJ05Df01.html.

49 Bruce Blair, "Primed and Ready," *The Defense Monitor* XXXVI, no. 3 (May/June 2007): 1-5.

determination of people to oppose their aims. As Hammes⁵⁰ documented, some of these groups have become quite sophisticated in their abilities to influence public opinion both in their own areas and in the developed world. Al-Qaida, for example, has used every available avenue of communication to sell its position that it is purely a defensive movement trying to protect Islam from attack by Western powers and their local lackeys.⁵¹

Better use of propaganda, or as it is sometimes called “information operations,” helps define the new generation of violent non-state groups, but their methods and aims go way beyond talk punctuated by the occasional violent act. Some of them already see themselves as complete alternatives to traditional states. The proponents of the “Islamic State of Iraq” (ISI), for example, claim:

[T]hat the ISI, unlike a modern Western state, is not defined by absolute geographic boundaries, a monopoly on the use of violence, or bureaucratically-administered services. According to Tamimi, measuring the ISI against that metric misunderstands both Islam and the globalization revolution. The ISI is structured around pseudo-feudal allegiances from subject to Emir, shared ideological goals, and the execution of judicial proceedings.⁵²

With the possible exception of shared ideological goals, this could be a mission statement for the Corleone family or any other invisible empire from down through the ages. When this proven organizational form is combined with the changes in technology and global politics that have appeared over the last generation, there is the potential for something entirely new to evolve.

The rise of such non-state organizations, some hosted in failed states and others alive and well among us, represents a challenge to the modern inter-

50 Thomas Hammes, *Sling and Stone: On War in the 21st Century* (St. Paul, Minn: Zenith Press, 2004).

51 Michael Scheuer (as Anonymous), *Imperial Hubris: Why the West is Losing the War on Terror* (Washington, D.C.: Brassey's, 2004). As Scheuer documents in his series in the *Jamestown Terrorism Focus*, bin Laden has stayed consistently on this message from 9/11 to the present day.

52 Brian Fishman, “Fourth Generation Governance: Sheikh Tamimi defends the Islamic State of Iraq,” Combatting Terroism Center, United States Military Academy, March 23, 2007, 2; <http://handle.dtic.mil/100.2/ADA470056>.

national system, one that the armed forces of developed nations have shown a limited ability to handle, particularly since the end of World War II. Why this is true will be dealt with in chapter IV, which will discuss whether military force is an effective tool to employ against transnational organizations, religiously inspired or not, that use violence to achieve their ends.

Globalization

Many of the trends in Table I fall under the label “globalization,” as does much of the modern international system itself. Most mainstream economists and, at least until recently, a majority of American elected officials, have regarded globalization as, at worst, inevitable, and probably an overall positive. The theory was that the increase in the volume and velocity of world trade would more than offset any local dislocations, which would only be temporary, and everyone would shortly benefit from the general rise in world income. Those who questioned this wisdom were denounced as troglodyte protectionists, seeking to preserve their own rice bowls at the expense of the public at large. Recently, however, even a few establishment economists have asked whether globalization has produced the benefits that were promised.⁵³ No one can claim that trade with China has failed to improve the living standards of hundreds of millions of Chinese citizens. But as Lawrence Summers, former U.S. Treasury secretary and long time supporter of globalization recently concluded, the middle classes of the United States and other Western countries have not shared to anything like the same degree.⁵⁴

In other words, if a family’s income is falling faster than the prices at Wal-Mart, then they have a net loss in standard of living. Average hourly income in the United States has been stagnant for a generation, offset only by the increase in the numbers of family members who work. More worrying, perhaps, is that this pain is not being shared equally. The enormous increase in Fortune 500 CEO compensation, to more than \$10 million or about 350 times that of the average wage earner in 2005,⁵⁵ represents only the most visible evidence of a

53 William Greider, “The Establishment Rethinks Globalization,” *The Nation*, April 19, 2007.

54 David Leonhardt, “Larry Summer’s Evolution,” *New York Times*, June 10, 2007.

55 United States Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, *National Compensation Survey: Occupational wages in the United States, June 2005*, (Washington, D.C.: Labor Department, 2006).

trend in income inequality that began shortly after President Ronald Reagan took office. By 2005, the top 10 percent of U.S. individuals were receiving about 45 percent of total U.S. income, a proportion last seen during the “gilded age” of the early 20th century,⁵⁶ and about 50 percent above the historical average that had held from the Eisenhower administration up through Carter’s.⁵⁷ That same year, the top 1 percent took home a record 21.2 percent of all income, nearly twice as much as the bottom 50 percent combined.⁵⁸

As Summers calculated, it is as if households in the bottom 80 percent of the income distribution — all those with incomes from \$0 to \$92,000 — each wrote out a check for \$7,000 and mailed it to the top 1 percent — those making over \$264,000.⁵⁹ How this increasing inequality in a time of declining incomes will affect appetites for expensive foreign adventures is another development worth watching.

There is one other impact of globalization that is not often mentioned in economic analyses. John Robb⁶⁰ emphasizes that globalization can have unanticipated consequences, which he refers to as “black globalization,” the ability of non-state criminal organizations to utilize the same Internet, airlines and computer technologies as legal organizations in order to operate and cooperate on a global basis. The international trade in counterfeit drugs, just to cite one example — including anti-malarial medications, antibiotics and the anti-retroviral drugs used to treat HIV/AIDS — is now approaching \$75 billion per year.⁶¹ This same infrastructure is also available to the violent

56 Louis Uchitelle, “The Richest of the Rich, Proud of a New Gilded Age,” *New York Times*, July 15, 2007, <http://www.nytimes.com/2007/07/15/business/15gilded.html?ei=5088&en=b9361c0993b4502c&ex=1342152000&partner=rssnyt&emc=rss&pagewanted=print>.

57 Thomas Picketty and Emmanuel Saez, “Income Equality in the United States, 1913-1998,” *The Quarterly Journal of Economics* 118, no. 1 (February 2003): 1-39. Updated tables through 2005 available at <http://elsa.berkeley.edu/~saez/pikettytje.pdf>.

58 Greg Ip, “Income-Inequality Gap Widens,” *Wall Street Journal*, October 12, 2007. The bottom 50 percent earned about 12.8 percent of the national adjusted gross income. In real terms, the median income of U.S. taxpayers fell about 2 percent from 2000 to 2005.

59 Leonhardt, “Larry Summer’s Evolution”; Picketty and Saez, “Income Equality in the United States”; U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Income, Poverty and Health Insurance Coverage in the United States: 2005* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2006).

60 John Robb, *Brave New War: The Next Stage of Terrorism and the End of Globalization* (Hoboken, N.J.: John Wiley and Sons, 2007).

61 Jill McGivering, “Chinese gangs ‘behind fake drugs,’” *BBC News*, June 4, 2007, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/6718645.stm>.

ideological networks sometimes called “terrorists,” and it is difficult to imagine how an organization like al-Qaida in its modern form could have existed even a generation ago. To use a biological analogy, new communications and transportation infrastructures are allowing virulent pests to spread rapidly into ecosystems that lack effective defenses.⁶²

Whether black or white, globalization is changing the way that non-state groups form, operate, and evolve. It is not so much a trend in itself as a fundamental change in the nature of the playing field that will be exploited by some entities and will lead to the demise of others.

Urbanization and population growth

Another trend that will affect national defense policy in the post-Iraq years is the growth of the world’s population and the increasing numbers of people who live in urban complexes. The population of the world at the end of World War II was slightly over two billion.⁶³ Today it stands at more than 6.5 billion, and in one more generation, by 2040 or so, it will be approaching nine billion. It is true that the rate of population increase is falling, but it is still positive: The world is still adding people, albeit at a slower rate, and the Census Bureau forecasts that growth will continue at least through the 21st century.⁶⁴

Nobody can be sure exactly what this means, and dire forecasts from Malthus to the Club of Rome have proven wrong, or premature, in the past. Population growth will, at least in the short term, increase the competition for difficult-to-renew resources such as water, arable land, and petroleum, and so will add to the impetus for conflict. In the longer term, though, technologies will be discovered to increase supplies, particularly of water for drinking and irrigation — although whether the developing countries that most need them will be able to afford them is unknown — and changes in usage may reduce the demand. In some cases, substitutes may be found. It is also possible that unforeseen events, such as plagues, famines and wars, may reduce the world’s population and thus the pressure on nonrenewable resources. At this point, it will suffice to add population growth to the list of factors that appear to add to the global stress level.

62 Fabius Maximus, e-mail message to author, June 4, 2007.

63 U.S. Census Bureau, World Population Information, <http://www.census.gov/ipc/www/idb/worldpopinfo.html>.

64 U.S. Bureau of the Census, World Population Information.

A parallel trend with a more immediate effect on security policy is the rise of mega-cities, many of which are in the developing world and lack modern infrastructure. Table II, below, shows the populations of some the world's larger urban areas⁶⁵:

Table II: Selected Urban Complexes in the Developing World

CITY	POPULATION
Mexico City, Mexico	22 million
Mumbai (Bombay), India	21 million
Delhi, India	21 million
Cairo, Egypt	16 million
Jakarta, Indonesia	15 million
Calcutta, India	15 million
Manila, the Philippines	15 million
Karachi, Pakistan	15 million
Dhaka, Bangladesh	14 million
Lagos, Nigeria	10 million
Baghdad, Iraq	7 million
Khartoum, Sudan	6 million
Alexandria, Egypt	5 million

The table is not meant to be exhaustive, but one thing that it does illustrate is that Baghdad, with around 7 million people, is a village compared to other places where conflict is likely to occur. For comparison, the Cairo urban area contains 2.5 times the entire population of Israel.

Urbanization has reached the point where the United Nations forecasts that 2007 will be the year when more than half the world's population lives in cities and also when more than 1 billion people will live in slums, defined as urban areas with inadequate housing and a lack of the basic services we in the developed world take for granted.⁶⁶ This trend, the UN forecasts, will only get worse: By 2030, nearly 50 percent of the world's population will live

65 Counting populations in Third World mega-cities is an imprecise art. This list is from Thomas Brinkhoff, *The Principal Agglomerations of the World*, <http://www.citypopulation.de>, dated April 21, 2007. Other lists show Cairo, for example, with as "few" as 13 million people and Baghdad with five.

66 Edauro Moreno and Rasna Warah, "The state of the world's cities 2006/2007: Urban and slum trends in the 21st century," *UN Chronicle* 63, no. 2 (2006).

in cities in the developing world, and urban growth will become synonymous with slum growth in much of it.

The UN also notes that urbanization sometimes results from war, particularly in Africa, where farmers driven from their land have no choice but to try to survive in the slums of major cities.⁶⁷ It could happen, and this is a trend worth watching, that civil war and other problems in rural areas increase the urban slum populations that offer a breeding ground for the new generation of violent networked movements. It would be difficult for any country, and impossible for developing countries, to control what goes on in these conglomerations. Brazil, as noted above, a relatively advanced country, has ceded control of large pieces of Rio and São Paolo to armed gangs, and even the United States cannot stamp out urban street gangs in its major cities.⁶⁸

Implications

Table I listed a plethora of developments, and the remainder of this chapter has tried to synthesize four major trends, better described as global military-political sea changes, that will shape the national security environment for the next several decades. There are grounds for pessimism, particularly when the major trends are taken together.

First, larger numbers of people, particularly larger numbers of people living in slums, means a larger recruiting base for violent, non-state ideological groups that offer an alternative, whether it is social justice or ethnic liberation or just a decent meal on a regular basis. Already, more people live in slums in the developing world than in the entire developed world, and this trend is forecasted to continue. Such massive slums may also provide spawning grounds for disease on a scale not seen since the flu epidemic of 1918-19. A repeat of that pandemic would cause vastly more damage to the United States than any “terrorist” group could dream of and would probably increase the potency of radical religious groups, an effect such natural disasters always seem to produce.

Second, absent any measures to prevent it, globalization will aggravate the divide between haves and have-nots around the world. This is not the effect that it was supposed to have, but it seems to be occurring. American jobs

67 Ibid.

68 Max Manwaring, “Street gangs: The new urban insurgency,” (Carlisle, Pa.: Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, 2005).

that left for Mexico in the 1990s are now leaving that country and going to Asia. They are not, however, migrating on their own: People at the tops of the corporate pyramids are making decisions to move them, and these people will do quite well in the new globalized economic environment. They argue that were they not to move labor around in search of the lowest costs, they would not be able to compete against companies that did. If this is the case, then nobody should be surprised at another round of global protectionism as voters in the developed democracies react against the loss of well-paying jobs contrasted with the enormous growth in the wealth of the people who sent those jobs overseas.

Finally, the steep decline in the cost of computing as well as the rise of the Internet offers options that favor dispersed networks of groups. Although states as well as non-states can use these tools, and do, they were available only to states up until perhaps the time of the first Gulf War. Only military and other similarly expensive computers could routinely call up map displays, and they were usually connected to data centers that inhabited air conditioned bunkers with legions of technicians. When military commanders needed to communicate, someone had to establish a satellite link, which meant a rather large dish, along with generators and other olive drab vehicles of various sorts, and a contingent of troops and contractors to operate and secure the complex. Today, a \$500 laptop and a wireless connection can exchange vastly more data, not to mention search data sources that even the military did not have in 1990.

With this as a basis, we can turn to the ability of military forces to influence events in the post-Iraq environment.

III: Is it War?

*War is a matter of vital importance to the State; the province of life or death; the road to survival or ruin.*⁶⁹

The overriding issue in the post-Iraq era is: Is the United States at war?

This is not a matter of mere semantics because “war,” as Sun Tzu insisted, is a consuming struggle for survival, justifying at least for a while any number of drastic measures. During the U.S. Civil War, for example, Lincoln suspended *habeus corpus*, one of the most fundamental American rights, and during World War II, the Roosevelt administration relocated thousands of American citizens of Japanese descent to camps thousand of miles from their homes. After Sept. 11, 2001, the call for a “war on terror” justified all manner of restrictions on civil liberties and expansion of government powers that Americans would have denounced had someone like Russian President Vladimir Putin undertaken them. But, in the foreseeable world environment, will such actions be necessary? Or by restricting democracy and freedom in our own country, are we crippling our efforts to spread it abroad? It all depends on whether we are in a state of war.

The administration of George W. Bush has gone to great lengths to sell the notion of a “war on terror.” Michael Chertoff, the secretary of homeland security, wrote a piece in the *Washington Post* in early 2007 stating categorically, “Make no mistake, we are at war.”⁷⁰ His primary justification for considering our situation as war was that Osama bin Laden said that it was:

Is this actually a war? Well, the short answer comes from our enemies. Osama bin Laden’s fatwa of Feb. 23, 1998, was a declaration of war, a self-serving accusation that

69 Sun Tzu, *The Art of War*, trans. Samuel B. Griffith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1963), 63.

70 Michael Chertoff, “Make No Mistake: This Is War,” *Washington Post*, April 22, 2007.

America had somehow declared war on Islam, followed by a “ruling” to “kill the Americans and their allies — civilians and military... in any country where it is possible to do it.”

He then gave al-Qaida the capability to actually engage the United States of America in war:

Today’s extreme Islamist groups such as al-Qaida do not merely seek political revolution in their own countries. They aspire to dominate all countries. Their goal is a totalitarian, theocratic empire to be achieved by waging perpetual war on soldiers and civilians alike. That includes the use of weapons of mass destruction ... The fanatics’ intent, while grandiose, is not entirely fanciful. Islamist extremists such as those in al-Qaida, the Taliban and associated groups from North Africa to Iraq and South Asia are fighting for and sometimes achieving control of territory in which they can train; assemble advanced, inhumane weaponry; impose their own vision of repressive law; and dominate local life.

These are powerful arguments, but they also raise questions that the next administration, and all Americans, should consider carefully:

- ▶ Just because bin Laden declared war on the United States 10 years ago, does that mean that we are at war?⁷¹ Shouldn’t we, the world’s strongest military power, be somewhat embarrassed to raise an infirm and isolated old man to the status of legitimate threat to the survival of the United States?
- ▶ Does “not entirely fanciful” mean “real?”
- ▶ Is there one piece of real estate outside the Pakistan-Afghanistan border region where these “associated groups are ... achieving control of territory?” Their success in that area is solely due to our failure to find and destroy bin Laden when we shifted our focus to Iraq.

71 In his remarks upon leaving the chairmanship of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, October 1, 2007, Marine Gen. Peter Pace repeated the claim that we are at war because Osama bin Laden said that we are. Ann Scott Tyson, “Gen. Pace’s Successor Is Sworn In,” *Washington Post*, October 1, 2007.

- ▶ Is there any evidence that a sizable minority of people in any of the areas Chertoff describes — other than the Afghan border region — have any desire to live under the control of such groups? If the violent groups that Chertoff describes had any chance of carrying out their program, Saudi Arabia, the homeland of both bin Laden and of the religious philosophy he espouses, should be in revolutionary turmoil.
- ▶ If the United States is at war, how can U.S. officials hold “unlawful enemy combatants” in Guantanamo? Wouldn’t they be prisoners of war?⁷²

When deciding whether to consider our current situation “war,” the next administration should also consider that although the war metaphor provides an effective tool for mobilizing domestic support for its positions, wars against entities other than organized military forces are not replete with success. In addition to the guerrilla wars that the next chapter will examine, the United States has fought equally unproductive wars against such ills as poverty, illiteracy and drugs, chewing up huge amounts of taxpayer dollars but producing little and having any number of unintended consequences.

If it isn’t “war,” what am I watching on TV?

What you’re seeing is our participation in the Iraqi civil war.⁷³ It is similar, though on a larger scale, to the Lebanese civil war that you saw during the late 1970s and early 1980s. After a brief but tragic foray in 1982-83, done as part of an international force and for the best humanitarian reasons, the United States withdrew from that conflict not because we did not sympathize with the Lebanese people, but because President Ronald Reagan had the wisdom to realize that there was nothing our military forces could do about it.

The purpose of this book is not to offer advice on how to wind up U.S. involvement in Iraq, but instead to offer an answer to the question, “What next?” The Iraqis may, as a result of our invasion, be at war for a long time, but the question that concerns us here is whether *we* are at war in a wider sense, such as against “international terrorism.”

72 William Glaberson, “Military judges dismiss charges for 2 detainees,” *New York Times*, June 5, 2007.

73 Biddle, “Seeing Baghdad, Thinking Saigon.”

What's wrong with calling it war?

The main risk is that we will do the very things to ourselves, in the name of fighting the “war,” that bin Laden fanaticizes doing to us. We are already seeing this: the USA-PATRIOT Act — particularly Section 215, which authorizes broad searches without probable cause — the FBI’s extensive use of “national security letters,” indefinite confinement of anybody the president considers an “unlawful enemy combatant,” and “extraordinary rendition” of suspects to countries like Syria and Egypt that have few inhibitions about interrogation methods. The acceptance of our current condition as “war” has also caused us to abandon fiscal restraint and accept an enormous run-up of the national debt.

Perhaps most curious of all, given the amount of money being spent and the weakness of any foreign opponents, is the significant damage we’ve done to the U.S. military, and not just to its hardware, as described above. To meet its goal for new recruits, the Army has had to resort to a variety of extraordinary measures, including “moral waivers” for those with a criminal background, lowering intellectual qualifications, and even considering targeting illegal aliens for Army service.⁷⁴ Financial incentives for service have reached record levels. For new recruits, the Army is offering bonuses of up to \$40,000 (with an extra \$20,000 for reporting early), and junior officers are leaving in such numbers that the Army recently raised its bonus package to \$35,000 to keep them on active duty for three more years.⁷⁵ These bonuses are on top of compensation packages that are already generous by U.S. standards. In addition to competitive salaries, members of the military receive free or low-cost medical care for themselves and their families, and they can retire on half pay after 20 years (which, for high school graduates who enlist, could be before reaching age 40), with their medical coverage continuing for life. Despite these measures, readiness continues to degrade, with, for example, only about one-third of the Army’s reserve brigades now fit for combat.⁷⁶

74 Nick Turse, “Tomgram: Nick Turse on 12-Pentagon Steps to Misfit Military,” *TomDispatch.com*, September 14, 2006, <http://www.tomdispatch.com/index.mhtml?pid=121072>. As a retired officer, I consider military service to be a privilege of citizenship.

75 Thomas Ricks, “Army officer accuses generals of ‘intellectual and moral failures,’ ” *Washington Post*, April 27, 2007. For the recent raise to \$35,000, see Ann Scott Tyson, “Army Offers Big Cash To Keep Key Officers,” *Washington Post*, October 11, 2007.

76 Maj. Gen. Robert Scales, what service? Statement for the Record, Senate Committee on Armed Services, 110th Congress, April 17, 2007.

Another risk is that by calling it “war,” we come to believe that military force is the solution. Again, we are seeing this today. As the next chapter shows, the Department of Defense is depending on the “war on terror” for a large part of its future budget. If, as the next chapter will also argue, military force is not the main component of national security in the post-Iraq era, and in many cases, such as reducing the problems caused by criminal organizations (of which al-Qaida is but one), military force is counter-productive, then pretending that we’re at war only adds to the problems we are trying to solve.

The most important point, however, is that the prosperity of any organization — state or otherwise — depends in large measure on its ability to think clearly about the problems it faces. Adopting a position or ideology and then focusing all one’s efforts on finding facts to justify it is extremely dangerous. The world will move on — and you won’t notice it because the indicators did not fit your preconceptions — until something dramatic happens. It is important, therefore, that the next administration carefully examine the usefulness of a “war on terror” and not merely accept it as a given or succumb to pressure from those with a vested interest in continuing it.

IV: The Utility of Military Force

“War no longer exists.” Thus British Gen. Sir Rupert Smith began his book, *The Utility of Force* (2005, p. 1).⁷⁷ Sir Rupert was writing shortly after the end of a 40-year career in which he had held senior command both in conventional wars, particularly Operation Desert Storm, and in unconventional conflicts as commander of the United Nations Protection Force in Bosnia in 1995 and commander of the British forces in Northern Ireland in 1996-1998. He looked back over his career, and over history since the end of World War II, and concluded that “military force is considered a solution, or part of a solution, in a wide range of problems for which it was not originally intended or configured.” (p. xii)⁷⁸ Which raises the obvious question of whether military force is useful for solving any of these problems, or whether we continue to use it only because we have it.

The last major tank battle, by way of illustration, where tanks “in formation” actually decided anything, was 1973.⁷⁹ Since that battle, an entire generation of armor officers has been commissioned, served honorably, and retired. Like the dreadnought admirals of an earlier age, the confrontations for which they so painstakingly prepared never came and, for their successors, never will. The reason, as noted in the second chapter, is the proliferation of nuclear weapons. The previous chapter then made the argument that although war has passed

77 Rupert Smith, *The Utility of Force* (London: Allen Lane, 2005), 1.

78 Ibid., xii.

79 Ibid., 1. Smith is referring to the battles of the Yom Kippur War between Israel and its Arab neighbors. These were multi-divisional struggles involving thousands of tanks. By contrast, the largest U.S. tank action since the Korean War, the Battle of 73 Easting during the 1991 Gulf War, was won by a single U.S. regiment with fewer than 100 tanks.

from the human scene, except where one participant is very weak, its name lives on, applied to a variety of struggles and conflicts for which it is neither appropriate nor useful.

Have we outgrown armies?

If war is *passé*, is there any utility for military force? This is a good question, the key question, in fact, for national security policy in the post-Iraq era.

For if the answer is that there is little utility, or even that the employment of military forces will often make the situation worse, and most troubling of all, that it will be impossible to tell beforehand whether military force will be helpful or not, then most of our conventional forces should be eliminated. This is an extreme step, of course, although many of our allies have already carried it out to some extent. So, it is worthwhile examining the arguments in favor of retaining a large conventional force. There is no more appropriate source for such arguments than the organization that spends half the world's total, the U.S. Department of Defense, and it has, fortunately for my purposes, laid these out in its most recent "Quadrennial Defense Review" (QDR).⁸⁰

Fighting other countries

First, the U.S. Department of Defense sees a need for its conventional forces to "maintain their predominance in traditional warfare"⁸¹ However, the current U.S. Marine Corps, augmented with Special Operations forces and tactical airpower — particularly the A-10 fleet — would be more than adequate.⁸² If this seems strange, remind yourself that the United States is not going to have a real war against anybody with more than a few nuclear weapons — this list of non-opponents includes Russia and China, by the way — and countries that don't have such an arsenal are either U.S. allies or are too weak to require more than this.⁸³ The heavy armored forces of today are as relevant to world events as armored knights were after Agincourt, in 1415.

80 United States Department of Defense (DOD), Quadrennial Defense Review Report, February 6, 2006.

81 DOD, Quadrennial defense review report, 3.

82 Chet Richards, *A Swift, Elusive Sword* (Washington, D.C.: Center for Defense Information Press, 2001); Chet Richards, *Neither Shall the Sword* (Washington, D.C.: Center for Defense Information Press, 2006).

83 Chapter VI contains a more detailed description of such a force.

Fighting non-states (or very weak ones)

How does the department justify the rest of the defense budget? On top of its requirement to retain all the conventional legacy forces left over from the Cold War, DOD has identified four additional areas for emphasis:⁸⁴

- ▶ defeating terrorist networks;
- ▶ defending the homeland in depth;
- ▶ shaping the choices of countries at strategic crossroads; and
- ▶ preventing hostile states and non-state actors from acquiring or using WMD.

The remainder of this section will examine these potential uses for military force in the post-Iraq era.

In attempting to carry out these tasks against weak states or non-states, U.S. forces have three, and only three, generic options, summarized in Table III.

Table III: Generic Options for Using Military Force in Developing Countries

Option	Definition
Occupy	Invade another country with ground and supporting forces with the intention of remaining in the country long enough to become a factor (perhaps the primary factor) in governing the country
Raid	Insert military forces into another country in order to accomplish a specific mission, with the intention of removing those forces at the end of the mission and playing no role in governing the country
Strike	Attack another country without inserting substantial ground forces (i.e., other than as required in support of the strike, as forward air controllers, for example)

The next several sections explore how DOD could employ these options to perform its four additional missions beginning with the last (counter-proliferation), and working backward to the one that gets the most publicity (counter-terrorism) (C/T).

84 DOD, Quadrennial defense review report, 3.

Countering the acquisition of WMDs

With a single and partial exception, the only successes in preventing proliferation of nuclear weapons (the only WMDs that count) have been through political, not military, means. All the non-Russian states of the former Soviet Union that had nuclear weapons returned them to Russia in the late 1990s. Most recently, and for reasons nobody outside Libya quite understands, Libya ended its nuclear weapons program in 2004. Most likely, it was going nowhere and Col. Muammar al-Gaddafi simply decided to reap his public relations gains instead. South Africa, which had actually produced a small stockpile, ended its program, destroyed its weapons, and in 1991, signed the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). Among other potential nuclear powers, Brazil ended its program in the early 1990s and has since signed the NPT.

It cannot be pointed out too often that, in contrast to these political successes, the sole U.S. military action to prevent proliferation — the occupation of Iraq — has led to an expensive and seemingly interminable quagmire. Even worse, as noted above by Putin and former Singaporean Premier Lee Kuan Yew, it has probably accelerated those programs that remain.

Counter-proliferation Option: Strike

There has been a successful counter-proliferation strike (the third generic option): the Israeli attack against the Iraqi reactor at Osirak in 1981. Even in this case, however, the ultimate objective of ending the Iraqi nuclear program was not achieved. The strike was tactically successful in the sense that the reactor was destroyed, but when the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) examined the Iraqi program after the end of the first Gulf War, it concluded that Saddam could have produced a working device before the end of 1992.⁸⁵ In other words, the Israeli Air Force did its job, but because nothing was fundamentally changed in Iraq, Saddam learned from the experience and rebuilt his program.

Counter-proliferation Option: Raiding

Raiding is also a possibility, and in 2001 I proposed reshaping the U.S. Armed Forces as a counter-proliferation raiding force, primarily as an alternative to

85 Federation of American Scientists, "Iraqi Nuclear Weapons," November 3, 1998, <http://www.fas.org/nuke/guide/iraq/nuke/program.htm>.

the U.S. national missile defense program.⁸⁶ Although a raid can carry out a wider range of activities than a strike, unless the target country changes its policies, which neither a raid nor a strike is likely to accomplish, the effect will be temporary, and the outside world must assume that the next raid or strike will be more difficult. The best that can be hoped for is that a successful counter-proliferation raid would buy time for political solutions to work.

Counter-proliferation Option: Occupation

Finally, occupations can change regimes and completely root out WMD programs, overcoming the short-term nature of strikes and raids. In that sense, they represent the only realistic way to use military forces to stop the spread of WMDs. However, once a country is occupied and WMDs found, or not, the occupation itself becomes the cause of military activity. In other words, unless an occupation could be conducted as a giant raid — get in, scour the countryside, get out — it exchanges one set of problems for another. Thus, although this option may occasionally be necessary, policy-makers within the international community must understand and accept that, as the section on occupation as a counter-terrorism device will show, maintaining an occupation in a country that does not wish to be occupied is an extremely difficult problem for which American military planners have not been able to develop any good solution.

The conclusion is that counter-proliferation is primarily a political problem. Military force provides a limited range of options, but, as is always true, it is difficult to predict the ultimate outcome of its use.

Shaping choices

As for the second QDR mission, “shaping the choices of countries at strategic crossroads,” this bit of national arrogance has been thoroughly discredited by Iraq. It was discredited by the time the QDR was written in 2005, and the list in the QDR of countries that have embraced democracy — Iraq (!), Lebanon, and the former Soviet states of Central Asia — makes for painful reading today. It also reveals a fair amount of hubris to credit ourselves with shaping the choices they did make, and we are quite conspicuously not taking credit for their subsequent straying from the democratic path. While

86 Richards, *A Swift, Elusive Sword*.

encouraging respect for human rights and democratic reforms is a reasonable national goal, military participation in attempts since the end of WW II to coerce other countries into changing their policies are practically never successful.⁸⁷ Even the most committed neoconservatives are now claiming that they knew this all along.⁸⁸

In other words, there is nothing wrong with trying to influence other countries. All states and many non-states, legal and illegal, do it all the time. The question concerns the role of military force to coerce non-states or weak states (because the United States has shown no willingness to use force against strong states). The section after next will consider non-states. Against weak states, the problem is often that there is no effective central government to influence. Power is distributed among various groups — the army, police, militias and mafias, oligopolistic families, etc. — and other than their army (which will never present any great challenge), there is nobody to use military force against.

Defending the homeland

The QDR authors did have a certain sense of humor:

The Department remains prepared to reinforce the defense of the land approaches to the United States if directed by the President.⁸⁹

The only military mission for DOD in “reinforcing the defense of the land approaches to the United States” would be providing protection from invading Mexican or Canadian armies. What about securing the borders against narcotics trafficking and illegal immigrants? These are not military roles, as is clear from looking at who the enemy would be: job seekers and their families, who are generally unarmed, or lightly armed members of organized crime cartels. Although the military could provide bodies along the border, it is not well suited for guarding against civilians because military training and doctrine is designed to employ deadly force, not to apprehend and hold small groups of

87 Patricia L. Sullivan, “War Aims and War Outcomes.” *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 51, no. 3 (2007).

88 Richard Pearle, “PBS ‘America at a Crossroads’: ‘The Case for War,’” *Washington Post*, April 17, 2007, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/discussion/2007/04/06/DI2007040601624.html>.

89 DOD, Quadrennial defense review report, 26.

frequently malnourished and dehydrated men, women, and children. If we need more border security, then we should fund and train more border patrol and law enforcement agents.

What about defending the homeland against air or sea attack? The only form of such attacks that might threaten the United States in the 21st century would be some type of missile, either a ballistic missile or an air-, ship- or submarine-launched cruise missile.

Preventing these attacks from causing damage to American citizens is a legitimate concern. At present, the United States deters, rather than defends, against missile attacks, and so the question is whether we should, in addition, place a high priority on developing systems to defend against enemy missiles if deterrence has failed and the rockets are in flight. Real nuclear powers could easily swamp any such system — even its most enthusiastic proponents concede this.⁹⁰ So the question turns to quasi-sophisticated powers, who could build a few, but only a few, weapons.

When seen in the context not of stopping missiles but of protecting against attack by nuclear weapons, the argument for missile defense quickly breaks down, even against third-tier powers. For these semi-sophisticated states, the big hurdle is obtaining or building the working device. Once that is done, the question of delivery becomes one of selecting among a wealth of choices for bringing it across our 7,500 miles of land borders or 12,000 miles of coastline — missiles, possibly, but why not the vastly cheaper rental truck, rail container, shipboard container, private aircraft or boat, or a combination? Narcotics traffickers are able to move hundreds of tons of drugs into the country every year, so an extra ton for a nuke should not present an impossible challenge.

Oddly, the QDR's authors recognized this possibility: "Hostile states could also attack the United States using WMD delivered by missiles or by less familiar means such as commercial shipping or general aviation."⁹¹ In passing, it should be noted that non-states could also "deliver" devices in this way, if they could get the weapons. What the department does not do is offer any way in which military forces could act either as a deterrent, especially against non-states, or actively defend against such "less familiar" but obvious threats.

90 For a more detailed discussion, see Richards, *A Swift Elusive Sword*; Richards, *Neither Shall the Sword*.

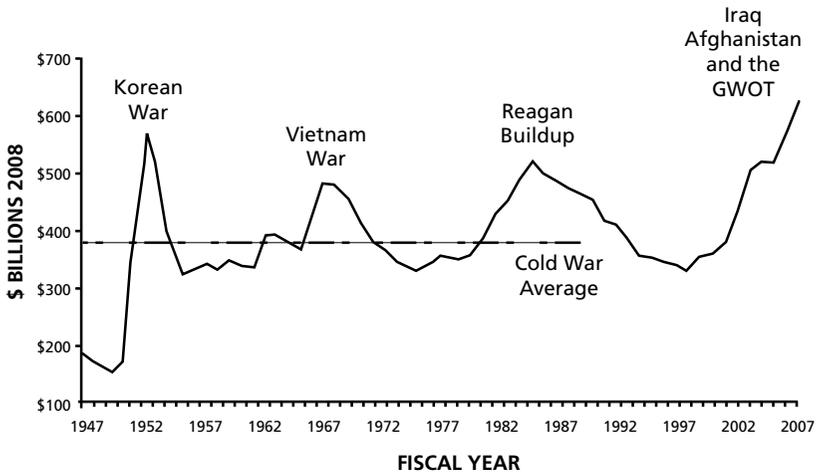
91 DOD, Quadrennial defense review report, 25.

These are missions for intelligence, border and port security, the Coast Guard, and law enforcement. The military’s major role will be, as it was after Sept. 11, to bore lonely holes in the sky long after the deed is done.

Defeating terrorist networks

This is the mission that has everyone’s attention and has been the primary justification for ramping up spending to levels not seen since the Korean War — even exceeding Vietnam.

Figure 1: Defense Spending Trends⁹²



In these earlier wars, not only did the United States recruit, equip, and deploy hundreds of thousands of troops, but we also had to maintain forces that could deter or defeat the mighty Soviet Union, a “peer competitor” with the same types of tanks, fighters, bombers, missiles, and missile-firing submarines as we had and in comparable numbers. We did all that, and for less money than we’re spending today to fight illegal networks that can’t muster a single tank, missile-firing submarine, or strategic bomber between them. It is important to recognize that in this comparison, the effects of inflation have been removed;

92 National Defense Budget Estimates for FY 2007, Office of the Under Secretary of Defense (Comptroller) March 2006 at http://www.dod.mil/comptroller/defbudget/fy2007/fy2007_greenbook.pdf; estimate for 2008 from the Center for Defense Information’s *Military Almanac* (Washington D.C.: Center for Defense Information Press, 2007).

otherwise spending at, say, three times the Korean War level might actually represent a decrease because a dollar back then bought considerably more than a dollar today (as a glance at housing prices will reveal).

What is even more curious, at least from a budgetary standpoint, is that the money is not being directed at the total problem of “terrorism,” but only that portion perpetrated by people of the Muslim religion.

Terrorist networks use intimidation, propaganda and indiscriminate violence in an attempt to subjugate the Muslim world under a radical theocratic tyranny. These networks also aim to exhaust the will of the United States and its allies and partners, including those in the Muslim world, to oppose them.⁹³

The QDR then identifies the mastermind of all this Islamic terrorism as al-Qaida, conceding near-peer status to an aging and reportedly ailing figure that most analysts figure is hiding in the mountains and villages along the Pakistan-Afghanistan border. In all fairness, though, belief in the power of al-Qaida is a bipartisan hallucination, as this quote from the Democrat-leaning think tank, Third Way, shows:

Al-Qaida and its affiliates are America’s central enemy and most urgent threat today. With its combination of high-tech and low-tech warfare and decentralized power structure, al-Qaida is a hydra-headed beast that, like its mythical counterpart, seems to grow in size and power as we fight it. It has the capacity to replace the leaders we capture or kill. In that respect, among others, it differs fundamentally from the enemies we faced in the 20th century.⁹⁴

How to deal with such a challenge? More to the point of this book, what is the utility of military force in dealing with it? The QDR advises that:

Victory will come when the enemy’s extremist ideologies are discredited in the eyes of their host populations and tacit supporters, becoming unfashionable, and following other discredited creeds, such as Communism and

⁹³ DOD, Quadrennial defense review report, 21

⁹⁴ Bill Galston, Elaine Kamarck and Sharon Burke, “Security First: A strategy for defending America,” (Washington, D.C.: Third Way, 2007), 16.

Nazism, into oblivion. This requires the creation of a global environment inhospitable to terrorism. It requires legitimate governments with the capacity to police themselves and to deny terrorists the sanctuary and the resources they need to survive. It also will require support for the establishment of effective representative civil societies around the world, since the appeal of freedom is the best long-term counter to the ideology of the extremists.⁹⁵

This may well be true, although the continuing existence of Maoist guerrillas in India and their inclusion in the government of Nepal suggest that the QDR's gloating about communism is premature at best. It is also too early to proclaim Nazism and fascism dead: There are people alive today who watched a free and democratic system bring Adolf Hitler to power, and far right parties are still strong in democratic Western Europe. There is nothing to keep a people from choosing to be ruled by a dictator; in fact, it is one of history's oldest themes. But even granting the ultimate superiority of "freedom," the obvious question is, "What part does military force, particularly foreign military forces, play in establishing 'legitimate governments' and 'representative civil societies' around the world?" Or more simply, "What is the role of the military in counterterrorism?"

Utility of military force in counter-terrorism

People have proposed many roles for the military in *counter-terrorism*, that is, to attack violent, transnational groups that are not under the control of a particular state. As is the case with counter-proliferation, these roles could involve all three generic mission types:

- ▶ **raids** — to, for example, rescue hostages or to track down and kill the fighters themselves;
- ▶ **strikes** — such as President Bill Clinton's cruise missile attacks,

95 DOD, Quadrennial defense review report, 21-22.

derided by veteran Pentagon analyst Chuck Spinney⁹⁶ as “drive-by shootings,” against Afghanistan, Sudan and Iraq; and

- ▶ **occupation** — invading and rebuilding the countries (failed or otherwise) that harbor such groups.

Counter-terrorism Option: Raiding

Raiding is a reasonable counter-terrorism (C/T) tactic if there is accurate intelligence on the identities of the targets and where they will be at some specified time in the future. The immediate downside of raiding is the fallout from a botched or misdirected raid, and presidents have hesitated to employ special missions in the past because of this possibility. Raiding into a neutral or even antagonistic country is a different proposition than a raid into enemy territory in wartime. A president can attempt operations in war and be forgiven if they fail, whereas a president who launches a sneak attack (which is what a raid is) against a much weaker opponent in peacetime and fails can only expect derision. Contrast the Son Tay raid to free U.S. prisoners of war in North Vietnam to the Desert One raid launched by Jimmy Carter to free the hostages in Iran. Both were technically failures. The Son Tay raid reached its objectives, but the prisoners had been moved. The Desert One force ran into a series of technical problems, lost a C-130 transport plane and two helicopters, and aborted. However, the Son Tay force was able to attack secondary targets and it sent a message to the leadership in Hanoi that no place in the country was entirely safe. Most Americans felt that it was a valiant effort and well worth the risk. The Desert One fiasco just made Jimmy Carter — and the United States — look weak, incompetent, and foolish.

Because we are not at war with anybody at the moment, not even the current members of the “axis of evil,” any C/T raid will more resemble the conditions of Desert One than Son Tay. The risks will be enormous, and anything other than spectacular success will be held up as evidence of arrogance and incompetence. Even spectacular success will likely only be temporary, as is also true

96 Chuck Spinney, “Boyd’s Question: Are Sactions on Iraq a Sensible Grand Strategy?” *Defense and the National Interest*, September 24, 2000, <http://www.d-n-i.net/fcs/comments/c388.htm>. Franklin C. “Chuck” Spinney was one of Boyd’s closest associates. He is the author of *Defense Facts of Life* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1985) and graced the cover of the March 7, 1983, issue of *Time*.

of counter-proliferation raids, because in either case, raids alone rarely make fundamental changes in a country's political system. This does not mean that it should never be used. Raiding Afghanistan to kill bin Laden and destroy al-Qaida was a reasonable option after 9/11. Whether to raid Pakistan in an attempt to perform the same mission today is a much dicier question. Future presidents will confront decisions such as these, and they must summon up the moral courage and leadership to deal with the inevitable armchair hawks who do not appreciate the risks or choose, for their own political gains, to ignore them.

The bottom line on raiding is that it remains an option, but it doesn't require more forces, particularly special operations forces, than the 50,000 or so that we have today.⁹⁷

Counter-terrorism Option: Strike

A strike by missiles or aircraft requires even better intelligence than raids — in a raid there is at least the possibility to seal off and quickly search an area, whereas in a strike, the target's location at the time of the attack must be known exactly. The potential results from strikes are also more limited than those of raids: a strike can only destroy; a raid can do that, even more surgically, but it can also plant surveillance devices and booby traps, capture personnel, disperse stay-behind special operations forces, collect documents, interview locals or assassinate guerrilla leaders — imagination and time providing the only limitations. Perhaps worst of all, even when successful, strikes have shown no ability to deter or destroy guerrilla groups. They may, on occasion, kill individuals associated with such groups, although it is always easy for the groups to deny it. It is also easy for them to take reporters to the area the next day and show the schools and mosques that were destroyed and the bodies of women and children who were killed (the question of whether the women and children were present at the time of the strike being irrelevant).

Politically, counter-terrorism strikes are easy decisions for presidents because they don't risk American lives when carried out. Morally, however,

97 Troop strength figures are from Andrew Feickert, "U.S. Special Operations Forces (SOF): Background and issues for Congress," *Congressional Research Service*, September 28, 2004, <http://www.fas.org/man/crs/RS21048.pdf>; United States Special Operations Command, Posture Statement 2006, <http://www.socom.mil/Docs/2006%20USSOCOM%20Posture%20Statement%20final.pdf>. Conclusions about the adequacy of this force are, of course, the my own.

this safety comes at great costs. It reveals the United States to the rest of the world, and particularly to supporters and potential supporters of the groups in question, as cowards. At least in a raid, U.S. citizens are at risk — even if for a short time — and as with the Israelis at Entebbe, the world may appreciate our courage, skill, and audacity, even if they don't support our cause.

Because counter-terrorism is essentially a moral conflict — we are trying to get the people who support and harbor such groups to quit identifying with them and to support instead their own government or other authority that doesn't threaten us — moral and presumably physical cowardice puts points on the board for the other side. Who wants to identify with cowards?

Therefore, despite the prospects for immediate gratification, strike should be a rarely used military option.

Counter-terrorism Option: Occupation

Occupation is also an option for dealing with a range of international irritations, from nuclear proliferators to terrorists, if, and this is a big "if," there is a willingness to actually occupy the target country. This means take over the country, deploy enough force to quickly suppress any opposition, and settle in for the duration, families and all. The allied occupations of Germany and Japan after World War II are sometimes cited as models for how this can work.

How many forces would be required? It hasn't been done successfully often enough to say for sure. At one extreme, the number could be small, if, for example, we use our own weapons of mass destruction to decimate the population and then, once the dust settles, occupy the remaining structures or build new ones.⁹⁸ This is the model that the Europeans inadvertently used to occupy the Americas, for example.

If, on the other hand, most of the population is left in place, nobody knows how many troops it might take. Estimates run as high as 5-10 percent of the population, which in Iraq would mean between 1.5 million to 3 million soldiers, plus other occupation elements including civilian governors, contractors and police (secret and otherwise). These estimates are extrapolations from the European and Japanese experience; but in those cases, there were declared wars, the losers lost and their governments surrendered, and in the case of Germany,

98 Edward Luttwak, "Dead End: Counterinsurgency warfare as military malpractice," *Harpers*, February 2007.

at least, the cultural differences with the occupiers were minor compared to the difference between occupiers and the occupied in Iraq.

It is important to keep in mind that the 1 million to 3 million troops figure is an estimate only for what would have been needed to run an occupation capable of keeping armed resistance at a manageable level. Given the differences in religion and the perceived American bias toward Israel, even this range may be conservative, especially if the occupation drags on. Nearly two-thirds of respondents to a recent poll of people in the Middle East, for example, believe that it is a major U.S. goal to “spread Christianity” in the region,⁹⁹ something that all Muslims must resist. So an occupation force of about 10 percent of the population might represent a reasonable initial planning estimate, but we should have contingency plans in place. Then-Army Chief of Staff Gen. Eric Shinseki, you may recall, was fired for telling Congress that a figure one-tenth of this size might be required.¹⁰⁰

What the administration did in Iraq, therefore, was seize what was probably the worst possible option: trying to occupy a country with a raiding-sized force. This suggests is that if we are going to rely on occupation as a counter-terrorism tool, we are going to need a vastly larger defense establishment than what we have now. It is straining DOD at the moment to keep a force in Iraq that even “surged,” amounts to fewer than 200,000 troops. So just to do Iraq, we would need a DOD perhaps three to five times larger. To put this in perspective, this would be a military establishment of some 5 million to 7 million troops, comparable to the one that won World War II.¹⁰¹ But there would be no Wehrmacht, no Luftwaffe and no Imperial Japanese Army and Navy for them to fight.

Before we can categorically conclude that military force is of limited utility in the post-Iraq world, however, we need to examine one last possibility:

99 Annie Jacobsen, “Only 3% of Pakistanis think Al Qaeda behind 9/11,” *The Aviation Nation*, April 24, 2007, <http://www.theaviationnation.com/2007/04/24/only-3-of-pakistanis-think-al-qaeda-behind-911/>.

100 Bacevich, *The New American Militarism*.

101 Bacevich makes that point that if we truly believed our rhetoric on Iraq — that failure would open the region to “genocidal violence, Iraq becoming a launching pad for terrorist attacks directed against the United States, the Middle East descending into chaos that consumes Israel, the oil-dependent global economy shattered beyond repair, all of this culminating in the emergence of a new Caliphate bent on destroying the West” — we would be willing to pay this price. See Andrew Bacevich, “Sycophantic savior,” *The American Conservative*, October 8, 2007, http://www.amconmag.com/2007/2007_09_24/article2.html

Perhaps military force could be useful, we're just not using it properly. Maybe there is a right way to do occupation, where we deploy forces into a country on a long-term basis, but only to help a foreign government put its own house in order. Maybe the great future hope for military utility is *counter-insurgency*.

Guerrilla warfare and counter-insurgency

Insurgencies are the types of conflict we are most likely to face for the foreseeable future, and therefore we must learn how to defeat enemies who practice this kind of war.¹⁰²

As the possibility of large-scale conventional war between real powers fades to insignificance, one might conclude that war between major powers and anybody else would be even less likely. If the major powers are unwilling to risk the end of the world by unleashing conflict on each other, then the mice scurrying between their feet should be even less eager to confront them. To an extent, this has happened. Weak states are no more likely to precipitate wars with powerful ones than they ever were, and in the cases where it has happened recently — Argentina against the United Kingdom or Serbia against NATO — the results have been predictable in result, if not in such details as length, cost or casualties.

A strange thing, however, sometimes happens when weak entities other than states confront even the strongest military powers: the non-state groups win. This has been especially true since the end of World War II, where it seems that one would have to be an especially inept guerrilla group to lose. Table IV shows some of the more significant state-vs.-something encounters:¹⁰³

102 John Nagl, "A Better War in Iraq," *Armed Forces Journal*, August 2006, <http://www.armedforcesjournal.com/2006/08/1931298>.

103 Expanding on a list offered by Martin van Creveld, *The Changing Face of War: Lessons of Combat from Marne to Iraq* (New York: Presidio Press, 2006), 220-221.

Table IV: Wars of National Liberation

Location	Power(s)	Result
Malaysia	U.K.	U.K. declares victory and leaves
Kenya	U.K.	U.K. leaves
Palestine	U.K.	U.K. leaves
Cyprus	U.K.	U.K. leaves
Aden (S. Yemen)	U.K.	U.K. leaves
Indonesia	The Netherlands	Dutch leave
Angola	Portugal	Portugal leaves
Mozambique	Portugal	Portugal leaves
Vietnam	France	France leaves
Vietnam	USA	USA leaves
Cambodia	Vietnam	Vietnam withdraws
Algeria	France	France leaves
Afghanistan	USSR	Soviets leave
Chechnya	Russia (1994 - 1996)	Russians leave
Lebanon (Hezbollah)	Israel	Israel withdraws

One of the U.S. Army's most influential counterinsurgency theorists is Lt. Col. John Nagl, author of *Counterinsurgency Lessons from Malaya and Vietnam: Learning to Eat Soup with a Knife*. In the article from which his quote, above, appears, he notes that:

However, successful attacks in Lebanon, Somalia, Saudi Arabia and the Gulf of Aden demonstrated that fighting the U.S. asymmetrically offers a much better chance for success. The endurance of the insurgencies in Afghanistan and Iraq has underlined the truth of this lesson for those who wish to do us harm to further their objectives.¹⁰⁴

As a result, some people, as Nagl's quote illustrates, have concluded that the national security policies of the United States and other developed countries should be refocused away from fighting other militaries in conventional, World War II-style battles and toward fighting guerrillas and irregular forces. Such a conclusion rests on the unstated assumption that there is a theory of counter-insurgency that, properly applied, could reverse the results of Table

104 Nagl, "A Better War in Iraq."

IV. If this is not the case, if Table IV represents the way the universe works rather than just poor counter-insurgency technique, then policy makers will have to seek other alternatives for dealing with armed non-state groups.

Before examining the utility, from a policy standpoint, of counter-insurgency theory and the alternatives to it, it is important to recognize that the uniformed military personnel — mainly soldiers and Marines — that are ordered into these areas have no choice but to learn and apply the best doctrine that they can. The implications for national security policy, however, are not that clear because policy-makers *do* have the option of not ordering an invasion and occupation. Each of Nagl's examples represented a decision by the United States to insert military forces into an area where there was no credible military force to oppose them, but where a sizable fraction of the civilian population did not want them. The people there would not be able to fight us, asymmetrically or otherwise, if we had not chosen to come into their areas and stay there. In the cases of Lebanon and Somalia, for example, we injected ourselves into other peoples' civil wars, and we have evolved into that situation in Iraq and Afghanistan.

This book only considers the national policy aspects of counter-insurgency, not the tactical effectiveness of its doctrine, an area best left to the practitioners. To use a medical metaphor, it is the difference between knowing when to operate and having great surgical technique.

Do insurgencies work?

Before exploring the policy implications of Nagl's suggestion to focus on counter-insurgency, it should be noted that not everyone agrees that insurgency is an effective form of warfare. Oddly enough, there are people who look at the record and declare that insurgencies rarely win.¹⁰⁵ One recent study even concluded that exactly 59 percent of all insurgencies fail, and Ralph Peters has proclaimed that 95 percent have historically failed.¹⁰⁶ Such commentators

105 Donald Stoker, "Insurgencies Rarely Win — And Iraq Won't Be Any Different (Maybe)," *Foreign Policy*, January 2007, http://www.foreignpolicy.com/story/cms.php?story_id=3689.

106 Jim Michaels, "Insurgencies like Iraq's usually last 10 years but fail, study says," *USA Today*, May 9, 2007. ; Ralph Peters, "12 Myths of 21st Century Warfare," *The American Legion Magazine*, November 2007. Peters does concede that the success rate has improved considerably since the mid-20th century.

can be quite creative in explaining the results of Table IV: The occupying power did not really try to win, or they could have won but did not use their full power, or they won militarily but lost in another way. One proponent of continued U.S. involvement in Iraq even pointed to the capture of Che Guevara, whose forces in Bolivia peaked at roughly 50 fighters, as an example of how to defeat guerrilla movements.¹⁰⁷

There are several important points exposed by attempts to explain away the success of insurgent movements since 1945. The first is that there is a fundamental difference between classical insurgency, which is simply a rebellion, an attempt to overthrow the government of a state, and what used to be called a “war of national liberation,” or a struggle to eject an occupying power. For example, Table V lists the unsuccessful insurgencies offered by one author as proof that they seldom work.¹⁰⁸

Table V: True Insurgencies

Location	Opponent	Result
Malaya	U.K. & Malaysian government	Claimed as victory by the U.K.
Greece	Greek government	Communists lost
Nicaragua	Sandinista government	Contras (backed by U.S.) lost
El Salvador	Salvadoran government	Communists lost
Bolivia	Bolivian government	Communists destroyed; Che Guevara killed
Angola	Angolan government	Savimbi (backed by U.S.) lost
Peru	Peruvian government	Leaders of Sendero Luminoso captured; movement quelled

Insurgencies can be defeated

The difference between the “real” insurgencies in this table and the wars of national liberation shown in the previous is stark.¹⁰⁹ Real insurgencies are

¹⁰⁷ Stoker, “Insurgencies rarely win.”

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ The Australian counter-insurgency expert, David Kilcullen, an author of the new counter-insurgency manual and an advisor to Gen. David Petraeus, also makes this distinction. However, he appears to regard it as a complicating factor rather than a major issue because it is only mentioned once in his Iraq lessons learned report. See “Counterinsurgency in Iraq: Theory and Practice, 2007,” unpublished presentation, October 2, 2007, 26, <http://www.wargaming.quantico.usmc.mil/Documents/Counterinsurgency%20in%20Iraq%20theory%20and%20practice2007.ppt?subject=Kilcullen%20COIN%20Theory>

difficult to carry through to completion because local governments have the option to make changes that will defuse the causes of the insurgency. They can combine these changes, which are generally political, social and economic reforms, with an appropriate level of coercion and often end “normal” insurgencies or reduce them to the level of street crime.¹¹⁰

But not by us

When contemplating the potential contribution of U.S. military forces to the effort, it is important to recognize the damage that calling in foreign troops does to the legitimacy of the local government. For this reason, the best strategy for the military forces of the United States in other people’s civil struggles is generally to stay out, the same prescription urged upon Britain and France during the U.S. Civil War, and which, after some initial hesitation, they accepted. The most productive role the United States could assume, along with our allies and the international community, is to encourage the local government to make the changes necessary to defuse support for the insurgents, at which point the international community should be generous with rebuilding aid.

This is the general strategy the United States followed in El Salvador, often cited as a case study in how the United States can defeat insurgencies. However, it was not the U.S. military that defeated the FMLN guerrillas, but the Salvadoran government. The primary job of the United States was to get the government to make the changes necessary for it to survive:

El Salvador is a small country close to the United States, but the United States spent nearly \$6 billion in assistance plus a tremendous amount of political capital, time, and attention. Put simply, the extent of change necessary to prepare a government for effective counter-insurgency is immense. It requires not only changing institutions and procedures, but attitudes and values. The final costs of consolidating counterinsurgency — of making it permanent — are still not clear.¹¹¹

110 Ralph Peters, “The World After the ‘Age of Ideology,’” JINSA Online, April 8, 2007, <http://www.jinsa.org/articles/view.html?documentid=3748>

111 Stephen Metz, *Counterinsurgency: Strategy and the Phoenix of American Capability* (Carlisle, Penn.: Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, 1995), 17.

Is training the silver bullet?

Perhaps the mission that is most often suggested for foreign forces in counter-insurgency is training government soldiers to take charge of their own security. This sounds so reasonable: If the government forces are not succeeding, then what they probably need is more training. The issue for national security policy, however, is whether training provides a reliable tool to use against insurgencies.

In Iraq, for example, we spent billions of dollars on training, but Iraqi units not infrequently refused to stand against attacks. They were adequately trained, but not willing to die for the Iraqi government. The effort we expended on training Iraqis also raises the question of who was training the insurgents, who obviously were willing to die for their causes. In other words, why should lack of training be a major problem when all the advantages in this area — including funding, expert advisors, training materials and equipment, and advanced schooling abroad — should go to the government?

Wars of national liberation are different

The one good thing that can be said about training and advising foreign governments in counter-insurgency is that they don't cost much in either American lives or treasure. This situation unravels quickly, though, when outside powers decide to show the locals how it's done and occupy a foreign country with their own troops. In this case, as shown in Table IV, they face a difficult and uphill struggle. This was not always true, incidentally. The United States successfully occupied the Philippines and put down the "Philippine Insurrection" between 1899 and 1902. The infant Soviet Union suppressed a vast insurrection involving several countries seeking independence in the civil war of 1918-1921. And the European colonial powers maintained their control, and even extended it in some cases, throughout the interwar years.

All these cases are ancient history and should be ignored. Conditions since the end of World War II differ so much from earlier eras that most "lessons" from that period are specious. In particular, colonial powers usually moved in for the duration, with a large military presence and extensive settlement by civilians. The smart ones co-opted the existing leadership and developed enough knowledge of the country to be able to play off the various indigenous factions against each other. These measures sometimes enabled them to extend their occupations over several generations. The old colonial powers did

not, however, discover the philosopher's stone of counter-insurgency. They were continually putting down rebellions in the hinterlands and otherwise suppressing opposition, sometimes with a ferocious brutality that would be impossible in this era of modern communications. In the end, their successes were temporary and unless the original inhabitants were almost eliminated (as in the United States, Australia and Canada), the colonial occupations failed and the occupiers left.

This historical summary raises an interesting question.

Is counter-insurgency a myth?

Van Creveld takes the ultimate step in dismissing the applicability of modern counter-insurgency theory:

The first, and absolutely indispensable, thing to do is to throw overboard 99 percent of the literature on counter-insurgency, counter-guerrilla, counter-terrorism, and the like. Since most of it has been written by the losing side, it is of little value.¹¹²

This argument, however may go too far, as there are special circumstances where modern counter-insurgency theory is of great value, and Chapter VI will address these. It is important, though, to recognize that all of Western counter-insurgency theory is being written by military organizations that have either never done it, or never done it successfully. A similar argument could be made about Western states training local governments to do counter-insurgency.

This still leaves the argument that counter-insurgency — in the sense of countering opposition to an occupation because, as already seen, defeating a classical insurgency against a government is doable if the government involved wants to do it — might indeed be possible, but no one has figured out how. Perhaps a group or leader more creative than ourselves could fashion a course of action that did not occur to us.

There were claims of success for counter-insurgency theory in Iraq.¹¹³ Closer examination shows, however, that most of these involved villages, towns

112 Martin van Creveld, *The changing face of war*, 268.

113 See for example, Dave Kilcullen, "Edward Luttwak's 'Counterinsurgency Malpractice'," *Small Wars Journal*, April 15, 2007, <http://smallwarsjournal.com/blog/2007/04/edward-luttwaks-counterinsurge-1/>.

or neighborhoods expelling foreign fighters that had come in uninvited or for which the locals had no further use. The vast majority of the Sunni fighters, for example, were native Sunni militias — Iraqi nationalists or Baathists¹¹⁴ — who appear to have had the support of the local population. They were, of course, immune to American counter-insurgency theory.

In the post-Iraq world, a more productive question than whether counter-insurgency theory is a myth is whether counter-insurgency provides a useful or even useable tool of national security policy.

To raise this question is not to imply that counter-insurgency theory might never work. As the tables above show, however, experience suggests it will prove so unreliable that future administrations would be wise not to get themselves into situations where it provides our only recourse. The data show, in fact, that when the military is used for purposes other than the defeat of another military force, the odds swing in favor of the weaker opponent. In particular, interventions by major powers since the end of World War II that depended on “target compliance,” which includes counter-insurgency, were unsuccessful nearly two-thirds of the time.¹¹⁵ These data include operations by the Soviet Union and China. It is not correct, therefore, to say that counter-insurgency never works, but as Sullivan’s study of 122 interventions shows, it is unpredictable and unreliable.

History also suggests that if outside forces intervene, even with the best of intentions, and if events do spin out of control, then massive human tragedies will result. Having ignited the conflagration, there will be nothing anyone can do to stop it unless there is a willingness to occupy the country with overwhelming force.¹¹⁶ To return to the surgical example, if counter-occupation insurgencies are like post-operative infections — a common metaphor — then once they get started even the best surgical techniques will be of limited value against them.

Before moving on to examine this argument in more detail, it is worthwhile to look at one exception to this rule, which Bill Lind¹¹⁷ and Martin van

114 Juan Cole, “The Bushies Just Make It Up: Iraq and al-Qaeda,” *Informed Comment*, May 24, 2007, <http://www.juancole.com/2007/05/bushies-just-made-it-up-saddam-al-qaeda.html>.

115 Sullivan, “War Aims and War Outcomes.”

116 Byman and Pollack, “Things fall apart.”

117 William Lind, “Strategic Defense Initiative,” *Defense and the National Interest*, 2004, http://www.d-n-i.net/lind/lind_strategic_defense.htm, see also *The American Conservative*, November 22, 2004.

Creveld¹¹⁸ call the “Hama” solution, that seems to work reasonably well. It is also sometimes called the “Roman” solution because it was first documented by the Roman historian Tacitus, who observed of the campaign to pacify Britain that the legions had “made a desert and called it ‘peace.’” The “Hama” name comes from the late Syrian dictator Hafez al-Assad’s use of the strategy to eliminate opposition by several hundred members of the Muslim Brotherhood in the town of Hama in 1982. The concept is that if you kill enough people, and al-Assad may have killed as many as 20,000 in that one operation, you can end the insurgency. It’s a common temptation once one finds oneself in the cul-de-sac of a national liberation movement (the late American Gen. Curtis LeMay proposed this same technique for Vietnam: “Bomb them back to the Stone Age.”) If there are no people, or no people willing to act against the interveners’ or occupiers’ interests, then there is no sea for the guerrilla to swim in.

Although attrition warfare of this sort has an appeal among amateur strategists of a “realist” bent, it is not that straightforward. For one thing, if you don’t use enough force and kill enough people, the effect may only be temporary. The survivors will regroup, learn their lessons from the first onslaught, and restart the insurgency. All you’ve done is weeded out the weak insurgents and trained and motivated the rest.¹¹⁹ The other complication is that al-Assad was using the technique in classic counter-insurgency, that is, against people trying to overthrow him in his own country. It cannot be stressed too much that lots of things work for governments that do not work for occupiers.

The Nazis, for example, were unable to secure the Russian territories that they conquered despite brutality unrestrained by human emotion. As a result, they had to devote increasing numbers of troops to protecting their supply lines. To a lesser extent, they had this problem throughout their empire, which probably doomed it to extinction regardless of how the battles for Moscow and Stalingrad had turned out. As van Creveld notes, they would have been trying to suppress liberation movements throughout Europe with a force that amounted to something like 0.5 percent of the population of the occupied lands.¹²⁰

118 Martin van Creveld, *The changing face of war*.

119 This is a well-known phenomenon in evolutionary processes and is often termed the “Darwinian ratchet.”

120 Martin van Creveld, *The changing face of war*, 216. Some 50 years later, and with tools of coercion similar to the Nazis’, the Soviet Union proved unable to hold its occupied territories.

Even in the modern world, brutality has its drawbacks. It is true that if the government hasn't waited so long that it has lost the loyalty of a majority of its citizens, then it can brutally suppress an insurrection by a minority and explain it as being in the national interest.¹²¹ But brutality is less effective when used by an outsider. It didn't work for the French in Algeria, nor more recently for the Indonesians in East Timor.¹²² Against ideological groups, such as al-Qaida, the use of force can actually confirm claims by the group that their region or religion are under attack by outside forces.¹²³ Thus, perversely, the more force used, the more force is needed, and atrocities of some sort or another are only a matter of time.

In the age of the Internet the list of countries that could hope to keep mass atrocities secret, which never included the United States, can only shrink. So as far as the United States is concerned, the Hama and similar solutions that rely on force will have to remain an illusion living only in the fetid imaginations of neo-cons and pseudo-macho journalists.

With the Hama solution by Western democracies firmly ruled out, the question that remains is whether counter-insurgency to support an occupation could potentially be done right. It's not a matter of the United States today being smarter or even better than those failures in Table IV; instead, the issue is whether enough has been learned from the failures of predecessors to make counter-insurgency a useful tool of national policy.

Unfortunately, the answer is no, and it is "no," not because there is more yet to learn but because the whole premise behind counter-insurgency — that a government has gotten itself into a situation where it is mortally threatened by its own citizens but could be saved by the correct application of American military power — is rarely if ever valid. Most important for the next administration, there is no way to determine ahead of the fact whether a proposed intervention represents one of those rare cases where counter-insurgency might work.

121 Martin van Creveld, *The changing face of war*, 242-246.

122 David Kilcullen, "Twenty-Eight Articles: Fundamentals of Company-level Counterinsurgency," *Military Review* LXXXVI, no. 3 (May/June 2006).

123 David Gompert, "Heads we win: the cognitive side of counterinsurgency (COIN)," (Santa Monica, CA: RAND National Defense Research Institute, 2007), 13.

Four points support this argument:

- ▶ First, there have been too few successful modern counter-insurgencies to make any theory valid (again, using “insurgency” in the sense of resisting an occupier).
- ▶ When the United States does intervene, we often pick the wrong side, thereby guaranteeing that any successes we do achieve will be temporary and will cause us problems in the future.
- ▶ In attempting to deal with the lack of validity of modern theory, we ask U.S. forces on the ground to do things that cannot be done. Those things that they can do, on the other hand, may help them achieve their local missions, but they will have *at best* no effect on the outcome of the conflict.
- ▶ Finally, the whole notion of “winning” makes no sense because unless the occupying forces engage in genocide, the insurgents can always wait them out.

The next several sections will examine each of these in turn.

Scenarios count

In the post-Soviet world, with its multiplicity of local power centers and causes for conflict, it is impossible to take most tactics from one conflict and generalize them to universal applicability. Whereas the principles of armored warfare were thought to be generally the same whether at Kursk, the Golan Heights or the Fulda Gap, lessons supposedly learned fighting one set of guerrillas may be misleading when applied in a different area. Sir Rupert Smith relates an experience that illustrates this phenomenon well. He tells of meeting several veterans of the unsuccessful attempt by white Rhodesians to defeat the movement to establish majority rule in what is now Zimbabwe.¹²⁴ They had carefully studied the techniques that seemed to work in Malaya and had fashioned them into a doctrine for winning guerrilla wars. However, despite their best efforts at applying their military “lessons learned,” they were unsuccessful in suppressing the 14-year rebellion in Zimbabwe. The reason for

¹²⁴ Smith, *The Utility of Force*.

this failure was not military but political: In Malaya, the government — first the British colonial government but later the indigenous regime dominated by ethnic Malays — granted political and property rights that had been lacking among supporters of the insurgency, who were overwhelmingly of Chinese descent. As Smith notes, however, the situation in Rhodesia was quite different in this regard.¹²⁵ Crucially, white Rhodesians were not about to grant the majority population political and property rights, and for this reason, support for the guerrilla movement stayed strong enough, long enough, to bring the insurgents to power.

It could be argued that the root of their failure lay in thinking that there was a military solution. This orientation deterred them from trying to create a political solution that might, as it did in South Africa, have stood a chance of working.

This episode shows how difficult it is to construct a general theory based on the episodic examples of successful counterinsurgency, especially one where an outside power is involved. There are just too few examples, and those few differ in so many critical areas, including ethnicity mix, religious mix, wealth distribution, length of occupation by foreigners, terrain, and the capabilities and intentions of their neighbors.

Often, we're on the wrong side

Although Americans often forgot it during the Cold War, armed resistance to repression has been an intrinsic part of the Western political tradition, enshrined in the Declaration of Independence.¹²⁶

According to the new Army/Marine Corps counterinsurgency (COIN) manual,¹²⁷ the goal of counterinsurgency is to “use all instruments of national power to sustain the established or emerging government and reduce the likelihood of another crisis emerging.”¹²⁸ In other words, counterinsurgency doctrine will often encourage intervention in favor of governments that have

125 Smith, *The Utility of Force*, 206.

126 Metz, *Counterinsurgency: Strategy and the Phoenix of American Capability*.

127 U.S. Department of the Army, *Counterinsurgency (FM 3-24/MCDP 3-33.5)* (Fort Leavenworth, Kan.: U.S. Army Combined Arms Center, 2006).

128 *Ibid.*, 1-1.

lost the support of their own people. Before sending in U.S. military forces, our national political leadership should ask how the local government got itself into this situation and whether it wouldn't be best to let it be replaced, even if such a course would seem to jeopardize some important U.S. interests.

The new manual, to give it credit, recognizes that insurgency is about governance:

Long-term success in COIN depends on the people taking charge of their own affairs and consenting to the government's rule. Achieving this condition requires the government to eliminate as many causes of the insurgency as feasible.¹²⁹

Unfortunately, the manual does not appear to recognize that insurgencies blossom out of control when a large number of people come to believe that "taking charge of their own affairs" means *not* "consenting to the government's rule." It is, of course, when they are in imminent danger of being overthrown that governments think of some excuse — counterterrorism has replaced anti-communism as the cause *du jour* — that will attract outside intervention.

Viva la revolución!

"I hold it that a little rebellion now and then is a good thing, and as necessary in the political world as storms in the physical."

— *Thomas Jefferson, letter to James Madison, Jan. 30, 1787*

We seem to have forgotten that we are a revolutionary system, created to promote liberty, not to maximize security. (Ironically, one of the most common arguments of the Loyalist side in the Revolution was that it would be madness to dispense with the system of good government and security that the British crown provided.) What this means is that, quite often, if we take the bait, we will be supporting the side that does not reflect our ideals.

The United States should consider that other people may also need to gain or protect their independence through insurgency. Conversely, it is difficult to imagine how a government that retains the loyalty of the majority of its citizens could be overthrown by insurgency. It would be impossible in a

129 Ibid.

democracy: If enough people want to replace the government, they just vote them out. In that sense, every election is an insurgency, and obviously, the United States has no business interfering in other democracies. This suggests that democracy, as maligned a concept as it appears to be after the way it was used to shield the prevarications that led to the invasion of Iraq, is indeed a powerful tool to resolve armed insurgencies. Unfortunately, as in Rhodesia and Algeria (1992), it often calls for the entrenched elites that run the government to share power and make other reforms, which are the very things that they refuse to do. The contrast between South Africa, a rare case where the elites did make fundamental changes, and Zimbabwe is striking.

If the United States is going to promote democracy, even in the limited sense of non-violent change of government, then much of the time, we should be supporting the insurgency. This is often true even if the insurgents are not what most Americans would consider as full-blown advocates of electoral democracy.¹³⁰ At least we will start with good relations with the new regime. Had the United States sided with Ho Chi Minh, as he invited us to do, rather than with the French occupiers, several million more Vietnamese and Americans could have enjoyed their old age, and the Vietnamese might have been spared the worst excesses of a generation of communism. If the United States is not going to support the insurgency, then our focus, along with that of the international community, should be on damping out the causes of the insurgency as quickly as possible and so avoiding prolonged, state-destroying conflict.¹³¹ In either case, the focus on counterinsurgency as always supporting the government must change.

Back in the days of international communism, the idea was that a powerful global organization was infiltrating innocent countries and somehow subverting democratic governments. Counterinsurgency was the way to play in this arena; bad guy outsiders were coming in so good-guy outsiders were going to help. It never happened because the whole scenario was false. Those communist governments that were established were either imposed by the Red Army, as in Eastern Europe, or by a few insurgencies that overthrew governments that had scant political support to begin with, most notably Cuba and China. Even there, the impact of international communism was over-rated because, as

130 Steven Metz, *Rethinking Insurgency* (Carlisle, Pa.: U.S. Army War College, 2007).

131 *Ibid.*, 50.

Mao was to learn, the fact that the insurgencies employed communist rhetoric, and thereby became beneficiaries of Moscow's money and advice, was often more than offset by its tendency to micromanage.¹³²

Armed revolutionaries — whether Maoist, Marxists, jihadist or otherwise — can only threaten an established government if a sizable number of people support the insurgents' cause to the extent that they are willing to get themselves and their families killed. In parts of the world, religious differences can provide such a force, and Christianity can be just as effective as Islam, as Northern Ireland and Bosnia demonstrate. If it were about religion alone, however, what would be the point of U.S. intervention? If enough people choose to adopt the religious practices of the insurgents, there is nothing we can do to stop them. The United States and the international community should begin preparations to relocate refugees who do not want to live under them.

If the people do support the government, and armed religious zealots started causing trouble, they will be policed up without further incident.¹³³ In all cases where an insurgency was able to take root, the fundamental cause was that the respective governments had lost the loyalties of a sizable segment of the population within the affected areas. Once this happens, all it takes is a catalyst, a seed — “vanguard” in Marxist theory — around which the insurgency can organize. As a side note, consider the unsuccessful interventions made by the United States during the Cold War to fight communist insurgencies: China, Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia and Cuba. Of these, only Cuba still runs a communist system today.

Can we persuade the government to change?

Current counterinsurgency theory, as documented in the new Army/Marine Corps manual, recognizes that the existing government is often the source of its own problems. The manual, for example, states that “The primary objective of any COIN operation is to foster development of effective governance by a legitimate government.”¹³⁴ This, then becomes the focus of operations:

132 Philip Short, *Mao: A Life* (New York: Henry Holt & Company: 1999).

133 The handling of the Branch Davidians in Waco, 1993, illustrates the power of legitimacy: Although the policing was messy and the final results horrific, the incident did not precipitate an insurgency.

134 U.S. Army, *Counterinsurgency*, 1-21.

In working to understand the problem, commanders and staffs determine what the HN [host nation] population defines as effective and legitimate governance. This understanding continues to evolve as information is developed. Commanders and staffs must continually diagnose what they understand legitimacy to mean to the HN population. The population's expectations will influence all ensuing operations. Additionally, planners may also consider perceptions of legitimacy held by outside supporters of the HN government and the insurgents. Differences between U.S., local, and international visions of legitimacy can further complicate operations.¹³⁵

Although understanding foreign cultures is a laudable goal, this paragraph presents American military commanders with an impossible objective because it requires their staffs to define what people in a foreign country — with culture(s) that are unfamiliar and language(s) that are incomprehensible — will regard as legitimate. The manual does recognize that this may be an uphill struggle:

In most COIN operations in which U.S. forces participate, insurgents hold a distinct advantage in their level of local knowledge.¹³⁶

One would think so. Unless the insurgency is occurring on U.S. soil, one is at a loss of when this would not be the case. If the local government has dug itself such a deep pit that it is threatened by insurgents who know less about the situation than do American troops, the effort is truly hopeless.

All modern counterinsurgency manuals fall into this trap: They require the intervening powers to do things that foreigners cannot do. For example:

- ▶ Control the population.¹³⁷ If the local government cannot do this, what chance does an outsider stand? Other than through Hama/genocide, when has it ever been done successfully by foreigners? Why, in particular, would a foreign population submit to control

135 Ibid., 1-21, 1-22.

136 Ibid., 1-23.

137 Terry Daly, "Classic counterinsurgency: The key to victory against today's insurgents," *Marine Corps Gazette* (December 2006): 53-57.

by American troops? This is not to deny that military forces can establish temporary control of a specific area through imposition of martial law.

- ▶ Establish a court system,¹³⁸ an endeavor that requires both a deep understanding of the various cultural and legal philosophies in the occupied country and the willingness of the local population to accept as legitimate a system of justice imposed by outsiders.
- ▶ Turn every rifleman into an intelligence analyst.¹³⁹ Unfortunately both rifleman and intelligence analyst are full-time jobs, suggesting that those who propose this course may be underestimating the level of experience and training needed to be a productive intelligence analyst.
- ▶ Establish security.¹⁴⁰ This is putting the cart before the horse as far as foreign troops are concerned. Security will follow from a government that the overwhelming majority of the population regards as legitimate, and the presence of American troops deals a heavy blow to the legitimacy of any government
- ▶ Separate the population from the insurgents.¹⁴¹ Again, how do foreign troops do this? If the insurgency has so much support that the threatened government has felt it necessary to call in U.S. troops, how do our soldiers sort out insurgents from loyalists? As Lawrence Kaplan once asked, “Population security depends on the assumption that U.S. forces can insulate the populace from insurgents and militias. But how do you isolate the population from the population?”¹⁴²

The fact is that there are few cases of outsiders intervening successfully on *either* side in a civil war.¹⁴³ Where the United States intervenes to support

138 Eliot Cohen, Conrad Crane, Jan Horvath and John Nagl, “Principles, imperatives, and paradoxes of counterinsurgency,” *Military Review* 86. no. 2 (March-April 2006): 49-53.

139 Nagl, “A better war in Iraq.”

140 U.S. Army, *Counterinsurgency*, 1-23.

141 Daly, “Classic counterinsurgency,” 54; 3-24; 1-3.

142 Andrew Krepinevich, “The ‘new’ counterinsurgency doctrine and the Baghdad surge formula for success?” Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessment, February 27, 2007, 7.

143 Byman and Pollack, “Things fall apart.”

a government, the most likely outcome is that our presence will relieve any sense of urgency that might motivate the government to make the changes that will restore its legitimacy and thus that the causes of the insurgency will remain unresolved.

Despite the injunction to American commanders to figure out what the locals will regard as legitimate, one outcome seems certain: Any government established by or propped up by foreign troops will be *illegitimate*, and puppet governments tend not to survive long once the occupiers have left.

Ties go to the insurgents

Nothing is over until we decide it is.

— Bluto, *Animal House*, 1978

In addition to its spotty track record and the episodic nature of its employment, counterinsurgency suffers from another defect that limits its usefulness to future administrations. This is the phenomenon that “ties” go to the insurgents. At first, this seems counterintuitive because the insurgents must overthrow the government in order to win, while the government has only not to lose. However, this fact is balanced by the need for the insurgents only to win once. As Henry Kissinger so famously observed, so long as the insurgents don’t quit, they win. Insurgents can lose innumerable military engagements — the Sandinistas lost practically every one¹⁴⁴ — and still come to power if the government for any reason folds its cards.

As the discussion above shows, this factor alone is often not enough to enable the insurgents to overthrow reasonably strong local governments — most civil war insurgencies do fail or result in political settlements short of a seizure of power. When the cause of the insurgency is resistance to an outside power, however, the odds reverse. So long as the insurgents maintain their political base, that is, so long as they retain enough support from the population to be able to establish safe areas, recruit and train new members, and plan operations, all the while remaining invisible to the occupiers, then they can prosecute the insurgency forever.¹⁴⁵

144 Thomas Hammes, *The Sling and the Stone* (St. Paul, MN: Zenith, 2004).

145 The Vietnamese fought Chinese occupation for the better part of a thousand years. See Hammes, *The Sling and the Stone*, 68-69.

A couple of scenarios

Suppose that instead of trying to take control of a government, the insurgents are just trying to carve out a slice of territory for themselves. At first, this might seem to change the logic for U.S. military intervention, namely to help the government preserve its territorial integrity, but it actually does not. All it means is that the government has lost the support of a significant fraction of the people in that area, often because the government represents one ethnic group and the insurgents represent another. Regardless of the reason, U.S. policy-makers should ask themselves, “So what?” If a humanitarian crisis is brewing, then the United States should work with the international community to alleviate it. In this case, the rebellious provinces may have good reason to want to break free, as in Darfur, which may require violating the territorial integrity of the country — the solution eventually imposed on Yugoslavia. It is important to remember that many state boundaries around the world are artificial creations of colonial powers and were drawn by the occupiers in order to control subject populations, not to help them lead independent and productive lives. This is just recognizing reality and should not tempt future administrations into choosing sides in somebody else’s civil war.

Another situation: Suppose an international criminal organization is attempting to gain control of a country or a piece of a country in order to carry out its nefarious schemes? The first question for the international community is “Why is the government so weak that outsiders can come in and take over?” That’s the real problem. The next question is “What can foreign military forces allied to the government do?” Ironically, the best course might sometimes be to let the insurgents try their hand. Any group that seizes power exchanges one set of problems — how to run a successful insurgency — for another — how to hold territory and govern populations. People who are good at one are rarely good at the other. In any case, an insurgent group that comes to power even in a territory or province has now thrown off the cloak of invisibility that enabled them to survive the government’s superior firepower. Unless they themselves want to engage in counterinsurgency, instead of world domination, they will have to worry about meeting the needs and aspirations of the people they have just liberated. They are now a state, and the developed world knows how to deal with states. It was remarkably easy to defeat the Taliban and al-Qaida when they governed Afghanistan; it is a different problem today.

The problem is the occupation

Like the theory of counterinsurgency itself, people are divided on whether occupations can be done right. That is, was Iraq possible, just bungled, or does it represent the most likely case in future scenarios?

The most eloquent proponent of the Iraq-was-bungled argument is probably Tom Barnett. In his 2004 book, *The Pentagon's New Map*, and its 2005 sequel, *Blueprint for Action*, he argues that if the developed world would put the focus on restructuring, and regard the initial invasion merely as an enabler, then the impetus for insurgency would be reduced to the point where it could easily be suppressed. He calls the restructuring function “system administration” (SysAdmin) and claims where Iraq is concerned that:

As part of the Bush White House’s sale to the American public on the war, however, all efforts were made to conduct the follow-on SysAdmin function with the smallest number of troops possible. This decision, along with several other key mistakes, allowed an insurgency to form inside Iraq and begin a low-intensity conflict with the United States-led occupational forces that has occasionally flared into high-intensity sieges of major cities occupied by various insurgency forces.¹⁴⁶

There is, in Barnett’s view, a right way to do occupations, but the problem with Iraq is that the United States and its coalition botched it. This view is echoed by most believers in the rightness of the invasion — otherwise how to explain the terrible aftermath?

Bush, Cheney, Rumsfeld, and Tommy Franks spent most of their time and energy on the least demanding task — defeating Saddam’s weakened conventional forces — and the least amount on the most demanding — rehabilitation of and security for the new Iraq.¹⁴⁷

Are they right? Is it possible *not* to botch an occupation? More important, is there a theory of occupation that future policy-makers could rely upon to make military incursion into foreign countries a useable tool? This is not an

146 Thomas Barnett, *Blueprint for Action: A Future Worth Creating* (New York: Putnam, 2005), 56-57.

147 Michael R. Gordon and General Bernard E. Trainor, *Cobra II: The inside story on the invasion and occupation of Iraq* (New York: Pantheon, 2006), 503.

academic issue, because Barnett is probably correct when he observes that future administrations will be sorely tempted:

There is overwhelming historical evidence, I believe, alerting us to the reality that America will inevitably engage in frequent efforts at postconflict stabilization and nation building in the coming decades.¹⁴⁸

Or, as former Secretary of State Colin Powell related in his memoirs, Madeline Albright once asked him “What’s the point of having this superb military you’re always talking about if we can’t use it?”

Does occupation always lead to insurgency?

As demonstrated by all of the experience listed in Table IV and now by Iraq, there is not a validated theory of counterinsurgency that will come to the rescue if an insurgency takes root in a country that has been invaded. So the critical issue — in fact the only issue of consequence — becomes: Under what conditions will military occupation of another area of the world (which may or may not be a “country” in any significant sense) lead to insurgency? Here’s the answer offered by the military’s new counterinsurgency manual:

Sometimes societies are most prone to unrest not when conditions are the worst, but when the situation begins to improve and people’s expectations rise. For example, when major combat operations conclude, people may have unrealistic expectations of the United States’ capability to improve their lives. The resulting discontent can fuel unrest and insurgency. At such times, the influences of globalization and the international media may create a sense of relative deprivation, contributing to increased discontent as well.¹⁴⁹

This statement makes insurgency sound somewhat likely. It is, in fact, more than likely because an occupation always involves attempts to control the

148 Barnett, *Blueprint for Action*, 31. On October 10, 2007, Defense Secretary Gates reinforced this perception by telling the Army that operations like Iraq and Afghanistan would “remain the mainstay of the contemporary battlefield for some time.” See Robert M. Gates, remarks delivered to the Association of the United States Army, October 10, 2007, <http://www.defenselink.mil/speeches/speech.aspx?speechid=1181>. Note his use of the word “battlefield” to describe what are, in reality, the areas where the insurgents — and the people — live.

149 U.S. Army, *Counterinsurgency*, 1-3.

population, which inevitably leads to coercion. As Sir Rupert concluded, and this might be especially relevant to a country that plans to use “all elements of national power” to fight insurgencies:

The dangers and costs of coercing the people have already been discussed, and if, as history keeps showing, they are used, then the coercive measures must be maintained, or the spirit of freedom and independence will break out.¹⁵⁰

A democracy like the United States cannot maintain coercion over another people indefinitely, so the only conclusion is that insurgency is likely. People do not like to be occupied by foreigners, even if it's for their own good, especially by foreigners who espouse blasphemous religions and immoral cultures.¹⁵¹

If occupation likely leads towards attempts to eject the occupier, and if there is no good way to deal with such insurgencies, then the United States and the wider international community should probably rule out occupation as a tool of national security policy unless, and this should always be stressed, unless we are willing to commit such overwhelming force to the occupation that it cannot but succeed, if only through the Hama solution. It should also be stressed that there is no way to know beforehand how much force and other resources will eventually be required, and so the temptation will be to underestimate.

Counter the insurgents or counter the insurgency?

All of the above suggests that future policy-makers will be unable to count on U.S. military force to prop up client regimes or otherwise suppress local opposition to an occupation. Then what do we do, let al-Qaida take over the Middle East? The Mid-West? Fortunately these are not the only options. For one thing, al-Qaida or other violent ideological groups could only “take over” the Middle East if a sizable number of its inhabitants see them as alternatives preferable to corrupt or ineffective local regimes (which was the way the Taliban took control in Afghanistan). Should that ever become the case, it isn't clear what a few hundred thousand U.S. troops could do to thwart the desires of several hundred million people.

150 Smith, *The Utility of Force*, 277.

151 Richards, *Neither Shall the Sword*.

There might, however, be roles for U.S. military forces that could improve America's standing in the region and that do not involve attempting to enforce an occupation. There is an intriguing school of thought, illustrated by the work of Steven Metz at the U.S. Army War College, that the function of outside powers in an insurgency should not be to defeat the insurgents, because that is generally impossible for outside forces to do, but to extinguish the insurgency itself.¹⁵² This might be considered as the “wet blanket” approach to dealing with civil wars.

As Metz notes:

[T]he U.S. goal should not automatically be the defeat of the insurgents by the regime (which may be impossible and which the regime may not even want), but the most rapid conflict resolution possible. In other words, a quick and sustainable resolution which integrates insurgents into the national power structure is less damaging to U.S. national interests than a protracted conflict which leads to the complete destruction of the insurgents. Protracted conflict, not insurgent victory, is the threat.¹⁵³

Protracted conflict is the threat because the longer the conflict persists, the greater the danger of destabilization elsewhere in the region and the interruption of resource flows, and perhaps most significant, the more opportunity violent transnational groups have to recruit, train, and vet leaders for operations elsewhere.¹⁵⁴

What can the United States and other countries do to damp out such conflicts? Metz advises that the United States should resist the temptation to intervene in support of the government. The best policy for any outsider in a communal conflict:

[I]s not to be an ally of the government and thus a sustainer of the flawed socio-political-economic system, but to be neutral mediators and peacekeepers (even when the outsiders have much more ideological affinity for the regime than for the insurgents). If this is true, the United States should only undertake counterinsurgency support

152 Metz, *Rethinking Insurgency*.

153 *Ibid.*, iv.

154 *Ibid.*, 50.

in the most pressing instances and as part of an equitable, legitimate, and broad-based multinational coalition.¹⁵⁵

In other words, if a government has a serious insurgency on its hands, there is probably a reason why. It is that reason that needs to be found and resolved. Instead of countering the insurgents, the focus of the United States should be on ending the insurgency, which sometimes means siding with the insurgents as part of “an equitable, legitimate, and broad-based multinational coalition.” These are interesting ideas that the next administration should ponder and carefully consider.

One way to resolve insurgency without recourse to prolonged conflict is for the government to step down in response to the desires of a majority of its citizens: more democracy means less insurgency. Spreading democracy, as was suggested earlier in this manifesto, is the best long-term strategy for dealing with insurgency, whether of the classical or of the counter-occupation variety. The next section will explain the reasons why.

Democracy is indeed the answer

There are only two generic ways in which a population can remove a corrupt and oppressive regime that the majority of them no longer support. They can remove it violently through some form of insurgency, or the will of the people can be expressed non-violently, which I shall take as the operational definition of *democracy*. This definition of “democracy” may strike many people as strange because it doesn’t specify how leaders are chosen, only how they are removed. For the purposes of counterinsurgency, however, this will be sufficient. Several popular conceptions of democracy, however, *do not* follow from this definition.

The first is that democracy must always take the form of a “liberal democracy.”¹⁵⁶ That is for the population itself to decide, usually after they succeed in fashioning a state that works. As Francis Fukuyama, perhaps the best known proponent of the idea that eventually democracy will win out, notes:

155 Ibid., iv.

156 Francis Fukuyama, “The History at the End of History,” *The Guardian*, April 3, 2007, http://commentisfree.guardian.co.uk/francis_fukuyama/2007/04/the_history_at_the_end_of_hist.html.

But this is different from saying that there is a universal desire to live in a liberal society — that is, a political order characterised by a sphere of individual rights and the rule of law. The desire to live in a liberal democracy is, indeed, something acquired over time, often as a byproduct of successful modernisation.

Moreover, the desire to live in a modern liberal democracy does not translate necessarily into an ability to actually do so. The Bush administration seems to have assumed in its approach to post-Saddam Iraq that both democracy and a market economy were default conditions to which societies would revert once oppressive tyranny was removed, rather than a series of complex, interdependent institutions that had to be painstakingly built over time.¹⁵⁷

Another fallacy is that “democracy” is synonymous with “elections.” We here in the United States and Western Europe are so accustomed to electoral, representative democracy, that it is sometimes hard for us to accept that other forms can exist. In many parts of the world, though, governments are not by, for, or of the people, and for most people, contact with government officials is to be avoided whenever possible. Their lives are regulated by their daily environment, their families, tribes, villages, gangs, militias and neighborhoods. Although they can organize to fight against a national government that becomes too oppressive — or falls out of favor with their local leaders — most people in the developing world don’t consider it part of their jobs to select the new one. They have no frame of reference into which they can place representative democracy, and to the extent that they have experience with elections, they probably regard them as another form of coercion or corruption. For these countries, the people concerned with choosing or removing the government, the *polity*, represents only a small fraction of the total population.

Although the new counterinsurgency manual does allow for the possibility that non-elected governments could be legitimate, it shows a strong bias for U.S.-style representative democracy, claiming that such governments “probably have the support of a sufficient majority of the population.”¹⁵⁸ This may

157 Ibid.

158 U.S. Army, *Counterinsurgency*, 1-21.

well be true, at least at the time of the election, but the “probably” signals that it depends on the case, mock elections being a favorite pastime of dictators everywhere. A more useful principle is that the rulers be held accountable to the people, more particularly, to the polity, and can be removed by them without recourse to violence.¹⁵⁹ This is sufficient to avoid the consequences of Lord Acton’s observation that power tends to corrupt and absolute power corrupts absolutely. *Vox populi* is indeed *vox dei*: Who but the people can withdraw the mandate of heaven?

Adopt democracy, or else

The last caveat on the subject of spreading democracy is that we can’t do it directly, at least not through military force. What about post-WWII Germany and Japan? First, the United States did not invade and occupy them in order to bring democracy. The reason the United States fought Germany was because on Dec. 11, 1941, Germany declared war. It is not clear, otherwise, that President Franklin Roosevelt could have pushed through a war against Germany after Japan’s sneak attack. Hitler, ironically, had come to power through the democratic process, and, until near the end of the war, probably enjoyed the support of a majority of the German people, so deposing him was technically anti-democratic. Japan had attacked the United States, so there was going to be war regardless of its form of government. There is no evidence, though, suggesting that at the start of the war the Imperial Japanese government enjoyed anything other than the overwhelming support of the Japanese people. The U.S. syllogism in both cases was: “We were attacked (or had war declared against us); we fought their militaries and won; we occupied with enormous force; we locked the countries down; we rebuilt them over a 10-year period along democratic lines, utilizing a lot of the existing social and economic structures.”

How large a force would it have taken to do this in Iraq? As noted above, probably somewhere between 1 and 3 million troops just to keep the level of violence under control, without any guarantee that U.S. forces would have

159 King Saud bin Abdulaziz of Saudi Arabia was removed by his brothers, the polity in that Kingdom, nonviolently in 1964. Saud was not executed but lived in royal style, at his country’s expense, until his death in 1969. In 1982, Riyadh University was renamed in his honor. Thus Saudi Arabia met my definition of democracy in 1964 and in the opinion of many Saudis does so today (personal experience).

been able to put the country back together as a functioning democracy, even in the limited sense. In any attempt to spread democracy through invasion, the focus would soon become repelling the invaders. Those who do not line up to defend their country would rightly be seen as collaborators and traitors. The lesson is not that Army Gen. Eric Shinseki was correct, because he was off by an order of magnitude, but that democracy cannot be spread this way.

But democracy as an alternative to violent revolution must be spread; it will just have to grow through other means. One measure the international democratic community could take is to adopt a strategy that makes it easy to select democracy but difficult to abandon it. In this effort, the European Union leads the way.¹⁶⁰ It provides a clubhouse for politicians and other members of the governing classes, so that even if an election is lost, the loser stays a member of the European elite — perhaps securing election to the European Parliament, serving on various commissions and panels, and in general being treated in the manner to which politicians so easily become accustomed. Politicians can contrast this with what their fate would likely be should they lose power in a totalitarian system. Such a community can make it easier to choose democracy. So the club of democratic nations should become like the roach motel: Countries check in, but they don't check out.

The European Union also forms a prototype of what senior British diplomat Robert Cooper calls the “postmodern” state system.¹⁶¹ He defines “postmodern” according to five principles:

- ▶ the breaking down of the distinction between domestic and foreign affairs;
- ▶ mutual interference in (traditional) domestic affairs and mutual surveillance;
- ▶ the rejection of force for resolving disputes and the consequent codification of self-enforced rules of behavior;
- ▶ the growing irrelevance of borders: this has come about both through the changing role of the state, but also through missiles, cars and satellites; and

160 Robert Cooper. “The new liberal imperialism,” *The Guardian*, April 13, 2007, <http://observer.guardian.co.uk/print/0,,4388912-110490,00.html>; Fukuyama, “The History at the End of History.”

161 Cooper, “The new liberal imperialism.”

- ▶ security is based on transparency, mutual openness, interdependence and mutual vulnerability.

In other words, the club of postmodern states, like Barnett's "Functioning Core,"¹⁶² consists of those states that have learned to play well together. There is, however, one important difference between core states — those who have integrated their security and economies with the broader world — and postmodern states as defined by Cooper: the United States is the foundation of Barnett's core system, but Cooper does not include the United States among the postmodern states at all! As he explains:

The USA is the more doubtful case since it is not clear that the U.S. government or Congress accepts either the necessity or desirability of interdependence, or its corollaries of openness, mutual surveillance and mutual interference, to the same extent as most European governments now do.¹⁶³

What is ironic about this statement is that the United States itself meets all the criteria of postmodernism among its 50 constituent states, and there is no reason we cannot add more states in the future (perhaps consolidating among the current ones). So, a mechanism for expanding postmodernism could be to take the postmodern groupings the world already has and grow them.

It might not seem that postmodern states are necessarily democracies. Near the end of the article, however, Cooper implies that they are by insisting that the governing institution "must be as dedicated to liberty and democracy as its constituent parts." Looking back over the list that defines "postmodern" and observing that all postmodern states are in fact democracies, the principles of mutual interference, erasure of borders, and merging of domestic and foreign affairs imply that only democracies can join the club; and a club it is. Cooper calls it the "voluntary imperialism of the global economy." It meets the criterion previously outlined, which is that, if a country wants in, they have to play the game: "If states wish to benefit, they must open themselves up to the interference of international organisations and foreign states (just as, for different reasons, the postmodern world has also opened itself up)."¹⁶⁴

162 Barnett, *The Pentagon's New Map*; Barnett, *Blueprint for Action*.

163 Cooper, "The new liberal imperialism."

164 *Ibid.*

The process of adopting democracy will vary widely from country to country. Before Westerners become too smug, we might recall that the democratic process in the United States, in one of the richest countries in the world and building on a centuries-long democratic English heritage, took about 175 years from the ratification of the Constitution in 1788 until the repeal of the Jim Crow laws in the 1960s. In Switzerland, women didn't get the franchise in federal elections until 1971. Even then, nearly one-third of all (that is, male) voters rejected female participation.

Although all instances of countries adopting democracy are of necessity anecdotes, it is worthwhile considering the experiences of the successes. One of the most successful is Singapore, although its system might be considered somewhat authoritarian by American standards. Its first premier, Lee Kwan Yew, suggests that the following steps are required:

1. Establish a strong educational system, achieve emancipation of women and create economic opportunity for the entire population.
2. Focus on "implementing rule of law, strengthening the independence of the courts, and building up the civil-society institutions necessary for democracy."
3. "Only then will free elections lead to a more democratic order."¹⁶⁵

As the experience of Switzerland shows, countries and societies must create democracy in different ways, and elections may not be the most important element or even required at all for democracies to fulfill their roles in counterinsurgency.

Is democracy doomed?

Although to those of us who live under it, democracy may seem like the inevitable end state of political development, there are those who conclude that for much of the world, efforts to instill democracy are doomed to failure:

165 Yew, "The United States, Iraq, and the War on Terror," 5. Even in the United States, electoral democracy is still evolving. Popular election of senators, for example, is less than 100 years old (17th Amendment, 1913) and the Constitution still does not allow direct popular election of the president (Article II, Section 1, and the 12th Amendment).

Democracy has never worked well; it has never generated as much enthusiasm as modern dictatorships have. As the 20th century draws to a close, the democratic system in many countries shows greater weakness than ever before. Outside Europe and North America, its roots were shallow, in any case.¹⁶⁶

One would like to argue the point, but the evidence suggests that the process of spreading democracy proceeds unevenly. Of all the 40 or so democracies created since the end of World War II, only perhaps a dozen are still *constitutional*, that is, there is a broadly accepted notion of the rule of law — above the interests of individuals or parties — that has survived for at least a generation.¹⁶⁷ In the Middle East, people who once longed for democracy are now pointing to the disaster in Iraq as evidence of its shortcomings, even its dangers.¹⁶⁸ Long-time observer of Russian affairs and manager of a Russian stock fund, Eric Kraus, claims that the average Russian “doesn’t give a tinker’s damn about ‘democracy,’ at least as defined by George Bush; they had their fill of it during the lost decade of the 1990s.”¹⁶⁹ In the rest of the former Soviet Union, once the great hope for advocates of democracy, only one of the “-stans” is still even remotely like a functioning democracy, even in the limited sense defined above.¹⁷⁰

This situation is the greatest tragedy for those who hope to reduce the level of non-state violence in the world. It is not helped either by a fruitless attempt to transplant democracy at the point of the bayonet nor by the hypocritical tendency of some established democracies to refuse to recognize efforts haltingly made toward democracy if, as in the 2006 West Bank elections, they don’t like the results.

166 Walter Laquer. *Fascism: Past, present, future* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 217.

167 William E. Odom. “Victory Is Not an Option. The Mission Can’t Be Accomplished — It’s Time for a New Strategy,” *Washington Post*, February 11, 2007, B01.

168 Michael Slackman, “Ballot boxes? Yes. Actual democracy? Tough question,” *New York Times*, June 7, 2007, http://www.nytimes.com/2007/06/07/world/middleeast/07democracy.html?_4=1&ref=world&oref=slogin.

169 Eric Kraus, “The breaking point,” *Nikitsky Fund*, June 5, 2007, <http://www.nikitskyfund.com/content/blogsection/4/37/>, 3

170 “A spectre haunting India,” *The Economist*, May 26, 2007, http://ecoomist.com/world/asia/displaystory.cfm?story_id=7799247.

Fighting “transnational insurgencies”

The new counterinsurgency manual does recognize a category of “transnational” insurgencies,¹⁷¹ although the name is something of an oxymoron. An “insurgency” is a rebellion — i.e., by the inhabitants of a country — against an established government or an occupying army.¹⁷²

Complicating the definition is the fact that most classic insurgencies have transnational elements: base camps in a neighboring country, financial backers in the diaspora, efforts to separate the government from its allies, and so on. But these do not make an insurgency “transnational” in any meaningful sense. The use of “transnational insurgency” is an attempt, because of internal political pressures within the Army, to avoid using a more controversial term, “fourth generation warfare” (4GW).¹⁷³

Some even use the term “the long war,” an especially unfortunate turn of phrase, because, if the United States is in a long war, it will lose. As Sun Tzu noted, no state ever benefited from a long war.¹⁷⁴ Non-states, however, can benefit greatly from them, which should give pause to those who are arguing for a “long war” against some ill-defined transnational insurgency or “war on terrorism.” If the United States and her sister democracies are in a protracted struggle, then we must go to great lengths to make sure it is not a war.

Fourth-generation conflict, whether considered a “war” or not, involves the rise of non-state organizations and their replacement of the state, in some areas of the world, as the object of primary loyalties, as shown in Figure 2.¹⁷⁵ Specifically, the first three generations created better ways for state militaries to defeat other state militaries. As noted above, the rise of nuclear weapons has ended this process for the major powers. For them, the problem becomes

171 U.S. Department of the Army, Task Force 31, *Counterinsurgency operations, southern and western Afghanistan (Counterinsurgency manual update)*, 2007, 1-3

172 David Gompert of the Rand Corporation uses the term “global insurgency” because it uses the methods of insurgency but adapts them to transnational groups, in this case, Muslims. See Gompert, “Heads we Win,” 4.

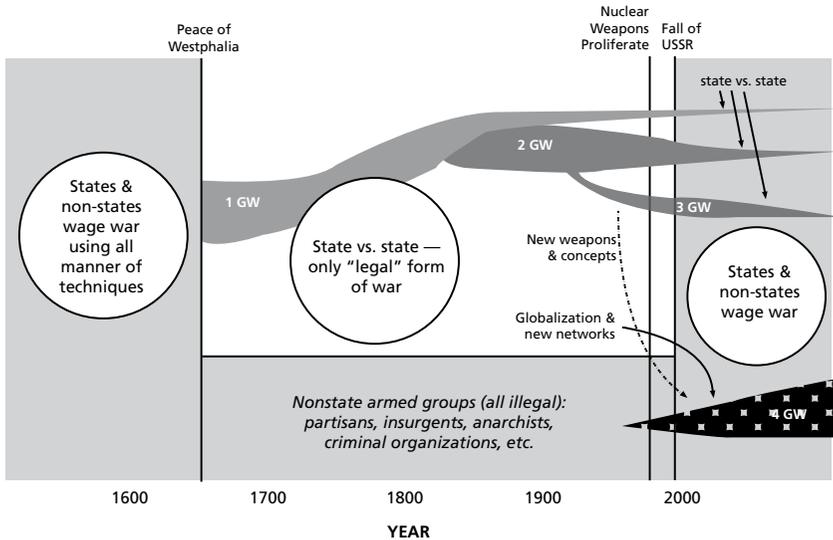
173 4GW — for an example of Army opposition to the term, see A.J. Echevarria, *Fourth-Generation War and Other Myths* (Carlisle, PA: United States Army War College, Strategic Studies Institute, 2005). The Marine Corps, by way of contrast, often uses the term, as a glance at any recent issue of the *Marine Corps Gazette* will show.

174 Sun Tzu, *The Art of War*, trans. Thomas Cleary (Boston: Shambhala, 1988), 58.

175 For explanations of the term, “fourth-generation war,” see W.S. Lind, K. Nightengale, J.F. Schmitt, J.W. Sutton and G.I. Wilson, “The changing face of war: Into the fourth generation,” *Marine Corps Gazette*, October 1989; Thomas Hammes, *The Sling and the Stone*.

how to deal with non-state groups. These organizations may take many forms: tribes, gangs, violent transnational ideological groups like al-Qaida, and in the future, perhaps even multinational corporations as states abdicate more of their responsibilities for providing decent qualities of lives for their citizens.

Figure 2: The “Generations of War” Model



As Lind notes, the decline of state influence means that warfare is returning to what it had always been, except for an interlude primarily in Europe from about 1650 until the end of the Cold War: the use of organized violence by a variety of groups for a variety of reasons. In that sense, fourth-generation warfare represents a return to “zero-th” generation warfare, before the “generations” numbering system that Lind and his co-authors began with the Peace of Westphalia in 1648.¹⁷⁶

Is “4GW” just another name for “insurgency”?

By definition, the primary goal of insurgents is to take control of the government of a state. Fourth-generation groups, in contrast, generally just want state governments to leave them alone so that they can get on with their real

176 Those interested in why should consult Lind, et al., “The changing face of war: Into the fourth generation,” 22-26.

business — selling narcotics, promulgating religious or other ideological doctrines, running tribal affairs across national boundaries, and so on. Despite the pronouncements of some high-ranking American officers,¹⁷⁷ there is no evidence that al-Qaida, for example, wants to establish a state with itself at the head. Even in Afghanistan, it was content to let the Taliban government of Mullah Omar occupy that country's UN seat.

Another aspect of fourth-generation warfare that distinguishes it from insurgency is that its practitioners may go to great lengths to avoid fighting. In their original, 1989 paper on the subject, Lind et al. noted that:

First generation warfare focused tactically and operationally (when operational art was practiced) on the enemy's front, his combat forces. Second generation warfare remained frontal tactically, but at least in Prussian practice it focused operationally on the enemy's rear through the emphasis on encirclement. The third generation shifted the tactical as well as the operational focus to the enemy's rear. Terrorism takes this a major step further. It attempts to bypass the enemy's military entirely and strike directly at his homeland at civilian targets. Ideally, the enemy's military is simply irrelevant to the terrorist.¹⁷⁸

In other words, the focus keeps shifting from the front lines to the enemy's rear areas, and then finally all the way back to the enemy's home population. Although the U.S. military largely ignored this paper, Osama bin Laden did not (copies were found in Afghanistan):

This foreign policy — or political warfare strategy — is to be delivered over the heads of U.S. and Western leaders to voters in non-Muslim countries and is meant to do two things: change the policies of countries allied with the United States by eroding popular support for assisting the United States in fighting the war on terrorism, and, second, slowly strip allies away from the United States and leave it increasingly isolated.¹⁷⁹

177 Abizaid, "The Long War," 18.

178 Lind, et al., "The changing face of war: Into the fourth generation," 22-26.

179 Michael Scheuer, "Al-Qaeda doctrine for international political warfare," *Jamestown Terrorism Focus* 3(42), April 25, 2007, <http://www.jamestown.org/terrorism/news/article.php?articleid=2370189>.

In fourth-generation conflict — as you can see, the term “warfare” is highly misleading in this context although it was more applicable during the Cold War — any fighting supports these two goals.¹⁸⁰ The purpose of fighting is not to “win” in a conventional sense, but to alter perceptions both locally and, more important from the 4GW fighter’s point of view, in the home countries of any foreign forces.¹⁸¹ This is an extremely difficult game for occupiers to play because they are foreigners killing locals. It is also worth pointing out that some theorists have extended the notion of 4GW — in the sense of a “strategic communications campaign designed to shift their enemy’s view of the world”¹⁸² — to state-vs.-state warfare.¹⁸³

As Hammes notes, 4GW in practice represents a continuing evolution of the techniques, if not the purposes, of historical insurgency,¹⁸⁴ which raises the question of a fifth generation. Theorists working this issue are understandably divided. One trend does seem clear, however: smaller groups are becoming more capable of larger disruptions.¹⁸⁵ Projecting this trend out a few years suggests that it might be possible for a small group or even a single individual to provoke enormous disruptions to the world system:

Over time, perhaps in as little as twenty years, and as the leverage provided by technology increases, this threshold will finally reach its culmination — with the ability of one man to declare war on the entire world and win.¹⁸⁶

Although it may not be necessary to lose sleep worrying about Dr. No in his Caribbean hideaway, the tight coupling of modern systems in the world

180 Hammes, “Fourth Generation Warfare Evolves, Fifth Emerges,” 14-23.

181 This was a deliberate strategy by the North Vietnamese. See Vo Nguyen Giap, *People’s War, People’s Army*, Hanoi, Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1961, particularly pp. 98 ff. This has led some people to advocate stricter control of the U.S. reporting on the war. For an example, see Jim Saxton, “Al Qaeda’s weapon of mass influence” *The Washington Times*, February 26, 2007 and retired Army General Ricardo Sanchez’s remarks at the Military Reporters and Editors Luncheon, Washington D.C., October 12, 2007.

182 *Ibid.*, 15.

183 *Ibid.*; Hammes, *The Sling and the Stone.*; Lind, et al., “The changing face of war: Into the fourth generation,” 22-26; Grant T. Hammond, “Paradoxes of War,” *Joint Forces Quarterly*, Spring (1994): 7-16.

184 Hammes, “Fourth Generation Warfare Evolves, Fifth Emerges,” 14-23; Hammes, *The Sling and the Stone.*

185 Hammes, “Fourth Generation Warfare Evolves, Fifth Emerges,” 14-23.; Robb, *Brave New War.*

186 Robb, *Brave New War*, 8.

does appear to allow small groups of criminal psychopaths, perhaps carrying out the instructions of their vengeful deity, to wreak enormous havoc. On the other hand, the modern world is more resilient than many give it credit for. The United States did not collapse after the Sept. 11 attacks, and the fall in the Dow — now just a dim memory — was more severe from the dotcom meltdown than from the loss of the World Trade Center.

Can 4GW theory replace COIN?

Whereas counterinsurgency theory has proven limited, does its progeny, 4GW theory, offer useful advice for policy-makers involved in dealing with transnational groups, particularly the violent ideological ones? One advantage 4GW theory might have is that it broadens the emphasis away from counterinsurgents or even defeating insurgencies. As Lind and Metz have noted above, if the problem is the decline of the state, then a solution might be the restoration of the state. If actions could be taken to help establish a strong, respected government in a country — which may not have the same boundaries as when the fighting started — then such a government should be able to end any insurgency, even a “transnational” one, in its midst.

As always seems to be the case, though, there are complications in this otherwise pristine theory. It is possible, for example, for the citizens of a strong state to support its government but also support violent transnational groups in its midst who are not bent on overthrowing that government. Saudi Arabia might well be a case in point, where there does not appear to be any widely-supported movement to remove the House of Saud from power, yet a large number of Saudis appear to back the aims, if not the methods, of al-Qaida external to the Kingdom. Another example might be the support enjoyed in the United States by the Irish Republican Army during “The Troubles.” This highlights another difference between 4GW and insurgencies: In an insurgency (of any type), one cannot support *both* the government (or the occupiers) *and* the insurgents, whereas this is not unusual in 4GW.

The rise of violent transnational groups able to do appreciable damage to established countries is such a new phenomenon that one can only speculate about strategies for dealing with them (which will be discussed in the next two chapters). This chapter has tried to show that the most likely result from using conventional military forces to deal with such groups is to find ourselves in another occupation, with all the cost and risk that that entails. In other words,

military intervention risks converting a “transnational insurgency” into a real counter-occupation insurgency that we have no reliable method to suppress.

Summary: The Utility of Military Force

Armies versus army ants

It may be that military solutions to insurgencies are doomed to failure because the nature of guerrilla-type warfare has evolved away from what military forces can handle. To explain what this means, first examine this description of the nature of counterinsurgency from the most recent State Department terrorism report:

Treating this new era of conflict as a form of global insurgency implies that counterinsurgency methods are fundamental in combating the new form of transnational terrorism. These methods include firstly, a focus on protecting and securing the population; and secondly, politically and physically marginalizing the insurgents, winning the support and cooperation of at-risk populations by targeted political and development measures, and conducting precise intelligence-led special operations to eliminate critical enemy elements with minimal collateral damage.¹⁸⁷

The State and Defense departments still want to see a hierarchical enemy with “critical elements,” Clausewitzian centers-of-gravity that can be targeted and eliminated, thereby bringing the whole structure down. If the enemy would just act like somebody we know how to defeat, we could defeat him.¹⁸⁸

187 United States Department of State. *Country reports on terrorism: Strategic assessment*, 2007.

188 Noted terrorism expert Bruce Hoffman suggests that our continuing fascination with eliminating the leadership structure of al-Qaida and other violent ideological groups is a factor in our failure to eradicate the threat these groups represent. See Bruce Hoffman, “We Can’t Win If We Don’t Know the Enemy,” *Washington Post*, March 25, 2007. Carl von Clausewitz was a Prussian general and theorist of first generation warfare. In his posthumously published *On War* (1832), he recommended top down control in order to hurl formations against the other side’s critical “centers of gravity.” In a world of modern weapons, as the 20th century American strategist, John Boyd, pointed out, Clausewitzian tactics are likely to lead to bloodbaths and wars of attrition. Nonetheless, Clausewitz remains the strategist with the most influence on an American defense establishment based upon firepower and technology.

As Robb has argued, however, what we are facing today might better be envisioned as an amorphous but highly dynamic group of relatively independent actors all operating within a common vision.¹⁸⁹ As they interact with each other, with populations, and with the outside world, an intelligence “emerges” (to use the terminology of complex systems theory) much as it does in a *swarm* of fire ants:

“Ants aren’t smart,” [Stanford researcher Deborah] Gordon says. “Ant colonies are.” A colony can solve problems unthinkable for individual ants, such as finding the shortest path to the best food source, allocating workers to different tasks, or defending a territory from neighbors. As individuals, ants might be tiny dummies, but as colonies they respond quickly and effectively to their environment. They do it with something called swarm intelligence.¹⁹⁰

Whether Robb is correct in supposing that an insurgency in either its “overthrow the government” or “expel the occupiers” form can be carried through to completion by groups acting as swarms is still an open question. On the other hand, the analogy seems apt for the Iraqi resistance, where regarding these groups as miniature versions of conventional military units has failed to end the uprising.¹⁹¹ One of the reasons, for example, that roadside bombs — the infamous “improvised explosive devices” (IEDs) — are so difficult to stop is that they are built and planted not by an identifiable organization but by what one Pentagon official called “a loosely knotted web of networks.”¹⁹² The swarm metaphor also seems to offer insights into the behaviors of violent transnational groups: one loses track of all the insurgent leaders and “al-Qaida number threes” that the coalition has killed over the last four years.

189 Robb, *Brave New War*.

190 Peter Miller, “Swarm Theory,” *National Geographic*, July 7, 2007, <http://www7.national-geographic.com/ngm/0707/feature5/index.html>.

191 By employing swarming techniques, the various Iraqi insurgents can rapidly change tactics and share experiences. This makes them extremely difficult to engage with traditional military practices. See Paul Beaver and Peter Beaumont, “‘Smart’ rebels outstrip US,” *The Guardian*, March 11, 2007.

192 Rick Atkinson, “‘If you don’t go after the network, you’re never going to stop these guys. Never.’” *Washington Post*, October 3, 2007, A01.

General utility of military force

There will still be people who will use violence — even organized violence and killing in large numbers — to get what they want. But these people have tools available to accomplish their aims without confronting men in tanks. In 1994, for example, the butchers of Rwanda hacked to death 800,000 men, women, and children without employing any of the dreaded WMDs and without encountering a single U.S. or NATO armored fighting vehicle.

The following table summarizes the conclusions of this chapter:

Table VI: Utility of Military Force in the QDR Missions

QDR Mission	Utility of military force, given the desire to perform the QDR mission	Status of current force
Defense against the armed forces of a nuclear power	High, in the sense of deterrence	More than adequate
Defense against the armed forces of a non-nuclear state	Would be high, if there were a threat	Vastly too large and expensive
Counterterrorism	Very low and generally counterproductive	Irrelevant, except for intelligence and some special operations; more than adequate today
Defending homeland	Very low —threats are non-military	Irrelevant; could be re-focused and trained for border security, assuming <i>posse comitatus</i> issues overcome, but why not stand down the military and recruit and train border security personnel?
Shaping choices of other nations	Counterproductive	At the best, irrelevant; possibility of the Albright Temptation
Counter-proliferation: Occupation	Theoretically high, because occupation would require massive military force; we have, however, no reliable method of dealing with post-occupation insurgencies	Woefully inadequate; would require doubling or tripling the size of the current DOD

Table VI: Utility of Military Force in the QDR Missions (CONTINUED)

QDR Mission	Utility of military force, given the desire to perform the QDR mission	Status of current force
Counter-proliferation: Raiding	High — raids require military forces; high risk to U.S. forces; long-term political impact is usually minimal	More than adequate; most conventional forces irrelevant
Counter-proliferation: Strike	High — strikes require either military aircraft or some type of missile; political impact, however, is usually minimal and often counterproductive	Hardware more than adequate; requires a level of intelligence that is often unobtainable

As the QDR noted:

It requires legitimate governments with the capacity to police themselves and to deny terrorists the sanctuary and the resources they need to survive. It also will require support for the establishment of effective representative civil societies around the world, since the appeal of freedom is the best long-term counter to the ideology of the extremists. The ultimate aim is that terrorist networks will no longer have the ability or support to strike globally and catastrophically, and their ability to strike regionally will be outweighed by the capacity and resolve of local governments to defeat them.¹⁹³

Noble words. Can you look at our military operations in Iraq and truthfully say that we are making progress in achieving any of this? More relevant for the next administration, what can we do to advance towards our goals in the future?

193 DOD, Quadrennial defense review report, 22.

V: New Directions

The long war

As noted in the previous chapter, if the United States is in a long war, then it will lose. States, by their nature, are not suited for long wars. There are at least two reasons. The first is that states exist to provide a higher quality of life for their inhabitants. The preamble to the Constitution lays this out well — not that other states need to adopt the U.S. model, but if most people are going to be worse off under a state, then what is its purpose? In times of legitimate national crisis, people accept the need for short-term sacrifice, so long as the burdens are fairly shared. But when “short-term sacrifice” turns into “national culture,” the viability of the state and the legitimacy of its government come into question.

Another reason why states have difficulty with long wars concerns moral issues, in particular, the “will to continue” the war.¹⁹⁴ The currently proposed long war leaves the United States extremely vulnerable to this effect because it is a case, perhaps history’s clearest case, of the strong fighting the weak. Martin van Creveld has warned of the risks:

194 There is a school of thought that says that all we need to do is have the “will” to win. For a typical example, see Paul Hollrah, “The fifth column,” *New Media Journal*, March 3, 2007. This is like saying is that if you find yourself under water, all you need is the will not to breathe in. Sun Tzu’s and van Creveld’s point is that such concepts as “national will” and “popular support” are irrelevant to states in long wars because time and a lack of success and the inevitable atrocities by their own forces will wear them down. The idea is not to get into these situations in the first place.

In other words, he who fights against the weak — and the rag-tag Iraqi militias are very weak indeed — and loses, loses. He who fights against the weak and wins also loses. To kill an opponent who is much weaker than yourself is unnecessary and therefore cruel; to let that opponent kill you is unnecessary and therefore foolish.¹⁹⁵

No state and no government can afford to appear foolish for long. If a government cannot defeat a weak opponent, despite enormous expenditures of the national wealth, what else can it not do? When the strong fight the weak, therefore, they had better win quickly and elegantly or they had better not fight at all. This does not imply that violent transnational elements must get their way, nor, on the other hand, does it mean that the “war” metaphor, as discussed in Chapter III, provides an effective framework for dealing with our current situation.

What it does suggest is that the United States must find ways to mitigate the threat other than what the QDR so self-servingly describes: “Long-duration, complex operations involving the U.S. military, other government agencies and international partners will be waged simultaneously in multiple countries around the world.”¹⁹⁶ It sounds good to fans of B-movie battle epics, but it is a formula for national bankruptcy, isolation and decline.

As the primary prescription for recovering from the trauma of Iraq, we should adopt new goals, or more accurately, return to national objectives that have been with us since the Revolution.

National objective

Our highest-level national objective should involve ethereal aims, such as survival on our own terms and improving our capacity for independent action.¹⁹⁷ These are the causes for which we fought every war through World War II, including the Civil War. Our military establishment worked well, even magnificently, in these encounters. In 1960, on a tape still showing at Graceland, recently-discharged U.S. Army veteran Elvis Presley summed up the pride of most Americans when he advised new draftees not to challenge the system: “You can’t fight them. They’ve never lost, you know.”

195 Martin van Creveld, “Why Iraq will end like Vietnam did.”

196 DOD, Quadrennial defense review report, 23.

197 John Boyd, *Patterns of Conflict*, December 1986.

This state of affairs began to change when the United States started to use military force for purposes that Sir Rupert Smith characterized as “in a wide range of problems for which it was not originally intended or configured.”¹⁹⁸ This lesson took a while to sink in: We were able to write off stalemate in Korea as a “police action.” But Vietnam was a clear loss, and Iraq is nothing short of a disaster.

As a first step, therefore, the country needs to return to its roots. We need to restore our innate suspicion of foreign entanglements and concentrate on being the best United States of America that we can be.

Grand strategy

If you are not ready to die for it, take the word “freedom”
out of your vocabulary.

— *Al-Qaida No. 2 Ayman al-Zawahiri quoting Malcolm X*¹⁹⁹

Although non-state groups do not permanently occupy land and perform the roles of governments — otherwise they would be states — they do operate in and among populations, and they rely on these populations for protection, support, camouflage and recruiting. If the number of people willing to provide these services becomes small enough, the non-state group cannot offer much of a threat. Making that happen is the role of a branch of geopolitics known as *grand strategy*.

At its heart, grand strategy is a moral and emotional matter. People do the important things of life because they feel they are the right things to do. As in World War I and the U.S. Civil War, they will suffer enormous casualties — walk in lines across level fields into cannon, rifle and machine gun fire — when they feel that it is the right thing.

The key element in grand strategy is to persuade a significant number of people around the world that the various views of “what’s right” don’t need to conflict. As one of the 20th century’s most influential strategists put it:

198 Smith, “The Next War, and the Next Part 1.”

199 Michael Scheuer, “Latest al-Zawahiri tape targets American society,” *Jamestown Terrorism Focus IV*(13), May 8, 2007.

With respect to others (i.e., the uncommitted or potential adversaries) we should:

Respect their culture and achievements, show them we bear them no harm and help them adjust to an unfolding world, as well as provide additional benefits and more favorable treatment for those who support our philosophy and way of doing things;

yet

Demonstrate that we neither tolerate nor support those ideas and interactions that undermine or work against our culture and our philosophy hence our interests and fitness to cope with a changing world.²⁰⁰

It is important to note that while Boyd did not rule out military action, there are many other ways to “neither tolerate nor support,” of which probably the best is the containment philosophy that worked so well against communism and the Soviet Union.²⁰¹

A critical ingredient in an effective grand strategy is upholding the moral or ethical code in which the United States claims to believe. Defense Secretary Robert Gates told the 2007 European Security Conference that the West’s adherence to our “shared belief in political and economic freedom, religious toleration, human rights, representative government and the rule of law” was as important as our military strength in bringing the Cold War to a peaceful end.²⁰² Interesting conclusions from a defense secretary, and they probably reflect lessons he learned from his long career in the intelligence community. They are even more applicable today, when military force is largely irrelevant, because if, in the current struggle, we are seen to violate our moral code, then support for our cause will begin to slip away both among foreign populations

200 John Boyd, *The Strategic Game of ? and ?*, unpublished briefing, June 1978, 57.

201 Biddle makes a convincing argument that in our current situation, we have only two generic options, containment and rollback (“American grand strategy after 9/11: An assessment.”) Our invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq represented attempts to roll back the perceived threat. For an extended discussion of the pros and cons of these options applied against transnational groups, see Richards, *Neither Shall the Sword*.

202 Tom Shanker, “Gates counters Putin’s words on U.S. power,” *New York Times*, February 11, 2007.

and among our own. As a former commandant of the Marine Corps and a former commander in chief of the U.S. Central Command put it:

If we forfeit our values by signaling that they are negotiable in situations of grave or imminent danger, we drive those undecideds into the arms of the enemy. This way lies defeat, and we are well down the road to it.²⁰³

We have not done a good job of this since 9/11:

- ▶ The United States claims to support democracy and to fight in order to bring the blessings of democracy to others, but refuses to recognize the results of democratic processes just because we don't happen to like who won, as was our reaction to the elections in Iran and the Palestinian Territories.
- ▶ The United States claims to be working hard to stop the proliferation of nuclear weapons, even giving ourselves the right to attack states that are close to acquiring this capability, but then turn a blind eye when an American ally, Israel, develops a substantial arsenal of such weapons.
- ▶ We emphasize the rule of law, and that all are equal before it, but then imprison "enemy combatants" and even U.S. citizens indefinitely without trial or the right to counsel.
- ▶ We proclaim the virtues of democracy and then are seen as surrendering our freedoms in order to grasp at short-term security.

It is difficult for hypocrites and cowards to attract sympathy from the people of the world. So, the first goal of the new administration must be to reverse this trend, this spreading meme that America sings about being the land of the free and the home of the brave, but is fast becoming neither.

Grand strategy: Have an overarching concept

The new administration should strike a completely different moral tone. As

203 Charles C. Krulak and Joseph P. Hoar, "It's Our Cage, Too," *Washington Post*, May 17, 2007, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/05/16/AR2007051602395.html>

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

Not very attractive, is it? If this metaphor seems stretched, read through the QDR, particularly the sections from defeating terrorism to stopping proliferation,²⁰⁴ where every section has the tone, if not the actual wording "the United States will use peaceful and cooperative means whenever possible, but will employ force when necessary."²⁰⁵ The last clause contains an error, however. It should have read "but will employ force whenever we in our sole judgment feel that it is necessary, often for our own internal political purposes." It is difficult to blame other countries for wanting to obtain a nuclear deterrent under these circumstances.

In other words, the direction of our current policy is self-defeating. It doesn't give people around the world any reason to cooperate with the United States, other than for financial gain or to avoid being invaded, and after Iraq, the threat of invasion may not carry the value it used to.

There is an element of modern warfare theory, which, because its purpose is to help harmonize the efforts of groups of people, is also useful for grand strategy. This element, often called the *Schwerpunkt*, is designated by the commander as the concept or principle that all the other elements of the strategy must support. In the case of grand strategy or national purpose, the president is the senior "commander" and designates the national *Schwerpunkt* through the administration's actions and through the publications and addresses that explain those actions.

For the next administration, there can be no more important principle than to restore America's moral strength. The highest-level concept, the one that all the actions and pronouncements of the administration must support, must, therefore, be something like:

204 DOD, Quadrennial defense review report, 20-39.

205 Ibid., 34

We're doing our best to live by the principles we say we uphold, and like all courageous people, we're willing to pay the price and even suffer losses to maintain these principles.

Whenever the new administration faces choices, between security and any compromise in our principles, for example, it must choose the principles. Even before there was a republic, the Founders understood that this was the correct moral stance:

Those who would give up essential liberty to purchase a little temporary safety deserve neither liberty nor safety.

Although attributed, probably erroneously, to Franklin, it appears in colonial documents as early as 1755. The irony of the statement from the standpoint of grand strategy is that giving up “essential liberty,” signals to the rest of the world that we do not actually believe in the principles of freedom and democracy that we are trying to foist off on them “by peaceful and cooperative means if possible, but by force when necessary.”

Grand strategy: Defense is offense

Another principle that the new administration might consider, and which harmonizes well with the first, is that when it comes to world opinion and support, most of the time it is better to be the aggrieved party. This may seem strange to most Americans, raised as we were in the John Wayne and “bring ‘em on” traditions. It is, nonetheless, an extremely powerful principle. The headline in the left-leaning French newspaper, *Le Monde*, on Sept. 12, 2001, was “We are all Americans,” and the European leaders of NATO invoked Article 5 of its charter to treat the Sept. 11 attacks as an attack on all of them, the first time that Article 5 had ever been used.²⁰⁶

At that point, the United States had the moral leverage to do whatever it needed to eliminate the sources of the Sept. 11 attack. The world, or at least that part that was important to us, united behind us and offered whatever support we wanted. And what did we do with it? Within less than two years, our phony tough guy posturing, our labeling of even our oldest friends as “Old Europe,”

206 Fred Kaplan, “Bush’s many miscalculations,” *Slate.com*, September 9, 2003, <http://www.slate.com/id/2088113/>

our shunning of anybody who didn't buy into our tactics ("You're either with us or against us.") — even if they wholeheartedly supported our goals — and finally our slacking off from the effort against the 9/11 perpetrators in favor of invading Iraq had blown it all. All of this shrank the base of support down to the United Kingdom, South Korea, Australia, and a sycophantic group of minor actors often known as the "coalition of the billing."

The basic problem was even deeper than calling off the hunt for Osama so that we could attack Saddam. It was that we gave ourselves the right to hammer anybody we wanted, for any reason that we wanted, for as long as we wanted, so long as our politicians said it was for our "security." None of our true allies objected to throwing out the Taliban and capturing or killing bin Laden and anyone who supported him. They were more than willing to help, and two dozen of them are still in Afghanistan. At that point, the offensive phase should have ended. After that, when we continued to make the military our primary weapon against what was clearly an international criminal organization, we lost most of our moral strength and leverage. It became a case of van Creveld's "strong fighting the weak." If it does not end quickly and with demonstrated brilliance — as did the 1976 Entebbe Raid and Afghanistan in 2001 — the strong power will find its support ebbing both at home and abroad. And that is exactly what happened.

One conclusion the next administration might draw from this experience is that military terminology such as "offense" and "defense" should be viewed warily when applied to the more political process of grand strategy. These are concepts from strategy and tactics on the battlefield, where the aim is to coerce the enemy, not to attract the uncommitted. Instead, it is better to be seen as steadfast in adherence to what we say we believe in. With the support America had after 9/11 — even in Iran! — we could have completely wiped out al-Qaida; with the support we have now, that task is infinitely more difficult, if it is possible at all.

Unfortunately, the country seems to be heading in the opposite direction. The QDR, for example, uses the phrase, "all elements of national power" in several places, as does the State Department's 2007 terrorism report. A mindset of employing national power, though, inevitably leads to a national strategy of intervention and occupation:

The United States, its allies and partners must maintain the offensive by relentlessly finding, attacking and disrupting terrorist networks worldwide.²⁰⁷

This might be fine if such networks lived out in the middle of unpopulated deserts somewhere, but in the real world, these groups live in cities and towns, among real people. In many parts of the world, the vast majority of these people would immigrate to the United States in a heartbeat if the opportunity were offered. The “all elements of national power” approach will change that. It is sure to kill any number of them, aid recruiting by the violent groups immensely, and motivate the surviving population to view the members of the networks as heroes. It confirms the image of the United States as a selfish bully who puts its own safety above the condition of the rest of the planet. And as operations drag on, and the hard-core members disperse or blend into the population, it will make us appear even weaker and more incompetent.

It is important that the new administration, and the American population, abandon the Clausewitzian notion that war is a normal tool of policy, its continuation “by other means.” In Clausewitz’s day, the main role of the population in war was to provide passionate cannon fodder. They were a resource to be used at the discretion of their hereditary rulers. In this new “war,” if such it be, the contest is for and “amongst the people,” to use Sir Rupert’s evocative term, so military means must be used subtly and with finesse. The vast majority — those who would immigrate if they could — must see the United States as the good guys.

Grand strategy: Prioritize military threats

To put it bluntly, “terrorism” is not one of them.

A recent report by the impressively titled “Center for Policing Terrorism,” stated that, “Some 15 years later [after the fall of the Soviet Union], terrorist groups that are not state-sponsored pose the greatest threat to the United States... Terrorists have killed more innocent Americans than the mob ever did, and if the next terrorist attack employs weapons of mass destruction, it

207 DOD, Quadrennial defense review report, 22.

could be even more devastating than 9/11.”²⁰⁸ The statement is pure marketing hype: organized crime never had a policy of attacking innocent Americans because it would have forced even corrupt officials to act against them — it was bad for business. In any case, the power of traditional organized crime is a shadow of what it was in the early 20th century, with no more than 1,000 made members of the Mafia still surviving.²⁰⁹

The numbers tell the story: Only two politically motivated attacks have killed more than a dozen innocent Americans on U.S. soil — Oklahoma City (168 victims) and Sept. 11 (2,996). Incidents like the attacks on the Marine Corps barracks in Beirut (1983), Khobar Towers in Saudi Arabia (1996), and the *USS Cole* in Aden, Yemen (2000), can't be counted as “terrorism” because the victims were uniformed combatants. In 2005, a grand total of eight U.S. citizens were killed by terrorist attacks outside Iraq and Afghanistan. Outside the Middle East, there was one. To put the threat from “terrorism” into perspective, contrast these numbers with the dangers from everything else we face in our daily lives: During 2001, for example, as many people were killed in traffic accidents every 26 days as died in the Sept. 11 attacks.²¹⁰

There is no doubt at all that another incident is possible, and given enough time, inevitable. There is also no doubt that although it will be horrific to watch and of incalculable shock and grief to the victims and their families, it will have exactly zero impact on the national well-being of the United States, unless . . . unless we do the damage to ourselves, again. We lose more than 100 of our fellow citizens to traffic accidents every day, and the grief and shock that their families suffer is just as real as that of terrorism victims. Yet, nobody has proposed trashing the Constitution via USA-Patriot Acts and launching ill-conceived invasions of foreign countries to make our highways safer.

New directions to counter WMDs

The one fly in the ointment, the one event that could kill significantly more Americans or citizens of allies than traffic accidents, is the detonation of a

208 Daveed Gartenstein-Ross and Kyle Dabruzzi, “The convergence of crime and terror: law enforcement opportunities and perils,” Center for Policing Terrorism, April 9, 2007, http://www.cpt-mi.org/pdf/The_Convergence_Of_Crime_And_Terrorism.pdf, 3.

209 Fackler, “Mayor’s Death Forces Japan’s Crime Rings Into the Light.”

210 N. Wilson and G. Thomson, “Deaths from international terrorism compared with road crash deaths in OECD countries,” *Injury Prevention* 11 (2005): 332-333.

nuclear weapon in a major city. What about “nuclear terrorism?” Wouldn’t it be worth any amount of increased security to prevent it?

First, let us admit that it could happen, and there are several possibilities. A group, for example, could get the material required to make a bomb, called “fissile material,” and make it themselves, or they could obtain a warhead from a country that already has one.

Fissile material

It would be technically challenging for a non-state group to make the most common fissile material, highly enriched uranium (HEU), because they would need to obtain the processed uranium ore — called “yellowcake” — from the few countries that produce significant amounts of it; then they would need a large, energy-hungry facility for the centrifuges that concentrate the isotope (U-235) that produces the explosion. The other potential material for a bomb, plutonium, is made in special reactors designed for producing weapons-grade material from a uranium feedstock. Facilities suitable for producing either material are difficult to hide, especially for non-state groups who survive by lurking in the shadows of the world.

Conveniently for the would-be nuclear terrorist, though, such extreme efforts aren’t necessary. There are something over 3,700 tons of HEU, for example, known in the world, distributed among 60 states.²¹¹ Neither plutonium nor HEU is, oddly enough, particularly dangerous to handle; the big risk being that whoever is transporting it accidentally brings a “critical mass” of it close enough together, at which point it would go critical and possibly even explode.

Why hasn’t it happened?

Once a group has the material for a bomb, making it should not present a great challenge either.²¹² If there is this much fissile material floating around the world, and if making a device would not present an insurmountable technical obstacle, why hasn’t a non-state group detonated such a device in a Western city? Nobody knows — perhaps security at all the facilities containing

211 Morten B. Maerli and Lars van Dassen, “Eliminating excessive stocks of highly enriched uranium.” *Pugwash Issues Brief* 3, no. 1: 2-11.

212 James Fallows, “Success Without Victory,” *The Atlantic*, January/February 2005, 80-90.

plutonium or HEU is effective. Of the non-NATO countries, the Chinese do appear to have their nuclear program under tight control, and Russian control over their weapons is improving.²¹³ But this leaves 35 other countries, including such places as the Democratic Republic of Congo, Vietnam, Bangladesh, and Egypt, that have nuclear energy programs and that have not ratified the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.²¹⁴

It could be that our counter-proliferation efforts and cooperative threat reduction programs have found and broken up all attempts to obtain plutonium or HEU. Most worrying of all, perhaps the groups that have the materials or even the completed devices are biding their time. Regardless of the reason, we cannot assume that our luck, or the groups' patience, will hold. Accounting for and securing fissile material, including spent reactor rods, should therefore assume the highest international priority. This is an area where the next administration needs to take immediate corrective action. Of the something over \$800 billion that we spend every year on defense, including Homeland Security, less than 1 percent goes into all forms of nuclear material control, including preventing the theft of Russian nuclear material and their 15,000 weapons.²¹⁵

Compared to control of fissile material, the problem of a "rogue state" giving a bomb to a group seems almost trivial. There are only nine countries that have such weapons, and only two — North Korea and Pakistan — might have a motivation to provide one of their tiny stocks of weapons to a non-state group. Still, it is prudent to monitor the nuclear facilities in these countries and continue diplomatic and economic efforts to minimize their production of additional weapons.

In addition to the nine current nuclear states, there are those other 35, noted above and listed in Annex II to the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, that have some type of nuclear program and therefore could be considered as candidate nuclear powers.²¹⁶ This is not a large number, and the key to them is keeping them out of the "rogue" category and in, or under the benevolent oversight of, the family of "core" nations. In other words, non-proliferation might better

213 Bruce Blair, "Primed and Ready," 1-5.

214 Brian Ellison, "Nuclear states: Past, present, and potentially future." *The Defense Monitor* 36, no. 3 (May/June 2007): 10-12.

215 Fallows, "Success Without Victory"; Blair, "Primed and Ready."

216 Ellison, "Nuclear States."

be achieved by exercising the attractive and persuasive elements of America's and the developed world's international relations, our "soft power,"²¹⁷

Soft power non-proliferation

This concept of grand strategy as a counter-proliferation technique fits nicely with Cooper's postmodern model and with Barnett's overall goal of "shrinking the Gap" by adding new states to the family of nations that accept the global rules sets of trade and security and thereby share in the resulting prosperity. Such states will not give nuclear weapons to non-state groups. In the meantime, the community of democracies and developed states can focus their triad of carrot-stick-intelligence on the small group of states that might be able to develop a device and who, if we try to frighten ourselves, might conceivably be willing to give the device or sufficient fissile material to a non-state group over which they have limited control and whose use of the weapon might well be traced back to its source. It could happen, but it is more likely that millions of us will be destroyed by an asteroid²¹⁸ or die in a pandemic, authentic threats to our well being and for which we could undoubtedly develop effective solutions if we prioritized the threats to our existence correctly.

Dirty bombs

Finally, there is one category of non-state nuclear threat that lies in between detonation of a device and the destructiveness of even a large explosive. This is the "dirty bomb," a conventional bomb that has been wrapped with highly radioactive material. When the bomb is detonated, the material would spread over the adjacent area rendering it uninhabitable for some period of time. Building such a weapon is entirely feasible, as there are more than 50,000

217 This term predates the 2003 invasion. See, for example, Joseph Nye, "Propaganda isn't the way: soft power," *The International Herald Tribune*, January 10, 2003. Secretary of Defense Robert Gates has begun to recommend an increasing reliance on "soft power," beginning with his November 26, 2007, speech at Kansas State University.

218 In June 1908, a small asteroid or possibly a fragment of a comet detonated above Siberia in what is now called the "Tunguska event" (information widely available on the Internet). The resulting explosion was roughly 1,000 times more powerful than the Hiroshima blast. In March 2004, a smaller, but still significant asteroid approached to within about 26,000 miles of the Earth, roughly one-tenth the distance to the moon. Most astronomers now believe that a catastrophic collision, unless the object can be deflected, is just a matter of time.

licensed lots of radioactive material in the United States alone that could provide the ingredients for a dirty bomb.²¹⁹ And unlike fissile material, of which there are only two kinds that would work for a nuclear bomb, there are at least 15 isotopes that could be folded into a dirty bomb.²²⁰

Given this much highly radioactive material floating around the world, it is conceivable that a group will succeed in obtaining some of it and pack it around their next bomb. The key to breaking up such an attack is good intelligence and international cooperation. Intelligence and international law enforcement can detect attempts to buy or steal a suitable amount of material or to move it through black market smuggling networks. Once obtained, the group still has to assemble it, and this task is also detectable. A stock of highly radioactive material large enough to be a credible weapon is also a threat to the group that is building the weapon (unlike HEU, which is relatively harmless unless a critical mass is brought together). Even short-term exposure to such material can cause nausea, diarrhea, weakness, fainting, debilitation and death.²²¹ So, to survive long enough to build the device, they will need infrastructure — facilities, logistics, housing, shielding material, etc. — and these preparations will be known to the people who live in the area.

It may not be possible to detect every such attack, but careful intelligence, patient diplomacy, and good law enforcement can make it difficult and risky for groups to accumulate enough highly radioactive material to pose a serious threat to a significant area. We, the community of Core or postmodern states, can also make sure that when we do detect and thwart such attempts, we eliminate the perpetrators and do whatever we can to reduce the numbers of people willing to support their cause — a largely political process, although a counter-proliferation raid by the international community remains a possibility. The QDR would not be warning of the threat from al-Qaida if we had driven home the opportunity that we had to destroy the group back in 2001 and early 2002.

Saudi Arabia's foiling in April 2007 of a large plot apparently to attack the country's oil infrastructure and other local targets also illustrates how good

219 Steve Coll, "The Unthinkable," *The New Yorker*, March 12, 2007, 49

220 *Ibid.*, 55.

221 For a list of symptoms, see United States National Institutes of Health, Radiation Sickness, July 6, 2007, <http://www.n.m.nih.gov/medlineplus/ency/article/000026.htm>

law enforcement and intelligence can be far more effective than military force in preventing attacks.²²² Although Saudi Arabia is hardly a liberal democracy in the Western sense, it appears to enjoy enough legitimacy among its citizens to reveal preparations for large-scale attacks.²²³

Summary of an effective grand strategy: Quit whining

And the Harry Truman who strolled on Washington sidewalks even after assassins tried to shoot him could explain something else: that a courageous, confident, open society is a goal in itself.²²⁴

From Inauguration Day forward, the new administration must demonstrate to the American people that our continued existence as a free, prosperous, and democratic state depends on showing physical and moral courage. Our ancestors were willing to make this sacrifice. Here are statistics from three other wars that threatened the existence of the republic:

Table VII: Casualties in Selected American Wars

War	U.S. Population	Killed in Action	Ratio (%)
Revolution	4,000,000	4,400	0.1100
Civil War	32,000,000	184,000	0.5750
WW II	135,000,000	292,000	0.2163
"Global War on Terrorism"	300,000,000	6,500 (including Sept. 11)	0.0022

Including the losses from Sept. 11, the United States is at 1/100th of the proportional sacrifice required to fight WWII. If you consider the enormous strength and support we gained from around the world in September 2001, you can see that our ability to take the occasional losses from criminal attacks, combined with fidelity to our national goals and Constitution, constitute a guaranteed grand strategy for success. However, if we do not cultivate our

222 Michael Slackman, "Saudis round up 172, citing plot against oil rigs," *New York Times*, April 28, 2007.

223 Michael Slackman, "Ballot boxes? Yes. Actual democracy? Tough question," *New York Times*, June 7, 2007.

224 Fallows, "Success Without Victory," 90.

moral courage, then each attack will build upon the panic generated by the one before it. As Brzezinski²²⁵ eloquently summarized our current state:

The culture of fear is like a genie that has been let out of its bottle. It acquires a life of its own — and can become demoralizing. America today is not the self-confident and determined nation that responded to Pearl Harbor; nor is it the America that heard from its leader, at another moment of crisis, the powerful words “the only thing we have to fear is fear itself”; nor is it the calm America that waged the Cold War with quiet persistence despite the knowledge that a real war could be initiated abruptly within minutes and prompt the death of 100 million Americans within just a few hours. We are now divided, uncertain and potentially very susceptible to panic in the event of another terrorist act in the United States itself.

In other words, although the United States is not in a “war” in any meaningful sense, the country may still have to take casualties to preserve our way of life. If this seems odd, consider that we are willing to lose 19,000 people a year to homicides without considering the murder rate as justification for dismantling our democratic system.

It will not be easy for the new administration. Although most Americans claim to be Christians, not many seem to have bought into Jesus’ grand strategy of turning the other cheek.²²⁶ It may or may not, depending on religious preferences, help with eternal salvation, but it is a proven formula for grand strategy, as leaders from Mahatma Ghandi to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., to the millions of participants in the post-Soviet color revolutions can attest. But it requires enormous moral (and some physical) courage.

There will be an incident during the next administration, and national leaders will come under a barrage of pressure from professional hawks, neo-cons, neo-liberals, and right-wing politicians to act tough. At this point, Congress and the administration will have the opportunity to show true leadership and enter the history books. As columnist Fred Kaplan wrote back in September 2003:

225 Zbigniew Brzezinski, “Terrorized by ‘war on terror’: How a three-word mantra has undermined America,” *Washington Post*, March 25, 2007, B01.

226 Luke 6:29 and Matthew 5:5&9.

Ever since the crumbling of the Soviet Union, foreign-policy specialists had been wondering how to create a new world order for an era that lacked a common enemy. Now, suddenly, here was that enemy. And here was a moment when the world viewed America with more empathy than it had in the past half-century. An American leader could have taken advantage of that moment and reached out to the world, forged new alliances, strengthened old ones, and laid the foundations of a new, broad-based system of international security for the post-Cold War era — much as Harry Truman and George Marshall had done in the months and years following World War II.²²⁷

This does not mean that we do not strike back against the perpetrators — so long as it is done quickly, professionally, accompanied by our allies, and with painstaking attention paid to limiting the damage suffered by those who did not perpetrate or assist in the act. But the administration must also accomplish a larger purpose, to use the tragedy of the moment to, as Kaplan advises, improve the country's web of alliances, partners, and sympathizers and in this way, add to our national security. This is the level of leadership that we must demand from the next administration.

227 Kaplan, "Bush's many miscalculations."

VI: Fight *Zugzwang* with *Shi* (Of Course)

SPIEGEL ONLINE: In your book “Inside Terrorism” you cite bin Laden’s deputy Ayman al-Zawahiri as saying that al-Qaida has the U.S. where they wanted it: if it leaves Iraq, it would be bad, if it stays in Iraq, it wouldn’t be any better. Is he right?

[RAND terrorism expert Bruce] Hoffman: Unfortunately I think al-Zawahiri’s analysis is probably among the most astute and insightful.²²⁸

There is a concept in chess, although it may also apply to other move-countermove games, where a player gets into a position such that no matter which move is made, the position is worse.²²⁹ In other words, it’s your move — you *have* to move something — but whatever you do will create opportunities for your opponent. What you’d really like to do is pass — somehow convince the other player that it’s not your move. With the clock ticking down and the championship on the line, a *zugzwang* can be a scary proposition, where the only reasonable options appear to be concede, knock all the pieces to the floor, or curl up in fetal position sucking one’s thumb.

228 *Spiegel Online*, “Interview with terrorism expert Bruce Hoffman,” October 10, 2006, <http://www.spiegel.de/international/0,1518,441695,00.html>

229 Allen Quicke, “Zugzwang, or white to play and lose,” *Asia Times Online*, May 10, 2007 http://www.atimes.com/atimes/middle_east/IE10Ak07.html; “Maximus,” personal email.

It may seem that we have somehow arrived in a national *zugzwang*, that everything we're doing is making the situation worse: Go in, things get bad; pull out, things get worse; stay, and things will get much worse. What we'd like to do is pretend the whole thing never happened and curl up in the geopolitical version of fetal position.

The sure-fire cure for zugzwang

In chess, true *zugzwang* typically occurs only near the end-game, when it can be proven that any move will make your position worse. Early in the game, the condition results more from what might be called a lack of *mental courage*. This curious term, which complements physical and moral courage, simply means the willingness to think the unthinkable, to fight off mental laziness, break out of patterns that you are comfortable with, and force yourself to grapple with concepts that are strange, distasteful, or perhaps even intimidating. It would take *mental* courage, for example, to realize that our current belief system — our national orientation — did not match with reality and *moral* courage to admit it in public. The next administration will need both.

Before national *zugzwang* turns into national malaise, we should consider the differences between chess and the real world, where:

- ▶ We can move, if we move at all, when we're damn good and ready.
- ▶ We can make more than one move at a time; we can time our moves, relative to everybody else's, to have maximum impact.
- ▶ A move isn't over until we say it's over; in fact, the game isn't over until we say it's over, and we're at 219 years and counting.
- ▶ We can call a friend; in fact we can get as many other players to help us as we can recruit.
- ▶ We can try to persuade opposing players to quit or change sides, or at least to forget about attacking us.
- ▶ The rules don't limit us to 16 pieces of any predetermined types, where in grand strategy, a "piece" is anything that might be useful — hardware, sure, but also alliances, ideas, negotiating skills, ideals, and money.

- ▶ Our only limits are our creativity and imagination and our willingness to work together to solve our problems.

If *zugzwang* is largely in our imaginations, or lack thereof, how do we break out? What can the next administration do to help the country buck up our mental courage and get back into the game? The answer may lie in another concept that is not so much a strategy as a philosophy for creating and employing strategies.

Shi

Go is the ancient board game invented by the Chinese, who “place heavy emphasis on strategy and stratagems whereas the West relies more on overwhelming force and advanced capability.”²³⁰ As the book up to this point has tried to demonstrate, “overwhelming force and advanced capability” have little to offer when dealing with non-state groups of all sorts, whether classical guerrilla insurgencies or today’s transnational, ideological networks. In fact, most of the time Western methods are counterproductive and play right into the hands of these groups. This suggests that the other alternative, the world of strategy and stratagems, might have more to offer the new administration. But it will require breaking out of our predominant mindset, as illustrated by the three dogmas described in the introduction.

Among the many facets of this philosophy of strategy is one usually rendered in English as *shi*. Like most concepts that trace their written records back to Sun Tzu, *shi* is difficult to define explicitly, which is what gives it its power: It is not a matter of following a formula. The more you learn about it, ponder it, and try it, the better you will be able to understand and use it. To help people grasp the basic concept, Lai describes four aspects of *shi*, and it is the third of these that might have the most potential to help us out of our national *zugzwang*:

The third aspect of *shi* is about developing a favorable situation with great potential to achieve the political objectives.²³¹

230 David Lai, “Learning from the Stones,” (Carlisle, Pa.: U.S. Army War College, Strategic Studies Institute, 2004)

231 *Ibid.*, 2.

The idea is that in peacetime, players should be working on their positions — improving them, removing flaws, and increasing their capacity for survival on their own terms. When not moving, or even while moving, we can be making more and better pieces — in the real world, nobody’s limiting us to just 16 — creating, in other words, a better United States. Richard Betts, who runs Columbia University’s Saltzman Institute of War and Peace Studies, has coined the appealing term *strategic solvency* to describe our ability to survive on our own terms in an uncertain future. He notes that on the important element of soft power, most of which falls under the Department of State, we spend roughly 6.5 percent what we give to the Pentagon.²³²

The rest of this section will propose policies for improving our position in the world, for storing up national potential energy that we can use to improve the quality of our lives, and those of our friends, instead of dissipating it against “threats” that do not threaten us.

Be realistic

Americans have great control over what we do to improve our own position. We have much less control over what happens in foreign lands. Yet the United States still talks as if it can cause positive outcomes by adopting the can-do spirit and putting enough muscle (and physical courage) on the problem. It’s an old fallacy. More than 70 years ago, the distinguished sociologist Robert K. Merton listed a dozen great scientists and economists who had studied the problem of why the unintended consequences (a phrase he coined, incidentally, along with “self-fulfilling prophecy”) of “purposive action” had led to disaster.²³³ These are shown in Table VIII.

232 Richard K. Betts, “A disciplined defense: How to regain strategic solvency,” *Foreign Affairs*, November-December 2007, 67-80. Secretary of Defense Gates has also called for a better balance between soft and hard (military) power.

233 Robert K. Merton, “The unanticipated consequences of purposive social action,” *American Sociological Review*, 1936 1(6), 894-904.

Table VIII: Economists, philosophers, and scientists who warned of the “unintended consequences of purposive action”

Niccolo Machiavelli	Florentine, 1469-1527
Giambattista Vico	Neopolitan, 1668-1744
Adam Smith	Scottish, 1723-1790
Karl Marx	German, 1818-1883
Fredrich Engels	German, 1820-1895
Wilhelm Wundt	German, 1832-1920
Vilfredo Pareto	French, 1848-1923
Max Weber	German, 1864-1920
Graham Wallas	English, 1858-1932
Pitirim Sorokin	Russian-American, 1889-1968
Corrado Gini	Italian, 1884-1965
Alexander von Schelting	German, 1894-1963

We could add the entire Austrian and Chicago schools of economics and all of libertarian philosophy to this list, which illustrates that the notion of “unintended consequences” spans the range of political thought. Yet, for some reason, we keep repeating the same fallacy — that we can reliably control events outside of our own country and drive the outcomes where we want them to be.

The new administration should cultivate a deep skepticism of the country’s ability to influence events in foreign lands in any predictable way. It is not so much that it can never be done; it’s that it can never be determined, in advance, if we are capable of doing it. As a guiding principle, therefore, it would be much better for all concerned to keep working at home most of the time, quietly and continually pumping up our *shi*, improving our strategic solvency.

Be expansive

Another principle for improving our national *shi* is the opposite of the first: Do not impose any limits on what can be accomplished. This would appear

to be a contradiction, and if we limit ourselves purely, or even primarily to military force, it is. It is also a contradiction if we rely on coercive measures of any sort. The reason is that people react in unpredictable ways to coercion — some resist, a few take up the challenge and strike back, and a very few submit. A tough-guy hard-power reliant national security policy is much like kicking a snake or tiger or any other living thing. It may move, but what happens after that is difficult to predict.

The resolution of this contradiction is to view the question of national security in the broadest possible sense. The military is certainly one aspect. But in a world where everybody is weaker than us, it has enormous drawbacks, as van Creveld pointed out. So, one of the first tasks of the new administration is to prioritize the threats to our national well-being. A simple, linear scale — this is first, this is second, etc. — will be misleading, but time and resources are limited so it is important that the country and the world know what the administration thinks is important and what they think isn't.

For what it's worth, here's my rough cut, *from least to greatest*, with no precision but with great overlap:

► **Attack by the military forces of another state**

We have this one pretty well beat to death. If Americans still feel insecure, then — because we outspend the rest of the world put together — we should decide what other state could threaten us and surrender now.

► **Armed threats other than foreign state militaries**

This category includes everything from guerrilla warfare in the United States — a repeat of the Oklahoma City bombing, for example — to violent transnational, ideological groups — “terrorists.” Attacks by such groups are certain, but unless they can somehow obtain a workable nuclear weapon, the effects on our society will be negligible. There are a couple of caveats. First, there are measures we can take, as described previously, to greatly reduce the ability of non-state groups to obtain nuclear weapons. The second is that non-nuclear effects will not threaten our survival on our own terms as a nation *unless* we ourselves amplify them all out of proportion by a continuation of the national hysteria that took root after Sept. 11.

► **Other foreign threats to our national well-being**

There are a lot of these, mostly involving competition for scarce resources. However, much of the threat this represents is self-inflicted — our prodigious use of energy, for example — or can be resolved through the normal course of trade and diplomacy. It should also be kept in mind that any resource that could be used to threaten our economy also threatens those of our allies, not every such threat applying to every ally, of course. In all such cases, however, the temptation to use military force to secure resources should be avoided because it will damage our alliance structure, Barnett’s “Core,” and will spawn consequences that we did not anticipate or intend (how many times do we need to learn this?)

► **Domestic problems**

Into this category fall all the things that are equivalent to not doing any maintenance on your car and then acting surprised when the thing breaks. The United States has run up an impressive list of things that need fixing, including health care (particularly Medicare funding), Social Security, ballooning debt, trade imbalances, infrastructure, water (especially in the West), illegal immigration, and narcotics trafficking with its related corruption and other criminal fallout. Here is one that may be unfamiliar: Louisiana has been losing approximately 24 square miles of coastal wetlands every year for the past several decades.²³⁴ Over just two decades, such losses would amount to roughly 500 square miles. Suppose a foreign power had grabbed off 500 square miles of U.S. territory, say the island of Oahu, where Pearl Harbor is located. We’d be ready to go nuclear, but whom do we nuke if we’re doing it to ourselves?

The cacophony of proposals heading into the 2008 election demonstrates that there is no consensus on solutions to any of the problems in this category. This alone suggests that, compared to this category, the three above are almost trivial. Yet, the United States’ weakens its position — *shi* — by misallocating resources away

234 Lolis Elie, “Unmasking our pain in New Orleans,” *The Washington Post*, February 11, 2007, B01.

from the big problems to the three small ones. Everybody should be familiar by now with the fact that we're on our way to burning through at least a trillion dollars of national wealth on the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, money that will never be available to solve domestic problems or to return to the taxpayers.²³⁵

This diversion of resources is beginning to have measurable effects on the quality of life in the United States. For the first time in decades, for example, the U.S. infant mortality rate, which already ranks 42nd in the world and trails all of Western Europe and Japan,²³⁶ has started to rise in parts of the country.²³⁷ And the transfer of crime-fighting assets to an illusory "war on terrorism" has led to such unintended consequences as a 34 percent drop in criminal cases brought by the FBI nationwide and a 90 percent drop in prosecutions of white-collar crime in some urban areas.²³⁸

By its very definition, the domestic category has the most to do with *shi* — building inner strength rather than frivolously dissipating it externally. For all of these reasons, the domestic arena is where the new administration must provide leadership and build consensus that these are the important problems, even if we do not yet have adequate solutions. This does not imply that the government itself is the solution, but as the elected representative of the country as a whole, it plays a unique role in prioritizing the problems.

Some recommendations (just to get the ball rolling)

Eliminate the Department of Homeland Security

Tom Barnett suggested the elimination of the Homeland Security Department (DHS) in *Blueprint for Action*²³⁹ and the idea has only improved with age. As

235 Amy Belasco, *The cost of Iraq, Afghanistan, and other global war on terror operations since 9/11*, Congressional Research Services, 2007; Linda Blimes and Joseph Stiglitz, "The economic cost of the Iraq war," http://www2.gsb.columbia.edu/faculty/jstiglitz/cost_of_war_in_iraq.pdf.

236 United States Central Intelligence Agency, *World Factbook*, 2007, <https://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/rankorder/2091rank.html>.

237 Eric Eckholm, "In turnabout, infant deaths climb in South," *New York Times*, April 22, 2007.

238 Paul Shukovsky, Tracy Johnson and Daniel Lathrop, "The FBI's terrorism trade-off Focus on national security after 9/11 means that the agency has turned its back on thousands of white-collar crimes," *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, April 11, 2007.

239 Barnett, *Blueprint for Action*, 27.

Barnett put it, the creation of DHS sent the signal to the rest of the world that what is of consuming importance to the nation is our own security. It's a modern equivalent of the Maginot Line mentality — withdraw behind it, slam the doors shut, and the United States is safe.

This kowtowing to “security” was driven home during a recent trip from Atlanta. As I was shuffling through the security waiting line at the airport, I handed my driver's license and boarding pass to the checker and then heard her order, “Look up at me.” I was momentarily stunned, but since it was either that or don't fly, I meekly obeyed. She compared my face to that on the license, looked at the boarding pass, and sort of shrugged in the direction of the x-ray machines. Now, here are some interesting things about this experience (other than more proof, as if any were needed, that we have truly become a nation of sheep):

- ▶ This individual was not an employee of the Transportation Security Administration, its parent (DHS), the airport police department, the Atlanta Police or Fulton County Sheriff's Department, the FBI, CIA, DIA or any other government agency. She was an employee of a private company hired by the airport, with, from what I could observe, training and experience a couple of levels below that of the average rent-a-cop. Giving such individuals power over other citizens burdens them beyond what many can handle, as the recent tragic death of Carol Anne Gotbaum in the custody of security personnel at the Phoenix airport illustrates.²⁴⁰
- ▶ Any “terrorist” who isn't bright enough to figure out how to print a boarding pass with any name on it shouldn't be in the business.
- ▶ Ditto for any “terrorist” who can't figure out how to get a driver's license with any name and picture on it.

240 For details on this episode, which occurred on September 28, 2007, see A. L. Bardach, “Why Flying Now Can Kill,” *Washington Post*, October 14, 2007 and Reuben F. Johnson, “Fear of flying? No. It's a fear of airports,” *Weekly Standard*, October 9, 2007. Note that Bardach published in the somewhat liberal *Washington Post*, while Johnson's article, which includes details of similar but not fatal incidents, appeared in the decidedly not liberal *Weekly Standard*.

It's a totally bogus exercise, and an excellent illustration of why the current security environment is more a part of the problem than of the solution. People who want to commit terrorist acts or any other sort of violence on commercial airplanes have a wealth of options, other than standing in line with the rest of us. In November, 2007, for example, it came to light that 110 fake security badges were being used by a contractor at Chicago's O'Hare International Airport, one of the world's busiest. Twenty-three were worn by illegal aliens. This is just one incident by one contractor at one airport.²⁴¹

As I was picking my stuff off the x-ray belt and retying my shoes, I looked around at the sea of white shirts and black pants. There must have been 100 TSA personnel. Now, I must say that they were all busy and the vast majority of them were polite and professional, but it suddenly occurred to me that the business of appearing to provide security is in fact providing a livelihood for an awful lot of people. And these were just the worker bees and their immediate supervisors. I had a vision of offices as far as the eye could see to house the layers of managers and their assistants and staffs, and of a forest of gleaming towers where the contractors and lobbyists live. And I thought to myself, "We're never going to be able to dismantle this operation — too many people with too much at stake."

DHS represents a bureaucratic empire to the amount of \$47 billion per year.²⁴² The tragedy of Sept. 11, however, was not caused by lack of bureaucracy. Just the opposite. Too much bureaucracy, in particular, barriers that prevented analysts and agents at the FBI, CIA and DOD from sharing and acting on the ample information they already had, was a critical factor in the failure to detect and prevent the Sept. 11 attack.²⁴³ Even given all this, they nearly succeeded in breaking up the attack. Why a Republican administration,

241 BBC News, "Arrests in US Airport Badge Scam," November 8, 2007, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/7084338.stm>

242 Robert Dreyfuss, "Financing the imperial armed forces: A trillion dollars and nowhere to go but up," June 8, 2007, http://tomdispatch.com/post/174793/robert_dreyfuss_the_pentagon_s_blank_check

243 This is well documented; see, for example, United States National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States, *The 9-11 Commission Report, Executive Summary*, 2004, http://www.9-11commission.gov/report/911Report_Exec.htm; David Corn, "On 9/11, CIA chief gets off easy," *The Nation*, July 2, 2004, <http://www.thenation.com/blogs/capitalgames?pid=1380>; Dan Eggen, "Pre-9/11 missteps by FBI detailed; report tells of missed chances to find hijackers," *Washington Post*, June 10, 2005, A01; Jeff Taylor, "How the FBI let 9/11 happen," *Reason*, June 2006.

which is supposed to be suspicious of government and bureaucracy, accepted the notion that more of both was the solution to “terrorism” is beyond me. Perhaps Bush will explain it in his memoirs.

The conceptual solution is the same as for private industry: Bureaucracies that aren't there can't erect barriers. Private industry has developed solutions that can eliminate bureaucratic underbrush in order to restore the competitiveness of organizations. The demonstrably most effective methods involve reforming the organization into a “lean” system, which explains how Toyota surged from nowhere to dominate the car industry.²⁴⁴

Although lean methodologies are well-understood and tested, they require the will to dismantle large pieces of the organization (not simply lay off workers and outsource!), and reduce the proportion of middle and upper managers relative to the rest of the organization.²⁴⁵ Summoning this will seems to require a high level of competition or a major catastrophe; as Taiichi Ohno, one of the originators of the lean system, noted, organizations that believe they have any other choice won't use lean.²⁴⁶

Because we are trying to avoid major catastrophes, it is worth asking how to introduce competition into bureaucracies. Unfortunately this is a problem that no one has solved, perhaps because if it is possible to have competition for a product or service, why create a government bureaucracy to provide it? It is highly unlikely, for all these reasons, that DHS can be reformed into an effective organization, even using proven lean methodologies. It might be noted in passing that most mergers in the private sector also fail, with Daimler-Chrysler being only the most recent and one of the most expensive.

The next administration should give serious consideration to the solution adopted by Daimler-Chrysler: Break the organization apart, remove the excess

244 See, for example, Taiichi Ohno, *Toyota production system* (University Park, IL: Productivity Press 1999); J.P. Womack, D.T. Jones and D. Roos, *The Machine That Changed the World* (New York: Harper, 1991); and Jeffrey Liker, *The Toyota Way* (New York: McGraw Hill, 2003).

245 For companies, see Chet Richards, *Certain to Win: The strategy of John Boyd applied to business* (Philadelphia: Xlibris, 2004); Tom Peters, *Thriving on Chaos* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1987); Tom Peters, *The Tom Peters Seminar* (New York: Vintage Books, 1994); Tom Peters, *Re-imagine* (New York: Dorling Kindersley, 2003); for military organizations, see Donald Vandergriff, *The path to victory* (Novato, CA: Presidio Press, 2002).

246 Isao Shinohara, *New production system: JIT crossing industry boundaries*, (Novato, CA: Productivity Press, 1988).

layers of bureaucracy (which the new owners of Chrysler will certainly do in order to increase shareholder value), and then reassemble the pieces that add value. Because it is not obvious which pieces add value to national security, without trampling the freedoms that define why we have a United States, the next administration will have to spend some time on this exercise, something that was not done when constructing DHS.

Downsize the Department of Defense

This should be a no-brainer, given that there is hardly any military threat to the United States. The significance of the problem is easier to grasp, however, if you regard DOD not as an organization that protects the country but as a giant flywheel for the economy. It has the same economic and political effect as DHS, only an order of magnitude larger (not to disparage DHS, but DOD has been at it decades longer and their toys tend to be a lot more expensive).

The chart below shows one estimate of annual spending on national defense. Totals can change depending on the operating definition of “national defense.” Including interest on debt from past defense-related expenditures, for example, could increase the total to well over one trillion dollars.²⁴⁷ Different analysts sum the numbers in different ways, but once you pass half-a-trillion dollars or so, and consider that there is no military threat to speak of, what else you include depends on where you fall on the ridiculous-to-absurd continuum.

Table IX: What is the Defense Budget? (\$ Billions, total budget authority)

CATEGORY	2006	2007	2008 (Request)
“Peacetime” DOD (Discretionary Only)	410.7	435.5	481.4
Mandatory Programs	59.3	1.7	1.9
Emergencies	123.8	163.4	141.7
Total DOD	593.8	600.1	624.6
DOE/Defense	17.5	17	17.4
Misc	5.9	5.2	5.2
National Defense Budget function	617.2	622.4	647.2

247 Robert Higgs, “The trillion-dollar defense budget is already here,” The Independent Institute, March 15, 2007, <http://www.independent.org/newsroom/article.asp?id=1941>; Dreyfuss, “Financing the imperial armed forces: A trillion dollars and nowhere to go but up.”

CATEGORY	2006	2007	2008 (Request)
Homeland Security (non DOD)	32.4	33	36.4
DVA	71	74.5	84.4
International Affairs	32.8	34.1	38.3
GRAND TOTAL	694.6	761.5	802.9

Source: Center for Defense Information, Washington, DC December 7, 2007

As a result of the present administration's policies, the American public is spending increasingly more on defense, but receiving less and less security in return — a *zugzwang*. Such situations are not uncommon in the design and operation of complex systems, and they virtually always arise because one or more invalid assumptions have somehow been incorporated into the design.²⁴⁸ This incorporation, incidentally, is rarely deliberate.

In the case of military force, the assumptions causing problems seem to be the following:²⁴⁹

- ▶ Military forces are as useful for furthering U.S. national interests in the 21st century as they have ever been.
- ▶ The more resources devoted to military forces, the more useful they will be and therefore, the more secure the United States will be.

These two assumptions operating together will produce the condition we are in today. Once we accept, as this book has shown, that these assumptions do not describe today's world, then the path towards a solution is clear: Quit devoting so much of the national treasure to the Department of Defense. In the language of the *theory of constraints*, a well-known approach to the design of large systems,²⁵⁰ the United States should *exploit the constraint* represented by DOD by radically downsizing it and then, as the next few pages will recommend, perform its residual functions in an entirely new way. The theory of constraints suggests that in so doing, our overall national system will improve.

248 William Dettmer, *The Logical Thinking Process: A systems approach to complex problem solving* (Milwaukee, Wis.: ASQ Quality Press, 2007).

249 See also Bacevich, *The New American Militarism*, who agrees that faulty assumptions are the cause, but proposes a different assumption set.

250 Dettmer, *The Logical Thinking Process*.

What would a reasonable size be for DOD, however it ends up on the national organization chart? To answer this, the new administration will need to involve Congress and the American people in a thorough scrub of the missions that will be assigned to a right-sized military organization. There has been a focus for so long on defeating a peer state on the battlefield, a mission that no longer exists, that it may be difficult to even imagine others.

Before engaging in complete unilateral disarmament, however, it might be worthwhile to consider a range of other missions that could involve us and our allies in conflict with armed groups around the world. These might include:

- ▶ damping out civil wars;
- ▶ supporting insurgencies;
- ▶ supporting or defeating, as the case may be, cross-border incursions (invasions);
- ▶ rescuing hostages;
- ▶ participating in anti-piracy efforts to defend the world's sea lanes;
- ▶ raids against groups developing nuclear or perhaps biological weapons;
- ▶ participating in multinational operations in weak or failed states.

The point is that there are still jobs that only the military can do. The next administration must remind the American people, however, that in none of these will the opponent be a credible military force; and, for all of them, the lead roles will be played by international political, economic, law enforcement and intelligence organizations, with the military providing specialized services.

Considering the secondary role of the military and the weakness of any opposition, it is clear that these missions will require a force no larger than what was recommended in *A Swift, Elusive Sword* in 2001, because the need for massive forces to fight conventional battles no longer exists. Administration explanations for the size of the budget — nearly \$500 billion, which does not include the supplemental requests for Iraq and Afghanistan — read more like creative writing to justify a pre-selected number than seri-

ous analyses of military force as part of an overall strategy to improve our national quality of life.²⁵¹

Briefly, an illustrative force adequate (with a considerable margin of safety) for the 21st century might consist of:

- ▶ The existing USMC, an in-being combined-arms force that has already adopted maneuver warfare as its official doctrine. “Maneuver warfare” derives from WWII “blitzkrieg” tactics and provides a proven doctrine for using more *agile* (as contrasted with “larger”) forces to quickly defeat an enemy with relatively little loss of life.²⁵²
- ▶ The special operations community — SEALs, Rangers, Green Berets and their supporting elements.
- ▶ Sufficient tactical air to work with this force. Again, this will require study. The purpose of the residual conventional military force will be to ensure that any allied operations against state militaries — which will all be in the developing world but may still possess some capable air and armor (tank) units — end as quickly and with as few casualties on all sides as possible. The ideal use of force would lead to their capitulation, with honor, after the briefest of encounters. Achieving this requires the application of maneuver warfare (winning is generally possible through attrition, but it takes longer and inflicts more casualties), and closely integrated tactical air is a key component of maneuver warfare.
- ▶ Some amount, to be determined, of airlift (C-130s, C-5s, and C-17s) and sealift (ships). The bulk of airlift requirements studies are wrong, although they do make useful marketing brochures. The vast, vast

251 Justifications include the need to handle threats such as North Korea and Iran, which spend less than \$12 billion between them, and forces to fight a conventional war with either China or Russia or both. For a recent summary, see Thom Shanker, “Meeting today’s military demands, with an eye on tomorrow’s,” *The New York Times*, September 30, 2007. Betts also makes this point most eloquently in “A disciplined defense.”

252 For a description of maneuver warfare tactics, see William Lind, *Maneuver Warfare Handbook*, (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1985); and United States Marine Corps, *Warfighting (Marine Corps Doctrinal Publication 1)*, (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1997). For the data that supports the effectiveness of these tactics, see Stephen Biddle, *Military Power: Explaining victory and defeat in modern battle*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004).

majority of troops and material move either by ship or by commercial aircraft. Airlifters move special high-value equipment. Because the United States will not be invading so many countries in the future, the lift we have now is more than we need.

- ▶ Some fraction, to be determined, of the strategic missile forces, primarily those based on submarines. Retire the bomber force and study the requirement for land-based missiles.
- ▶ Surface naval forces adequate to support the above force as the American component of a raiding force and to participate in other missions with our allies involving naval forces, such as anti-piracy. In an earlier work, I recommended six nuclear carrier task forces, half of the current level.²⁵³

One way to estimate a reasonable spending range for DOD is to compare it to other nations’ budgets. Bacevich²⁵⁴ suggested adding together the defense spending of the next 10 countries, which would produce a budget in the range of \$350-400 billion. Table X shows this and several other options.²⁵⁵

Table X: Standards for a Logical Defense Budget

AMOUNT (\$Billions)	External Benchmark
\$624	FY 2008 U.S. defense budget request — including costs of Iraq and Afghanistan
\$350-\$400	Next 10 nations (Bacevich’s recommendation)
\$250	Next four nations: China, U.K., France, Japan
\$180-\$200	Next 10, <i>excluding</i> close U.S. allies: China, Russia, India, Saudi Arabia, Brazil, North Korea, Singapore, Argentina, Iran and Pakistan
\$80-\$90	Next 10, <i>excluding</i> U.S. allies and significant nuclear powers: as in previous row, but excluding China and Russia
\$26	The Center for Defense Information’s (CDI) “Top 25 Countries of Vital Interest to the U.S.” Places we <i>might</i> actually fight, including Afghanistan, Cuba, Egypt, Iraq, Iran, Jordan, Lebanon, Liberia, Libya, Nigeria, N. Korea, Pakistan, Sudan, and Venezuela

Source: CDI, *Military Almanac 2007*.

253 Richards, *A swift, elusive sword*.

254 Bacevich, “More troops, more troubles,” 215.

255 Except as noted, budget estimates are taken from GlobalSecurity.org, *Worldwide military expenditures 2007*, <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/spending.htm>.

The third row (\$250 billion) defines an initial milestone on our way to creating an effective but reasonably-sized defense establishment. During the Cold War, the United States fought hot wars in Korea and Vietnam, while standing off the mighty Soviet Union — with its thousands of tanks, fighters, ships, artillery pieces, and missiles — for an average annual spend (in constant dollars) of about \$375 billion. As another benchmark, the combined defense budget for all of NATO other than the United States — a population of about 575 million — is \$300 billion.²⁵⁶

The last three rows show different ways to estimate the combined budgets of the nations that we might conceivably fight. The fourth row excludes NATO and other long-standing U.S. allies. The fifth row also excludes China and Russia, which are capable nuclear states and so not candidates for conventional war with the U.S. Because this row only considers non-nuclear and minor nuclear countries, to include it as a true benchmark would require adding back the cost of maintaining a reasonable nuclear deterrent, say for 1,000 weapons, which would still produce a benchmark under \$100 billion. Finally, the last row is the sum of the defense budgets of the 25 biggest spenders that the United States might actually engage with conventional military forces. Their combined budget is about what we spend on the U.S. Marine Corps.

The United States is not, of course, going to fight the next 10 biggest spenders, combined, nor should the country fight anybody without significant help from our allies. What these different ways of looking at the problem do is reinforce the conclusion that our defense spending is so out of balance with the rest of the world's that we can make significant reductions without compromising our national security. It is important to keep in mind that this is a budget to defend the United States as part of an overall effort to improve our quality of life — to survive on our own terms. It is not designed to fund massive social engineering programs abroad or prop up the military-industrial complex at home.

Some analysts have proposed that the budget also include funds to hedge against the rise of a future “peer competitor.”²⁵⁷ In order to affect the defense budget, such a peer competitor would have to present a formidable challenge

256 CIA, *World Factbook*.

257 DOD, Quadrennial defense review report; Galston, Kamarck and Burke, *Security First: A strategy for defending America*.

with conventional forces but not possess nuclear weapons — a reincarnation of the Wehrmacht, for example. Even granting, somehow, the possibility of such a threat, it would be detected years in advance. So future “peer competitors” can be safely left out of the defense budget because, while it is good strategy not to count on a single prediction of the future, it is equally good strategy to recognize that one cannot hypothesize threats and allocate money to defend against them *ad infinitum*.

Don't run on autopilot

We must be careful not to fall for a common fallacy, which seems reasonable enough when you first hear it. There are people who will tell you that we should pick an arbitrary percentage, usually around 5 percent, of our gross domestic product and spend that much every year on the Department of Defense.²⁵⁸ Under such a scheme, defense spending would increase when the economy is good, and decline in times of recession (even if we were confronted with a major threat).

There are four points that are always rolled out to justify this idea:

- ▶ That's what we've historically spent.
- ▶ We're at war.
- ▶ We can afford it.
- ▶ We don't want a repeat of the “hollow military” of the Clinton (or sometimes the Carter) years.

The U.S. GDP is about \$13 trillion, and 5 percent of that would provide a defense budget of \$650 billion, excluding Homeland Security and operations in Iraq and Afghanistan.²⁵⁹ How can we square this with the claim that a budget of no more than \$250 billion would be adequate? The short answer is that the constant percentage answer does not consider what defense is for,

258 J. Talent, “The crying need for a bigger U.S. military,” *National Review*, March 5, 2007. Adm. Michael Mullen, chairman of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff has called for a more modest 4 percent. See John T. Bennett, “Mullen: 4% of GDP Needed for Defense,” *DefenseNews.com*, December 3, 2007.

259 That is, the “National Defense Budget Function” entry for FY 2008, as shown in Table IX, including the DOE's nuclear programs but excluding “emergencies” like Iraq and Afghanistan. For FY 2008, this is about \$500 billion.

only how much to spend. So a conceptual refutation of the four above points might go something like:

- ▶ Since defense requirements are built against a threat, pegging our spending against our GDP might make sense ... if we were fighting our GDP.
- ▶ Here's yet another way to look at the "is it war" question: If we're at "war," where is the opposing Army? Navy? Air Force? We are in a state of conflict, no doubt, but that doesn't mean that it's "war" or that the DOD budget is any significant part of the solution.
- ▶ We can afford it only if we're willing to give up other things, like reducing taxes or fixing health care, Social Security, illegal immigration, infrastructure, crime, the debt, etc.
- ▶ Clinton cut the budget because the conventional military threat had collapsed (the Soviet Union had disappeared, a fact that constant-percentage advocates sometimes overlook).

Budget analyses can get complex, reflecting the debate over exactly what should be included; for comparison, the budget for the U.S. Marine Corps is less than \$30 billion, which pays for a force of 220,000 Marines, active duty and reserve.²⁶⁰ So, perhaps \$250 billion is not so austere. The fact that the current administration, as well as the leading presidential candidates of both parties feel that spending half a trillion dollars on defense is at best barely adequate shows how stable a system our military-industrial complex has become. The next administration needs to supply some adult supervision to the problem of bureaucratic self-preservation and not waste time or energy on trying to reform unnecessary departments.

In order to offer specific recommendations, however, it is necessary to broaden the concept of national defense to include the intelligence function. Defense and intelligence should operate together as an integrated facility for understanding what is going on in the world and, from time to time and with great finesse and support from our allies, to employing force as part of a

260 United States Department of the Navy, "Department of the Navy FY2008 Budget," Appendix B, http://www.finance.hq.navy.mil/fmb/08pres/highbook/Highlights_book.pdf.

strategy for influencing events — staying ever mindful of the historical legacy of unintended consequences.

Never hurts to know what's going on

When people think of intelligence, they usually imagine spying on enemies and potential enemies using human agents or technical means such as eavesdropping devices or spy satellites. They're on the right track because all these are necessary, but they don't, in and of themselves, provide *intelligence*. What they give is information. To turn into intelligence, this information requires hard analysis, and much of the raw data that's collected — in the case of human sources, nearly all of it — will have to be disregarded:

- ▶ In the case of technical means of intelligence, most of what satellites photograph or antennas pick up is not important and some of it is deliberate deception.
- ▶ This is also the case when it comes to human sources, plus dealing with humans creates an entirely new set of problems. Sources lie, sources tell intelligence officials what they think they want to hear (and will pay for), and sources forget or make other honest mistakes: “Did he actually say he had the weapons?”

Turning all this into something useable is a difficult job requiring the mental courage to keep exploring alternatives no matter how complex or seemingly unlikely, and the moral courage to go against the popular solution, or, most difficult of all, to resist telling powerful people what they want to hear. But if the purpose of intelligence is to spy on enemies, why bother? What use could intelligence be in a world with no enemies or even potential enemies worthy of the term?

The answer typically given is Sept. 11. This is correct, if the subject is law enforcement. The Sept. 11 attack was a criminal activity and could have been (and, as noted above, nearly was) broken up by a few well-timed arrests, with no F-15 fighters or M1A2 main battle tanks in sight. In a way, this is encouraging because, in a big world with many potentially hostile groups, and with limited ability to infiltrate those groups, particularly if time is a critical factor, the fact that we got as close as we did with what was largely a Cold War-era intelligence and law enforcement system should be grounds for optimism.

And it is, but it should not become grounds for complacency. Because of our involvement in Iraq, the world is a more complex place to practice intelligence than it was before. Under Saddam, there were no self-organizing, potentially dangerous groups; dictatorships are not noted for encouraging such initiative among the population at large. Today there is a profusion of groups who have experience in recruiting and training effective fighters, and they now have a history, a doctrine and a cadre of leaders who have proven their worth under fire. While it is true that none of these groups pose any real threat to the United States, they can cause plenty of trouble in their regions and inflict casualties around the world. They are certainly a problem, but for intelligence and law enforcement.

Intelligence: Sun Tzu got it right

There appears to be a growing belief that if only the United States had good intelligence, it would be possible to peer into state and non-state groups and see what they're up to before they do it. Sometimes intelligence can do just that, as when the FBI and other agencies infiltrated and essentially eliminated the Ku Klux Klan in the 1960s and 1970s. Infiltrating foreign organizations, however, is much, much more difficult. In addition to the obvious need to fit their religious and ethnic profiles, obtaining entry into their inner circles usually requires vetting based on family or long-standing personal connections that U.S. intelligence personnel rarely have.

It is sometimes possible, given sufficient time, to develop sources that do meet these conditions, to "turn" an insider, for example. But it is obviously a difficult job to find the right individual and then persuade him or her to betray friends, relatives, and even religion, and there is no way to tell how long it will take or whether it is even possible. Despite billions of dollars spent on the attempt, for example, our intelligence community had little success penetrating the KGB,²⁶¹ an organization much closer to the United States culturally, ethnically and linguistically than is al-Qaida.

Despite these problems, intelligence does turn out to be the key to improving our position and quality of life, but the reason takes a little explanation. Because my recommendations rest upon the concept of improving our *shi*, an

261 Christopher Andrew and Vasili Mitrokhin, *The Sword and the Shield: The Mitrokhin archive and the secret history of the KGB*, (New York: Basic Books, 1999).

idea out of Sun Tzu, it is worthwhile considering what that book has to say about intelligence. Even the most casual scan of the book reveals that Sun Tzu valued intelligence highly:²⁶²

So what enables an intelligent government and a wise military leadership to overcome others and achieve extraordinary accomplishments is foreknowledge.

Foreknowledge cannot be gotten from ghosts and spirits, cannot be had by analogy, cannot be found out by calculation. It must be obtained from people, people who know the conditions of the enemy.

In China of the fifth century B.C., “people who know the conditions of the enemy” meant spies, which is a common translation of the title of the chapter where this quotation appears. Today, it would also include people who interpret the results of electronic surveillance and overhead photography and those who listen in on intercepted communications. But even this isn’t enough, because all these people, along with the spies and those who manage spies, only produce *fore-information*, the raw materials, as it were, essential but not complete. To know the conditions of the enemy and be able to produce *fore-knowledge*, somebody has to put it all together: resolve the contradictions, throw out the lies and disinformation, make educated guesses to fill in the holes, and come up with a coherent picture that explains what all the information is trying to tell us.

This is why intelligence is such a difficult field. There is no newspaper, magazine, or web page that one can go to and find out everything one wants to know about a potentially threatening country or group (Unfortunately, intelligence organizations often present their findings in just this way, which might account for why senior leaders — the “decision-makers” — may think we know more than we do.) Intelligence analysis is more like some demented game show from the 1960s where analysts frantically search through mounds of garbage looking for what might be important clues, and then assemble them to form the picture of a prize, all before the bell — or bomb — goes off. One of the few bright spots in the Iraq situation is that the new commander of the U.S. Central Command, Adm. William Fallon, has expressed a similar view

262 Sun Tzu, 1988, 168.

of intelligence and has observed that it is key to winning without fighting,²⁶³ the ultimate measure of success to Sun Tzu. The next administration must seek out and promote those who understand this approach.

As challenging as that is, though, it doesn't completely describe the role of intelligence in Sun Tzu's concept of strategy. Foreknowledge is essential, but foreknowledge about what? What do we need to understand? To answer this, it is first important to realize that intelligence to Sun Tzu was a relative measure:²⁶⁴

So it is said that:

If you know others and know yourself, you will not be imperiled in a hundred battles;

If you do not know others but know yourself, you win one and lose one;

If you do not know others and do not know yourself, you will be imperiled in every single battle.

That is, intelligence, unlike information, does not exist in a static state. It is a dynamic, interactive quality: To mean something, we have to know how it will affect us relative to an opponent who is constantly changing and worse, trying to deceive and confuse us. Suppose the United States had an effective missile defense, for example, that could stop 10 missiles 100 percent of the time (keep in mind that this is a thought experiment), and suppose that the CIA learns that a country that now has 10 missiles is building 10 more. So far, this is just information, even if it is confirmed through a variety of sources so that we're certain that it is true. To see why it's not intelligence, continue the thought experiment: You're the director of central intelligence, so you run breathlessly over to the White House to brief the president, who listens politely and then looks up at you and says, "And ...?" What you answer is intelligence:

263 Elaine.M. Grossman, "Fallon to push for better Mideast intelligence, particularly on Iran," *Inside the Pentagon*, April 12, 2007.

264 Sun Tzu, 1988, 82.

- ▶ They're starting to ramp up production so that they can swamp our missile defense system, or
- ▶ They're just adding a few more to keep their R&D production capability intact, or
- ▶ These are going to replace their original 10, which we know have maintenance problems, or
- ▶ These are multi-warhead models to replace the original 10, which are single warhead models, or
- ▶ We have lots of hypotheses but no firm conclusions.²⁶⁵ We'll put more resources on it and find out.

To be real intelligence, it has to have an impact on the “know-self, know-opponent” duality.

With this caveat about its relative and dynamic nature in mind, it is now possible to answer, in a sense, the question of “Foreknowledge about what?” For his life and times, Sun Tzu gave a short list that, he claimed, would give a clear picture of who will win:²⁶⁶

- ▶ Those who know when to fight and when not to fight.
- ▶ Those who face the unprepared with preparation.
- ▶ Those who discern when to use many or few troops.
- ▶ Those whose upper and lower ranks have the same desire.
- ▶ Those whose generals are able and not constrained by their governments.

265 As the new head of the CIA, Gen. Michael Hayden, has pointed out, this is often the best answer. Pre-war assessments of Saddam's WMD programs, he notes, were written by people who knew WMDs and assumed that Saddam had them and was lying. They interpreted the often murky evidence in this light, which, given their mindsets, was a logical thing to do. The conclusions, however, would have been different, and probably more closely matched to reality, had they been written by people who knew how Iraq under the Saddam of 2003 really worked. See Walter Pincus, “Hayden works to absorb new hires at CIA,” *Washington Post*, April 15, 2007.

266 Sun Tzu, 1988, 80-81

Careful examination of this list shows that Sun Tzu was not focusing on creating databases of enemy equipment, although these are part of the information grist for the intelligence mill. He was instead asserting the timeless principle that leaders need to develop an intuitive understanding, a “feel,” for how the other side thinks and acts.

- ▶ Do they have a better understanding than we do of when to fight and when not to fight? How do we know? And does this apply to all types of fighting?
- ▶ Do they have a better grasp of how to face the unprepared? Have they taken concrete steps to prepare? Are their steps likely to be effective?
- ▶ And so on.

Whether Sun Tzu’s particular list is useful for the post-Iraq world is not the point, although the administration might have given more emphasis to the first three in its pre-Iraq planning. In the post-Iraq era, where we are not going to be fighting enemy military forces in existential struggles, policy makers will need to develop suitable categories for conflicts, as Sir Rupert Smith called it, “amongst the people,” where the military will play a decidedly secondary role and too much force will be counterproductive.

There is one final complication that is unique to the 21st century, or at least aggravated by recent advances in technology. Unlike the practice of intelligence against the Nazis or the Soviets, today it’s not enough to focus Sun Tzu on the identified groups themselves with the objective of penetrating and destroying them. If social and political conditions remain favorable, groups can form, dissolve, and reform with dizzying speed.²⁶⁷ To make matters even more interesting, swarm theory suggests that it is the interactions among these groups — as contrasted to the competence of the any specific group — that produces the emergent intelligence. So, when trying to understand “when to fight and when not to fight,” for example, it is not enough to look at the weakness of individual insurgent groups and conclude that an occupation won’t face a serious resistance any more than one can examine the stinger on a single bee and judge whether it’s safe to walk in the forest.

267 Bruce Hoffman, “We Can’t Win if We Don’t Know the Enemy”; Robb, *Brave New War*.

A few specifics

If the United States is going to survive and prosper in a world where it must both compete and cooperate with states as well as non-state entities, but where military force is of declining usefulness, then the country must do better at harmonizing the two functions of *intelligence* and *operations*. The purpose of intelligence is to understand, while the purpose of operations is to accomplish a mission — to change something, in other words.

The operators can be military units, but they may also be law enforcement personnel or private contractors. The defining characteristic is whether their primary intention is to influence or, as with intelligence, to observe and understand. Technically, practitioners of intelligence don't care whether a military operation succeeds or fails — they learn from either case — whereas the operators are very much success-oriented. It is easy to understand how intelligence can improve operations, but operations — the actual use of forces — can both interfere with and assist intelligence.

As soon as we do something with our forces, even special operations forces, people in the affected areas are going to react. The social and political landscape has been perturbed and the power structures, influences and personal relationships that govern any region will be rearranged. Needless to say, the new situation is fraught with possibilities for unintended consequences.

On the other hand, there are times when carefully conceived operations can help or are even essential to the function of intelligence. All proponents of the Sun Tzu school insist that passive observation and contemplation is not enough:

Sun Tzu: Test them to find out where they are sufficient and where they are lacking.²⁶⁸

Miyamoto Musashi: It is essential that you make a “misdirecting” motion to open up the enemy, forcing him to show you his strengths and weaknesses.²⁶⁹

John Boyd: Probe and test adversary to unmask strengths, weaknesses, maneuvers, and intentions.²⁷⁰

268 Sun Tzu, 1988, 111.

269 Miyamoto Musashi, *The book of five rings* (London : Allison and Busby, 1974), 66.

270 Boyd, *Patterns of Conflict*, 132.

Military forces provide one tool for probing and testing into an area to gauge the readiness of local forces — their willingness to fight, the relative strength of local warlords, and the degree of popular support for various factions, etc. But because any intervention runs the risk of changing the situation in unpredictable ways — which is sometimes referred to as the Heisenberg Effect in an analogy with quantum mechanics — such probing and testing operations need to be carefully thought out as part of an overall strategy for improving our understanding. They must also be conducted in such a way as to preserve our moral strength, to reinforce the idea that we are the good guys.

The next administration needs to start the process of making us much better at playing this game: developing a deep understanding of world dynamics, supporting and reinforced by clever and devious use of operations in a variety of spheres and in concert with our allies. Intelligence and operations must be brought into balance and harmonized.

An obvious solution is a super-agency over both DOD, which owns the bulk of our operational capability, and the CIA, which runs national-level intelligence. This may be logical, but it is not the best move: If there has ever been a human endeavor that was improved by adding new layers of bureaucracy, I have yet to see it. We already have plenty of government, and what we need to do is eliminate what we don't need and use the rest better.

Long term, there is a need for a single agency that controls both intelligence and operations, which are as *yin* and *yang*: quite different, but complementary and neither capable of existing without the other. The natural tendency is to consolidate under the larger of the two, DOD, for efficiency's sake. But again, this is not the optimum move. In the post-Iraq era, our focus is on building understanding and position — *shi* — and not on employing military forces, although such forces are one component. The main focus, the day-in-day-out work, is improving understanding. A national-level “improving understanding” agency is required that can, as part of its job, occasionally probe and test with military force.

Larger-scale use of military force cannot be ruled out, but it is not necessary to have a separate department of government standing by just for missions that rare (and we do have allies to help with the heavy lifting). Instead, conventional military forces should be regarded as one tool in the toolbox and a tool that can reside as a separate agency — appropriately sized, as described above — within a department constructed around the current CIA,

as shown in Figure 3, below. Note that soft power, including diplomacy, aid, and information, is another tool for probing and thereby changing the world — and is essential in dealing with allies — so it makes sense to put it into the same “Department of External Affairs.”

Other alternatives also make sense, such as placing both the understanding and “kinetic” (as some in the military refer to use of forces) functions under the department that already is concerned with relations with foreign entities, the Department of State. The important point is that a system largely designed after World War II for the Cold War is not what is needed for the 21st century. The next administration should begin that debate.

Figure 3a: Current Resource Allocation — Legacy of the Cold War



Figure 3b: Emphasis Appropriate for a Postmodern State

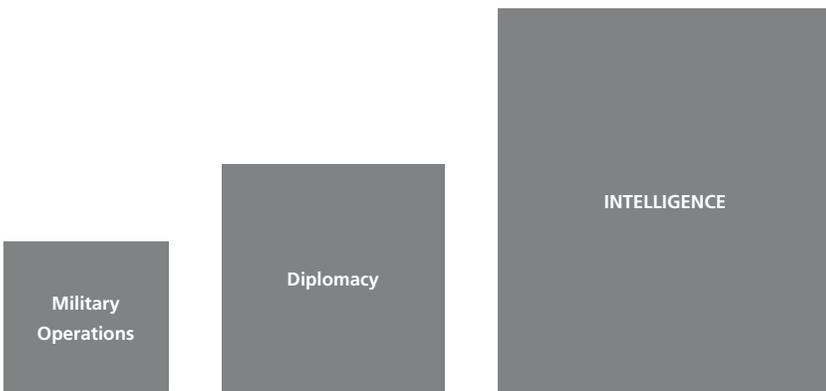


Figure 3c: Strategy for Restructuring the U.S. National Security Apparatus for the 21st century

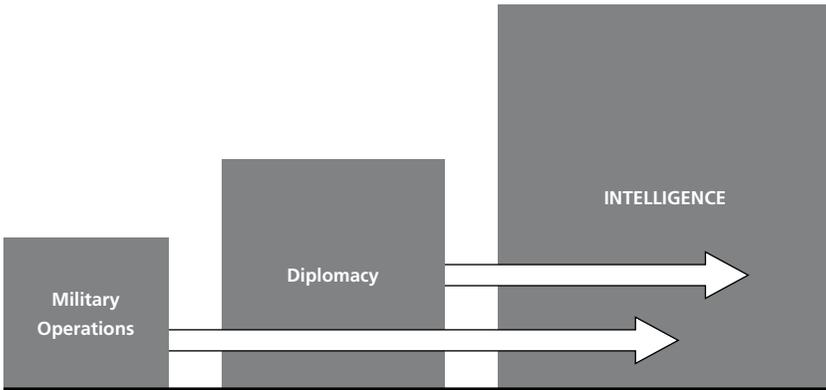
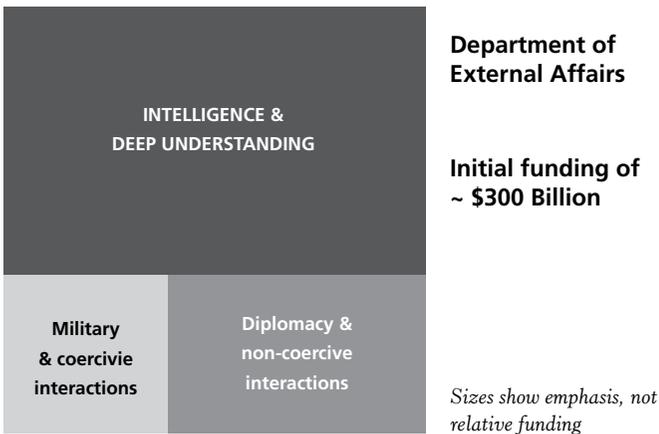


Figure 3d: Option for a Restructured and Streamlined Department



It could be argued that this scheme simply replaces one bureaucracy — the current DOD — with another. In fact, it can replace at least three — DOD, State, and CIA — with one, eliminating entire layers of bureaucracy in the process. It does not have to add more bureaucracy on top of the existing ones, but done intelligently, fuses the three and downsizes to fit. In the business world, those few giant mergers and acquisitions that succeeded, Hewlett-Packard and Compaq, for example, or Lockheed and Martin Marietta, use this approach, which is why there are always massive layoffs after their consummations; the new organization does not need two human resources departments or two

executive vice-presidents of marketing or two CEOs and their attendant staffs. They are more like acquisitions than true mergers, which better describes this proposal as well.

By removing the military aspect of national security from the Cabinet and folding it and its (greatly reduced) budget into a department concerned with all external affairs, we can integrate military forces into a more harmonious system for interacting with the world. This proposal also delivers a bonus for U.S. taxpayers: If the leaders of the new department must lay off spies and close down embassies in order to afford F-35s, it is possible that hardware designed to defeat the Soviet Union will finally get the priority it deserves.

Shrinking the Department of Defense from something that spends more than a half-trillion dollars per year to somewhere under \$250 billion will be an enormous undertaking, eliminating from the economy between 1 million and 2 million jobs. This is a rough estimate, assuming \$200,000 per job lost among DOD personnel and all the layers of contractors, subcontractors and suppliers. There will also be a multiplier effect on businesses and their employees who supply goods and services to people employed in the defense sector. The people affected by these changes have invested years — in many cases their entire careers — to learning and practicing their occupations, many of which were dirty and difficult, while others required the most advanced technical degrees. They have done nothing wrong, yet making the requisite changes will mean terminating them *en masse*. The alternative, however, is that the American taxpayer should continue to pay them to do work that is no longer necessary for, and in many cases is harmful to, the national well being. It will take leadership by the next administration to sell the American public on the necessity of this course and to devise a strategy for making the needed changes palatable.

The next administration should make resolving this problem one of its highest priorities. The process of shrinking the bloated DOD will be painful, but it will be bearable if it is seen as fair. Although issues concerning DOD are usually framed in military or strategic terms, the impact of a 60 percent or greater reduction in defense spending will primarily be social, political, and economic, and it is in these spheres that solutions must be sought. The Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) process, which accomplished another painful but necessary downsizing, may provide insight into alternatives. The U.S. government must try to create a process that is more equitable and just than

the mass terminations often carried out by American industry. The people most affected are not just employees but also our fellow taxpayers and citizens.

These recommendations only address conventional forces. Strategic, that is nuclear, weapons are not military forces in any reasonable sense because their only purpose is to ensure that they are never used. They are not very useful for probing and testing, so they can stay in their own department.

Moving toward a radically new structure will also inflict severe trauma upon the politicians who depend on the existing structure for pork, votes and political contributions.²⁷¹ These are, of course, the very people who will have to pass the laws to implement any significant changes in the structure of our government. Reform of this magnitude threatens so many vested interests that short-term action would be extremely difficult. Thus, the nation is in a state of *zugzwang* — unable to make any decisions. It will take a major crisis, something that by its nature is unpredictable, to break the deadlock. But crises will happen, and in the meantime, the next administration must start the debates and begin the educational process so that when a crisis does occur, we can use the opportunity to make progress.

Privatization of military functions

One trend that the occupation of Iraq brought to the surface was the widespread use of “private military companies” (PMCs) or as some prefer to be called “private security companies.” These organizations provide nearly 40 percent of the personnel in Iraq and have suffered somewhere over 20 percent of the fatalities.²⁷² In addition to the outsourcing that has become standard on peacetime bases — laundry, food preparation, janitorial, front gate ID checks — private companies in Iraq have taken on roles that have heretofore been considered military missions, including base and embassy security, protecting convoys carrying supplies and equipment for the Iraqi Army, maintenance of

271 For an excellent description of how the pork production line works in Washington, there is no better source than Winslow Wheeler’s *The Wastrels of Defense* (Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, 2004). Those who had hoped that a change of party in congress would put a stop to this prolificacy were quickly disappointed. As Wheeler recently noted, “Absolutely nothing has changed.” See John Solomon and Jeffrey Birnbaum, “In the Democratic congress, pork still gets served,” *Washington Post*, May 27, 2007.

272 John Broder, “Filling gaps in Iraq, then finding a void at home,” *New York Times*, July 17, 2007, <http://www.nytimes.com/2007/07/17/us/17contractor.html?ref=us>

weapon systems in the field, and even personal security of diplomats, senior U.S. generals, and visiting VIPs.²⁷³

These roles are continuing to expand. The largest American PMC, North Carolina's Blackwater, offers training in everything from basic pistol techniques to something called "helicopter sniping." It has also expanded into hardware systems, selling the GRIZZLY™ armored personnel carrier, billed on its website as "the world's only Armored Personnel Carrier intended to counter the most lethal threats in the modern urban combat environment."

In 2007, the United States planned to outsource more than \$1.5 billion to PMCs in Iraq, including:

- ▶ a "theater-wide" contract to protect U.S. bases in Iraq;
- ▶ providing intelligence to the U.S. Army and personnel security for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers; and
- ▶ protecting all reconstruction convoys and some protection for U.S. military convoys.²⁷⁴

These were, not long ago, all missions for the uniformed military. Acknowledging this trend, there are those in DOD who see a permanent place for them performing an increasing variety of traditional military missions in, for example, guerrilla-type conflicts and in situations such as Rwanda where countries have decided not to intervene with their uniformed military forces. Performing these roles, they contend, would allow the real military to concentrate on its "core competencies."²⁷⁵

PMCs are indeed evolving to fill the cracks in relations among and within states that don't fall within the "core competencies" of state military forces, organized to fight each other on well-defined battlefields. As van Creveld predicted in 1991, this development is the wave of the future — the "core competences" of the traditional militaries aren't much in demand nowadays — and it makes no difference whether state governments and their captive

273 Robb, *Brave New War*; Steve Fainaru, "Iraq contractors face growing parallel war," *The Washington Post*, June 16, 2007, A01.

274 Steve Fainaru, "Iraq contractors face growing parallel war," *The Washington Post*, June 16, 2007.

275 Jonathan D. Heskett, *The potential scope for use of private military companies in military operations: An historical and economic analysis*, (master's thesis, Naval Postgraduate School).

military establishments like it any more than the influenza virus cares whether you like the flu or not.

To a large extent, this is already happening. A Chinese company for example, has signed a contract with the government of Angola to provide several hundred thousand armed and unarmed contractors to assist with security and construction. Coincidentally, perhaps, China has also signed a 10-year deal to buy oil from Angola at \$60 per barrel. Whereas there might have been a hue-and-cry if China put 100,000 troops into Angola, the commercial deal hardly raised a ripple.²⁷⁶

As more PMCs form and more state and non-state groups employ them, new roles will evolve. A PMC, for example, can provide an instant military capability to a government that for whatever reason does not wish to rely on its national army.²⁷⁷ This could prove most useful to a group that has just staged a successful coup and needs a trained, professional force to keep it in power while it overhauls the (obviously failed) national security apparatus. A PMC can also be of great help to a minority government that wants to secure resource-rich areas from the majority population, a situation that the government of Sudan has resolved through the use of another Chinese PMC,²⁷⁸ although one can never be sure how “private” any entity associated with China actually is.

As Hammes²⁷⁹ also notes, the increasing presence of PMCs, particularly in 4GW-type environments where conventional militaries have not had much success, raises all manner of policy issues for the next administration. The major issues include:

- ▶ What missions are suitable for a PMC and which should be reserved for uniformed military forces?
- ▶ How should the performance of PMCs under contract to the U.S. government be evaluated?
- ▶ How can they be held accountable, particularly for actions that would be illegal if performed by a member of the U.S. military? Failure to

276 Hammes, “Fourth Generation Warfare Evolves, Fifth Emerges.”

277 Metz, “Rethinking Insurgency.”

278 Hammes, “Fourth Generation Warfare Evolves, Fifth Emerges.”

279 Ibid.

set out clear rules and regulations governing PMCs — and then to hold them accountable — has led to the highly publicized incidents involving Blackwater and other PMCs in Iraq.

- ▶ How should U.S. military forces react when confronted by foreign PMCs? Note that almost all the casualties the coalition has suffered in Iraq and Afghanistan were inflicted by private, that is, non-state, armed groups.
- ▶ Does the United States have any obligation when an American PMC engages a foreign PMC? If the American PMC, for example, was contracted by the U.S. government, is there any obligation concerning killed, wounded and prisoners by either company?
- ▶ Is there any risk that use of a PMC could lead to U.S. military involvement (if, for example, the PMC suffers a serious defeat while performing on a U.S. government contract)?
- ▶ Will the locals make any distinction between official and private U.S. armed forces?

Perhaps most interesting of all, what is to keep a PMC, whose mission in life is to make money for its owners, from deciding that U.S. laws and regulations are too onerous, closing down its American operations, and reforming as a new company in a country with a more congenial legal environment? The answer is “nothing,” and several have already done just that.²⁸⁰

It would be wrong, however, to see PMCs as merely the latest permutation of rag-tag mercenary soldiers of fortune. The most advanced high-tech companies are also trying to expand their markets into areas that have traditionally been performed by military personnel. Lockheed Martin, for example, recently proposed not only to build the new F-35 fighter, but to take a giant step toward operating it as well. Under this concept, Lockheed Martin will charge air forces that use the F-35 a per-hour rate that will include parts, inventory management, and training (military forces will still do the actual maintenance).²⁸¹

280 Ibid.

281 Rebecca Christie, “Lockheed Martin hopes F-35 leads to maintenance revolution,” *Dow Jones Newswires*, June 13, 2007.

This seems reasonable, and in many ways it is, but consider:

- ▶ If contractors do everything but turn the wrenches, then why not do that, too?
- ▶ If contractors do all the maintenance, provide intelligence, and ensure the security of the bases, then why not fly the fighters, too?
- ▶ If contractors fly fighters, why not operate tanks?
- ▶ If tanks, why not infantry battalions?

In another book, I have suggested that eventually entire functions or even combat units could be contracted to private industry.²⁸² Our opponents in 4GW are, by definition, not state military organizations — they are already privatized. In order to deal with them, in particular, to cope with their ability to mutate rapidly and to swarm, our military forces will have to become more like them. The next administration must get out in front of the trend towards privatization and control it for the national interest or it will lose control to other interests. Interestingly, the Constitution, in Article I, Section 8, specifically allows congress to issue “letters of marque and reprisal,” which in today’s language would mean chartering PMCs.²⁸³

As Robb summarized the current situation:

We can expect to see the use of PMCs continue to grow. For every local or global failure of nation-states to address critical problems, corporate participants in general and PMCs in particular will continue to gain ground.²⁸⁴

Terrorism: Buck up

The damage these three words [war on terror] have done — a classic self-inflicted wound — is infinitely greater than any wild dreams entertained by the fanatical perpetrators of the 9/11 attacks when they were plotting

282 Richards, *Neither Shall the Sword*.

283 Interestingly, the Constitution is more ambivalent on the question of a standing army. Contrast the curious language in Art. I, Sec. 8 concerning “Armies” with the unequivocal endorsement of a Navy and of “letters of marque and reprisal.”

284 Robb, *Brave New War*, 91.

against us in distant Afghan caves. The phrase itself is meaningless. It defines neither a geographic context nor our presumed enemies. Terrorism is not an enemy but a technique of warfare — political intimidation through the killing of unarmed non-combatants.²⁸⁵

The next U.S. administration would do well to ban the term “war on terrorism” from any official communication, as the British have already done.²⁸⁶ Instead, it should adopt the radical approach of saying what it means: “Who threatens us? Why? Where do they rank compared to our other problems?” In addition to clearing the air and improving our ability to think about the problems the country faces, it would help establish an environment where we might be able to dismantle the industry that has grown up and grown fat by promoting a “terrorist” threat.

The best we could hope for by inflating the threat posed by violent, transnational ideological groups would be misallocation of resources and the resulting starving of more pressing issues. The risks, however, go far beyond that, and inflating the “terrorism threat” can have unintended, and self-fulfilling, consequences.²⁸⁷ Among these are:

- ▶ Agencies focus on protecting us from the last threat. The Transportation Security Administration (TSA) has raised this to an art form.²⁸⁸
- ▶ Government organizations at all levels obsess with protecting themselves. This is always a problem, of course, but the current environment of hysteria amplifies the effect. The reaction of the city of Boston in February 2007 to a harmless public relations stunt promoting a cartoon series — which did not seem to bother any of the other municipalities where it was used — gives us an idea of what we can expect.²⁸⁹

285 Brzezinski, “Terrorized by ‘war on terror’.”

286 “Benn criticizes ‘war on terror,’” *BBC*, April 16, 2007, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/politics/6558569.stm.

287 David Bell, “The Peace Paradox,” *New York Times*, February 4, 2007.

288 Bruce Schneier, “Last Week’s Terrorism Arrests,” *Wired*, August 13, 2006, <http://www.wired.com>.

289 Bruce Schneier, “Why Smart Cops Do Dumb Things,” *Wired*, February 22, 2007, <http://www.wired.com/politics/security/commentary/securitymatters/2007/02/72774>

- ▶ By turning “terrorism,” a criminal activity and not even the most dangerous of those, into a threat to our existence, we raise it to the level of a moral crusade. History suggests that in such crusades, the moral part quickly falls away and any and all methods become justifiable.²⁹⁰ As Cooper put it in his 2002 essay, “Among ourselves, we keep the law but when we are operating in the jungle, we must also use the laws of the jungle.”²⁹¹ Although Cooper’s concept of postmodernism is brilliant, his prescriptions for dealing with threats to the postmodern order may complicate its expansion: Besides emitting a slight aroma of racism, proposals such as these reinforce the message that Osama bin Laden and others have been spreading: that Western states are hypocritical and want to dominate the Middle East in order to subjugate its people, destroy its religion, and exploit its resources.²⁹²

The last bullet illustrates another van Creveld²⁹³ notion, “that he who fights terrorists for any length of time is likely to become one himself,” another unintended consequence of a state fighting a long war against militarily weak opponents.

Prescription for improving strategic solvency

The United States has long been the big kid on the block, and it will probably remain so for years to come. But its staying power has a great deal to do with whether it is perceived as a bully or a friend. States and non-state actors can better address today’s challenges when they can draw in allies; those who alienate potential friends stand at greater risk.²⁹⁴

Rather than sink to the level of international criminal cartels, ideological or otherwise, and thereby improve the *shi* of the likes of Osama bin Laden, the

290 Bell, “The Peace Paradox.”

291 Cooper, “The new liberal imperialism.”

292 A. al Quraishi, “The fourth generation of wars (translated as “Writer Says New Type of Wars Suits Mujahidin’s Fight Against Western War Machine”) (U.S. Government Open Source Center 2002); Jacobsen, “Only 3% of Pakistanis think Al Qaeda behind 9/11.”

293 Martin Van Creveld, *The transformation of war*, 201.

294 Richard L. Armitage and Joseph S. Nye, “Stop getting mad, America. Get smart,” *Washington Post*, December 9, 2007.

next administration should take concrete steps to ensure that U.S. ideals are maintained while strengthening the national position. These could include:

- ▶ As recommended above, do a global search-and-replace on the word “terrorism” and its related forms in all administration communications. For groups or ideologies that do pose a threat, it should be clearly stated who they are and why they threaten the security and prosperity of the United States.
- ▶ Rescind the USA-PATRIOT Act. This measure, hastily-passed in the post-Sept. 11 panic, and renewed in 2006, should be repealed in its entirety. The next administration must propose measures that both have been shown to work, such as improved cooperation among intelligence and law enforcement bodies at home and abroad, but it must achieve these measures without attempting the spurious trade-off of freedom for security or exposing the country as being less than true to its stated ideals. This will be an extremely difficult and perhaps divisive process because there are many conflicting ideas for how to accomplish it. It is hard to imagine, however, a more important goal for the next administration and for its successors.
- ▶ Over the next four years, transfer the lead for day-to-day dealing with violent non-state groups out of the DOD and into the Department of Justice. The so-called “terrorist” groups are nothing more than transnational criminal organizations and they should be approached the same way as any other criminal syndicate. On those rare occasions where the use of military force is required, the State Department should be the lead agency, requesting forces as required from DOD until an integrated Department of External Affairs can be formed.
- ▶ France withdrew from the military command structure of NATO in February 1966, and it is time for the United States to follow. NATO completed its job in 1991 and should have been disbanded then. If we’re not willing to leave NATO or to disband it, then the alliance should, as an interim step, remove a major irritant by inviting Russia to join. Conversely, there is a need to increase participation in various super-national bodies of postmodern/core states geared to improve intelligence, law enforcement and what might loosely be

called “good governance.” Interpol, the International Criminal Police Organization, for example, represents a small step in the direction of such a group.²⁹⁵ If elimination proves too difficult at this time, NATO itself might be refashioned as a postmodern organization promoting good governance, once the United States joins the postmodern world.

- ▶ Abolish immediately the “combatant commands” — Central Command, European Command, etc. The only one that has had much use is Central Command, which planned and then executed the invasions and occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan. If we are not going to be engaging in such operations in the future, it’s not clear what function these commands will perform.
- ▶ Provide positive and vocal leadership to eliminate the residual Cold War mindset and form a strong working partnership with Russia to control nuclear weapons, fissile material, and the highly radioactive (but non-fissile) materials that can be used for a dirty bomb. Our two nations hold 25,000 nuclear weapons (the rest of the world, combined, accounts for barely another 1,000), and both countries should immediately retarget these missiles away from each other’s homelands.²⁹⁶
- ▶ Each and every new bureaucracy established since 2001 should be eliminated: Homeland Security, Transportation Security Administration and the Directorate of National Intelligence. Security of the U.S. airline system, just to cite one example, should be returned to the Federal Aviation Authority (FAA), the airports, and the airlines — the FAA to set policy and the airports and airlines to implement using their own creativity. The FAA will also act as a national clearinghouse for sharing and, through a rigorous program of probing and testing, enforcing best practices. The flip side is that airports and airlines must be held responsible for security, with repeat

295 To the tune of \$50 million (not “billion”) per year, according to its director’s statement on the CBS program *Sixty Minutes* on October 8, 2007. This is total funding, not the U.S. share. By comparison, the budget request for the new F-35 fighter in fiscal year 2008 alone is over \$6 billion.

296 Bruce Blair, “Primed and Ready.”

lapses and egregious breaches drawing jail terms for the executives and board members (fines are simply paid by shareholders in lower dividends, by employees through salary and benefit reductions and layoffs, and in the case of municipal airports, by taxpayers or the flying public). The non-TSA functions of DHS, to the extent that they are valid requirements, will be returned to their original agencies.

- ▶ Until a Department of External Affairs, combining State, the residual DOD, and the national-level functions of the intelligence community, can be formed, the Director of the CIA will return to being the Director of National Intelligence (DNI), with Cabinet rank and budget authority over all members of the community with the exception of those units in other departments whose missions are to provide tactical intelligence (i.e., direct support of the functions of those departments).

The DNI must be an individual with long experience in intelligence and who has developed a deep and intuitive understanding of the craft. Although it is important that the intelligence community generate and evaluate a range of opinions, ultimately the president, who is, after all, most likely to be a career politician, needs some one individual to give the best estimate, including the uncertainties, of what is going on in the world. Intelligence conclusions like “CIA thinks A, but DIA says B and State believes C” are not of much use to a president who must decide whether or not to commit the United States to a course of action.²⁹⁷

By moving toward what Cooper called a “postmodern state,” instead of a semi-rogue but extremely strong modern state, the United States will gain increased support and cooperation from the other postmodern states in Europe and the Far East. Such an enhanced level of international cooperation among police and intelligence agencies will improve U.S. security far more than unilateral military action, with all of its inherent uncertainties. Our best opportunity for securing a prosperous future for ourselves and for the planet

297 For a counter-argument to this approach, although it does assume that politicians can judge the work of intelligence professionals, see Lee Johnson, “After Iraq,” *Marine Corps Gazette*, February 2007, 59.

— and with no apologies to the neo-cons and the far right wing, the two cannot be separated — lies in bonding and to some extent melding with an expanding community of like-minded states. As the futurist Francis Fukuyama, who is sometimes saddled with part of the blame for U.S. interventionism, has observed:

The *End of History* was never linked to a specifically American model of social or political organisation. Following Alexandre Kojève, the Russian-French philosopher who inspired my original argument, I believe that the European Union more accurately reflects what the world will look like at the end of history than the contemporary United States. The EU's attempt to transcend sovereignty and traditional power politics by establishing a transnational rule of law is much more in line with a "post-historical" world than the Americans' continuing belief in God, national sovereignty, and their military.

Finally, I never linked the global emergence of democracy to American agency, and particularly not to the exercise of American military power. Democratic transitions need to be driven by societies that want democracy, and since the latter requires institutions, it is usually a fairly long and drawn out process.²⁹⁸

It has been said that states do not have long-term friends, only long-term interests. In the postmodern world, this bit of tired cynicism is turned upside-down. As the international response to Sept. 11 showed, although multilateral interests on any particular issue may diverge perhaps to the point of opposition, the United States does have long-term friends and these relationships are much more valuable to national security than sterile calculations of "interests" that often lead to supporting dictators and other opponents of democracy. Our only true interest lies in cultivating these friendships, and fostering them, and fully entering into the family of postmodern nations. We must not wait for another tragedy in order to proclaim that we are all Americans, that we are all French, and that we are all Japanese.

298 Fukuyama, "The History at the End of History."

When to send in the Marines

*We only want the world to know
That we support the status quo.
They love us everywhere we go,
So when in doubt,
Send the Marines!*

—Tom Lehrer, “Send the Marines,” 1965

Cooper’s formulation of the postmodern state also provides a useful framework for deciding when the use of military force is appropriate. Because the age of conventional wars among major powers has passed, the pressing question is when to use un-conventional or counterinsurgency doctrine, or, put another way, when to try to occupy foreign countries.

As previously noted, successful occupations are rare. Perhaps the most successful since the end of World War II is the British experience in Northern Ireland, although calling that an “occupation” is something of a stretch. Still, the British were faced with an insurgency, and over time they were able to restore peace and the rule of law, without resorting to the Hama tactic. The solution involved a range of political and social compromises by all sides, but a critical factor was that a large majority of the population came to view British troops not as occupiers and oppressors but as protectors.

As a senior British officer with multiple tours in Northern Ireland explained it, there were 3,000 people killed during “The Troubles,” of which about 1,700 were civilians killed by other civilians.²⁹⁹ Of the remaining 1,300, more than a thousand were British soldiers and fewer than 300 were members of the IRA or other violent groups. “That,” he explained to van Creveld, “is why we’re still there.”³⁰⁰

Van Creveld concluded, based on this and his long experience in studying non-conventional conflicts, that:

Compared to the willingness, or lack of it, in men (and women) to die for their cause, virtually all questions of policy, organization, doctrine, training, and equipment pale into insignificance.³⁰¹

299 Van Creveld, *The changing face of war*.

300 *Ibid.*, 235.

301 Van Creveld, *The transformation of war*, 228.

In real war, your job, as Patton so eloquently put it, is not to die for your country but to get the other poor dumb bastard to die for his. As is true with so much of modern conflict between powerful states and the militarily weak groups that oppose them, the opposite is true in the 21st century. These are largely moral struggles, for the willingness of large numbers of people to support transnational fighters, hide and protect them, and even enlist in their cause. On the side of the developed countries, it is also a matter of having the moral courage to support the *process* of democracy, even though we may not always like its results.

In such moral struggles, the side that shows fear will lose, and deservedly. Sir Rupert Smith, who commanded in Northern Ireland, explains it from the soldier's point of view. A Western soldier in a foreign land is in a terrible position, attacked by people he often cannot see or whom he could not identify as enemies even if he could see them. As a result:

He appears helmeted, armoured, and armed amongst them, or in his heavy armoured vehicle on the street. His behaviour as he patrols is threatening. His bases are heavily fortified and often sited to overlook the people. These measures, while most necessary in particular cases, do not have my general support. They all define the soldier as "the other;" the opponent amongst the people is gaining advantage every day they are in place.³⁰²

Military leaders are carrying this tendency to what must be its ultimate conclusion in order to protect our troops from IEDs in Iraq. In no previous war did our forces feel the necessity for armoring their jeeps. But because of the very real IED threat, DOD has initiated the Mine Resistant Ambush-Protected (MRAP) vehicle program to replace the Humvee, which replaced the jeep. MRAP vehicles, from a variety of suppliers, will cost about \$1 million each. While our troops in Iraq deserve the best protection available, the overall effect, as Sir Rupert notes, will be to isolate our troops even more from the population they are trying to protect. American citizens have a right to ask how we got ourselves into a conflict where we need million dollar jeeps. They might also ask how much the other sides' cost.

302 Smith, *The Utility of Force*, p. 401.

A U.S. administration should not send forces into other countries unless it is prepared to have them die for the causes that sent them there. And if that is so, and if the administration is prepared to lose three Americans for every “terrorist” killed, then the U.S. government should be prepared to explain this to the families of those being sent and to the public. If an administration cannot conduct the occupation along these lines, and has ruled out the Hama solution, then the United States will lose, again, and the administration should be prepared to explain that to the families and to the public.

If we must send our troops into foreign countries again, the operation should meet the criteria of 2001: quick, daring, successful, and recognized as necessary even by left-wing newspapers in France.

A Schwerpunkt for *shi*

These are not mystical musings. No country can survive by continually manufacturing enemies or by dissipating its strength and its future capacities. What future administrations should do instead, whenever the country reaches a crossroads and has a choice to make, is head in the direction that will influence the largest number of people to regard us favorably. They should apply Gen. Petraeus’s imperative³⁰³ — when conducting an operation, don’t create more bad guys than you eliminate — to the conduct of national policy as a whole. The only way to accomplish this at the international level is to rely primarily on the attractive, persuasive, soft elements of our relations with others (states or non-states), the only elements that can be used on a daily basis. Hard power, that is, military force, must fit within and complement this scheme, not the other way around. To update Clausewitz, military force is not the conduct of policy by other means, but only one instrument — and one rarely used — that must harmonize with all of the other means that we have for improving our strategic solvency/*shi*/ability to survive on our own terms.

By judging potential actions in this way, the United States will also continue to grow and strengthen the collection of states that we call democracies, Core, or postmodern — those states that will not harbor violent ideological networks.

303 David Petraeus, “Learning Counterinsurgency: Observations from Soldiering in Iraq,” *Military Review*, January-February 2006, 2-12.

As suggested in the Introduction and again in Chapter V, this is the grand strategy of containment, so named by its architect, George Kennen, at the beginning of the Cold War (which, of course was not a war and so not some “World War III” — that was the point). As a result, the great democracies brought down the communist dictatorships, and added many of them to the list of democratic states, without invading a single one.

Several people have recommended such a strategy as the best way to deal with the problems caused by violent transnational ideological networks.³⁰⁴ Danner gives a description of how this would work that is quite realistic:

Containment, by which the United States determinedly resisted Soviet attempts to expand its influence, would have meant a patient, methodical search for terrorists, discriminating between those groups that threaten the United States and those that do not, pursuing the former with determined, practical policies that would have drawn much from the military and law-enforcement cooperation of our allies and that would have included an effective program of nonproliferation to keep weapons of mass destruction out of terrorist hands.³⁰⁵

It is not too late to adopt such a grand strategy, and it would reinforce and be reinforced by an objective of solidifying the United States into the ranks of postmodern states.

Be who we say we are

Some of foreign policy is what we do, but some of it is also who we are.³⁰⁶

Newsweek International Editor Fareed Zakaria recalls coming to the United States from “officially anti-American India” in the 1970s and being

304 Stephen Biddle, “American grand strategy after 9/11: An assessment,” United States Army War College, Strategic Studies Institute, 2005, <http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pubs/display.cfm?pubID=603>; Mark Danner, “Taking Stock of the Forever War,” *New York Times*, September 11, 2005, http://www.nytimes.com/2005/09/11/magazine/11OSAMA.html?_r=1&oref=slogin; Richards, *Neither shall the sword*; Pfaff, “Manifest Destiny: A New Direction for America.”

305 Danner, “Taking Stock of the Forever War.”

306 Fareed Zakaria, “After Bush, how to restore America’s place in the world,” *Newsweek*, June 11, 2007, 29.

dumbfounded by the difference between the open, tolerant, and welcoming country that he found and the caricature that he had been taught. “But today,” he concluded, “through inattention, fear, and bureaucratic cowardice, the caricature threatens to become reality.”³⁰⁷ This must not be allowed to continue. The next administration must be a conservative administration in the sense of leading the nation back to the roots from which our attractiveness and therefore our greatness grew.

Ultimately, we here in the United States are defined by the Constitution and the philosophy and laws that follow from it. We can never be seen as violating the spirit of the Constitution or we will, as Gens. Krulak and Hoar reminded us previously, drive the “undecideds” around the world “into the arms of the enemy.” It follows that a clear understanding of the Constitution is the bedrock upon which rests a successful American grand strategy for the 21st century. As Michael Duncan Wyly, who was instrumental in promulgating maneuver warfare within in the Marine Corps, advised:

If this country is at risk of being undermined by fourth generation enemies, it is because we have too long allowed people to be citizens without requiring them to learn the precepts of our government. If Americans understood the fundamentals presented here about our constitutional concept we would be a stronger country. Certainly we would be more resilient in the face of fourth generation war.³⁰⁸

If we need to change the Constitution, that is no problem, and the document itself allows for two methods. It is reasonable that extensive changes might be required because our basic system was designed for a country of fewer than 5 million people,³⁰⁹ the vast majority of whom shared a common English heritage. We need to be careful, though, that in changing it, we move closer to ideals stated in the Preamble, which, because it may have been a while since many readers have thought about it, is worth repeating:

We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic

307 Ibid.

308 Michael Wyly, “Fourth generation warfare: What does it mean to every Marine?” *Marine Corps Gazette*, March 1995.

309 The total popular vote in the 1824 election, the first for which that statistic is both meaningful and available, was 365,000.

Tranquility, provide for the common Defense, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.

By the way, Amendments IX and X make it clear that in the United States, the people are sovereign and grant certain limited powers to the government and not, as even some distinguished jurists have suggested,³¹⁰ the other way around:

Amendment IX

The enumeration in the Constitution, of certain rights, shall not be construed to deny or disparage others retained by the people.

Amendment X

The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the states, are reserved to the states respectively, or to the people.

In neither of these amendments is the pursuit of “security” mentioned as a valid excuse for compromising the other purposes enumerated in the Preamble. The next administration should keep these amendments in mind when proposing sweeping expansions of government programs that limit the rights of the people.

In other words, the best way to defend and even spread democracy is to practice it at home.³¹¹ In conventional wars from the dawn of time until the mid-20th century, restricting citizens’ rights for the duration perhaps made sense. For the types of conflicts we are involved in today, however, our serene exercise of our rights and freedoms are weapons much more effective than aircraft or missiles or tanks. If we the people of the United States are willing to compromise liberty and democracy under fire, then what value are they? Many violent groups around the world are more than willing to die for their

310 Public Broadcasting System Online News Hour, “Justice Scalia bans media from free speech ceremony,” March 19, 2003, http://www.pbs.org/newshour/media/media_watch/jan-june03/scalia_3=19.html.

311 Lind, “Strategic defense initiative”; Richards, *Neither shall the sword*.

ideals, yet we broadcast that we're afraid of getting hurt. So whose principles are the stronger?

The side that shows fear will — and deserves to — lose.

Epilogue: Counterinsurgency is a piece in the puzzle

After reviewing the notions of *shi*, improving world attitudes towards us, and emphasizing inclusiveness, we can now fit counterinsurgency doctrine in to the picture. The wrong way to do this, as noted above, is for senior national leaders to read the counterinsurgency literature and conclude that they now have a tool of foreign policy that can make the unlikely both predictable and easy. There are just too many factors to ending an insurgency on favorable terms that are out of the control of foreign military forces for this ever to be the case.

Modern counterinsurgency theory, however, can make positive contributions to national security in at least two ways. The first exploits the fact that counterinsurgency is based on the same underlying principles of “war amongst the people” as insurgency. But whereas counterinsurgency by an outside power is a losing game most of the time, particularly when it is used to prop up a regime that has so lost legitimacy that it has to call in foreign troops, insurgency has an excellent track record. So the work done by Nagl, Kilcullen, Lind and the 4GW Working Group, and the authors of *FM 3-24* will be most useful when it comes time for the postmodern coalition to put an end to the suffering caused by Third World tinhorns like Mugabe — a process Cooper called “the imperialism of neighbours.”³¹² Of course, the postmodern coalition better have thought through what to do next. In Zimbabwe and Burma, often-mentioned candidates for intervention, their problems stem from long-standing ethnic (“tribal”) disputes as much as from the traditional economic incompetence of dictators, and these are not going to go away just because the developed democracies depose the current rulers.

The other area where counterinsurgency theory can prove useful to national grand strategy is on the ground. Until we can refocus our national security policy, we will have people deployed overseas with a mission to do counterinsurgency. Modern counterinsurgency doctrine is for them and largely by them. It is soldiers talking to soldiers. All that we, as citizens, would ask is

312 Cooper, “The new liberal imperialism.”

that whenever they get into a tough situation and it isn't clear exactly the best action to take, that they take Gen. Petraeus's advice to heart and apply the doctrine so that when they leave, more people think favorably of us than did before they arrived.

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