

Guns & Butter?

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A New Kind of War * An Old Kind of Sacrifice * A Cautionary History Lesson * A Bit of Advice

Citizens across the nation are asking what can they do? President Bush has cautioned patience. While we wait, we need to evaluate what will be the costs and what will be our share of what must be done. We need to understand the necessity as well as commitment to a shared sacrifice not seen since the Second World War. This is a greater and more important parallel than the comparison evoked by Pearl Harbor.

When the American colonists began the Revolution and it was opposed by conventional military force from the pre-eminent world power of its day, England, the ability of the American's to fight on the same level or manner of the British army was non-existent. What the militias resorted to was a fighting technique learned in the forest battles of the French and Indian War. It was a style of harassment, hit and run raids, attacking from ambush and from behind protection. In short it was the very kind of common sense tactics that from today's viewpoint was the guile that made us not only different but transcendent over the outmoded style of warfare and politics practiced by the British.

When we as a nascent nation later fielded an army that attempted to meet the British regulars on their own terms, vis-à-vis the linear tactics of massed field armies, we rarely succeeded. It was not until the intervention of the French, whose naval capability was used to isolate the British armies, that eventually became cornered without prospect of relief, did the American cause ultimately win the day.

This is of necessity an over simplification of the evolution of warfare during the course of the American Revolution, but it points out a watershed in the type and manner of fighting from that day forward. The evolution of warfare is replete with the circumstances of new weapons and tactics that alter how things are done. The Civil War brought a clash of steam powered iron clads that made the wooden, sail driven navies of the world obsolete. The introduction of the machinegun drove the field armies of Europe to ground in trench warfare of the First World War. The ultimate model of trench fortifications, the *Maginot*

Line, was overcome by the armored mechanized *Blitzkrieg* of World War II. The development and use of atomic weapons ended that war and shrouded the subsequent fifty years in a level of engagement short of nuclear war known as the Cold War.

In all of these wars a common thread, except for the latter, was the sacrifice of those not directly involved in the combat to contribute to the war effort. This engagement of the general population in the cause gave them a shared experience of being involved. Their contributing, regardless of effect, made this sharing the acceptance of a common goal. Atomic weapons changed the historical model.

In the case of the Cold War, when conventional conflicts erupted they were evolving attempts in how to engage in war short of tripping the nuclear trigger. This led to “client states” and “puppet regimes,” fighting “proxy wars” designed to insulate the nuclear superpowers from direct confrontation. This attempt at standoff left the U.S. in the perplexing situation of fighting wars without the direct engagement, involvement, and buy-in of the general population. When direct military operations by the U.S. occurred in Vietnam we had lost the understanding, if not the ability, to engage the general population in the effort. Life on the home front proceeded as if no conflict existed, that is both *guns and butter*.

The lack of this involvement was a major contributing factor to the outcome, rightly or wrongly, of the Vietnam War. The syndrome that arose from this experience affected the conduct of our fight in the Persian Gulf War. We needed not only clear goals but also the support of the general population. We needed a commitment to use overwhelming force to defeat the foe, as well as, protect to the greatest degree those conducting the fight. The practice brought such unprecedented success that it had the effect on the perception of the general population that wars not only could but should be fought, if not without casualties, certainly the fewest. While the popular consensus supporting the war and its goals had returned, the conflict’s short duration did not allow any perception of shared sacrifice to materialize. Again, guns and butter.

The effect was underscored by the contrast of the U.S. intervention's failure in Somalia. The government's perception that there was a lack of willingness on the behalf of the general population to buy-in on the nation's goals and therefore the necessary sacrifice, hamstrung actions in the conduct of the subsequent military operations in the remnants of the former Yugoslavia.

What of today? Certainly the British military practitioners of their day held that the colonists were barbarians in how they practiced war. Not quite the a-symmetrical concept expressed by the present set of circumstances but to their way of thinking certainly improper. How do we regard the perpetrators of the destruction of the World Trade Center and the attack on the Pentagon?

When the British attempted to engage fire with fire when pursuing Francis Marion through the swamps of the Carolinas and Georgia they debased themselves from their way of thinking and ultimately were unsuccessful. To us, Francis Marion was a hero and a patriot because we won. To the British he was a criminal and a traitor. Could the British have successfully adjusted to the changing reality? Can we today? How will Osama bin Laden appear in history?

It seems that since we are at war, history suggests that we need the involvement of the general population to succeed. We need a sense of shared sacrifice. We need to make the choice to reduce our craving for butter. But how do we accomplish this without the visible enemy of the conflicts of the past? What engagement by the general population will permit a perception of the reality of this newly evolving kind of war?

It seems clear that this is a different kind of war. No nation state to declare war upon. No front line for forces in the field. As frustrating a mission as clearing, and keeping clear, all the pigeons from Central Park with only five people armed with slingshots. The coalition approach is necessitated simply because there is an extra-national organization which is the prime culprit. Beyond that justification is an extra-national mindset that this is a new level to which warfare has evolved.

Sadam Hussein learned first hand that he was no match militarily for the pre-eminent military of his day. So how can a nation like Iraq, for example, conduct a successful future war without coming under the calculus of the conventional war in which he last engaged? What is happening today is the equivalent of the American militia firing at the redcoats from behind fieldstone walls and trees. Now, we wear the redcoats!

Whether or not the recent events can be traced to Iraq, or some other state, it is not beyond the pale to suspect there is some level of collusion. The profiting by those in the know by making money on the share price decline of the World Trade Center's insurance underwriters is evidence of a more sophisticated foe, certainly more than can be imagined originating from a fly tent on the Afghan plane alone. Who is bin Laden's CFO?

Today, to counter this multi-level a-symmetrical threat, what we need are the skills of those who understand the possibilities to make profit from catastrophic events. They need to develop a mechanism by which they can monitor the indications and warning of such events to hopefully not only thwart profiting from them but lead to the pre-empting of the event altogether. We need to shut down the means by which terrorist do business. We need to deny them the means to wage war.

We need research analysts. We need people skilled in information technology, investment analysis, competitive intelligence, and other critical areas of today's global business and communication practices. We need nerds. We need hackers. We need encryption/decryption experts. We need foreign language linguists. We need a spectrum of people with skills that they have profited by to put those skills to work in ending the reign of terror which now attacks their very freedom to pursue happiness. We need people to tighten their belts and forego the *butter*.

Maybe the country needs legislation that would place those people and commercial enterprises who possess the skills capable to fight this new kind of war into national service. Singer converted to the manufacture of machineguns and fairly profited during

WWII. What can a firm like Merrill-Lynch do today? We need to commit the weapons, tactics, and strategies at the level to which warfare has seemingly evolved.

If we drafted men into a military to fight the conventional wars of the past, perhaps today the need exists to bring those specialized individuals into the fight to win on the battlefield of today. Whether, uniformed or non-uniformed, establishing a corps of specialists whose mission is ending world terrorism seems evident. This is the responsibility of citizenship, one that should be perceived as privilege to perform. If adopted this involvement will truly serve to broaden the base of shared sacrifice.

This will involve sacrifice of lost careers or lost income potential of those who could have made it big in the world as it existed before September 11th, 2001. We will all be at risk. Did not those of the "Greatest Generation" sacrifice this as well as hazard their very lives? Did not the founding fathers hazard their lives, their liberties, and their fortunes in the pursuit of freedom? Without such engagement and sacrifice we become doomed to suffer the same end as our involvement did in Vietnam when the American people were given both guns *AND* butter. This will not be enough, however.

Much has been said of the lack of intelligence resources necessary to evaluate all the raw information collected by all the various assets at the disposal of the intelligence community. This is unfortunately true. All too often lip service has been given to the dictum that intelligence drives operations. The budgetary support to achieve this capability as a sustaining reality has never been given appropriate credence. Collection of the raw data without the ability to distill and analyze this information into intelligence is of little worth. This is not an inexpensive proposition.

Intelligence must be meaningful and *timely*. Intelligence that can be used to not only counter the enemy's intended actions but allow for offensive planning and execution on our part, must be made our number one priority. How can this be achieved?

Announcements to begin intelligence sharing of all the information and collection capabilities of the various and disparate governmental agencies is a beginning. This fusion provides a synergy that should appear obvious but historical practice defies such common sense. During the decade since the Gulf War the efforts of instituting “jointness” and in breaking the “iron rice bowls” over information sharing itself, have been monumental within the Department of Defense alone, and appear to have been barely adequate.

During that decade thousands of trained intelligence personnel have been let go in retirement or discharge. This was done to accommodate the downsizing of the military in the proportions of support assets to spear point that had been reasoned appropriate for the conventional military force structure. That force structure was geared to conventional warfare. While conventional capabilities *must* be the baseline, the planners, budgeteers, and Congress did not want to hear the warnings from the intelligence community that the new world evolving would require more, not less, intelligence capabilities.

Whether it was the ostrich complex metaphorically sticking one’s head in the sand or seen as self-serving wailing of the intelligence community, the cutbacks continued. The national intelligence agencies have suffered similar impacts. To be sure it must be clear that it will be necessary to magnify efforts to provide the analytical capability to keep pace with the voluminous collections, let alone the demands for prognostication with any degree of confidence.

It takes time to grow this expertise. This is only one spoke in the rudimentary intelligence cycle to define, collect, process (analyze), and disseminate. All need additional resources. It is, however, the one requiring the greatest assets. It will be costly. Sacrifice of the nation’s treasure by the way of a levy on those who live in and most benefit from the society and its standard of living, must be seen necessary. Most assuredly, it is a way to broaden the shared involvement of the general population.

In addition to authorizing, recruiting, and training this growth, serious consideration should be given to tap the institutional memory and skill set of those who have already been trained in intelligence specialties and let go. Consider reactivating those retired with the requisite skills during this national emergency. Consider identifying and finding those discharged with these skills and re-enlisting/drafting them to the cause. We are not talking bringing back those of every generation past but certainly those of and since the Gulf War, if willing and capable, should be considered.

And what of our rage? Osama bin Laden is irrefutably a terrorist menace but there are those by their actions that are aiding and abetting him in his efforts above and beyond those who are his ideological compatriots. Those of whom I speak act in rage, ignorant to reality, blindly assailing those who appear different. Attacks on mosques, those of Arab ethnic background, or those similar in appearance, demonstrate that they who participate are not patriots, far from it, they are as much a terrorist as bin Laden. Profiling can be debated but there is a larger issue at play and the best way to deal with suspicion is to leave it to the appropriate authorities and not behave as vigilantes. I only wish President Bush had more forcefully stressed this issue as a matter of sedition in his address to Congress. Right now our nation needs all its investigative resources to concentrate on the threat and not be taken from their vital task wasting time and resources tracking down those guilty of hate crimes. Why aid the enemy? We all feel rage. We all want justice. Justice is not achieved by injustice.

Will we as a nation recognize the need to and succeed in adjusting to the changed reality in the conduct of warfare? Will we succumb to the temptation of guns *and* butter? Will we become victims of our own rage? How will history see us? How will we see ourselves?

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