

This New Kind of War

WW IV – the World War Against Islamist Terrorism – looks like a new kind of war. A global, transnational, ideological, religious federation of enemies using the latest technology for terror is a unique threat. But, it isn't a totally new kind of war. The basic war is the Islamists against everybody else. The Islamists are a sub-culture of Islam as a Civilization. It's a war among mutually exclusive, antagonistic cultures. Islamists can't co-exist with anyone else. Only one culture and its civilization will prevail, ultimately, on any piece of earth. This isn't a new kind of war for America.

The Indian Wars (1608-1891) were the same kind of war. The differences are illuminating. The scale was continental, not global. The former destiny of American Civilization and American Empire demanded the conquest of the continent, but today's Americans won't conquer the world. Unlike the Indian Wars, America is on the strategic defense. America exercises operational and tactical offensives under this defensive grand strategy.

The gap in centuries of civilization between the English-speaking people and the Indians was over 2000 years – in 1608. The Indians were a pre-Greek Civilization. The Islamists and Islam are 800 years behind America – in 2003. The Islamic world imports technology. Name one technology, other than the suicide bomber vest, developed in the Islamic world since 1200. Moreover, the ideas of the Rule of Law, Nation-State, Reformation, Enlightenment, and Republican Democracy grew in Europe and America only. It's been a long journey of development since the Magna Carta. The ideas haven't matured in Islamic civilization (including heroic Turkey).

Americans used Indian allies against other Indians. Americans will use Muslims to fight the Islamists. Likewise, the fighting will come and go against different bands in different locales, using different forces and tactics over centuries of conflict. These are long, long, long wars. The bitter, ruthless, bloody murdering of men, women, old and young on both sides will be the same. The big difference is the National Destiny that propels the strategy.

The Manifest Destiny of the 19th Century culminated the strategic offensive of earlier centuries. The whole continent would be subject to American Civilization, not Indian Civilization. American doesn't have a consensus vision today. Our Second American Civil War, ACW II, is an unsettled, internal clash of cultures for the future of American Civilization.

If the Liberals win ACW II, we will retreat in defeat from WW IV and finish a spectacular decline like Rome. If the Conservatives win, a coherent destiny might be defined. Among Conservatives, neither the mushy, wishful thinking of 'Islam is a religion of peace' aching for the Rule of Law and individual liberty, nor the mushy, wishful hope for isolationist retreat to fortress America will work. Sooner or later,

Americans will agree on a Destiny, like a 'Munificent Destiny' (more in another op ed) to express our National Will. The WW IV global strategy, like WW III's 'Containment' for Cold War, will be defensive.

Keep the Islamists in the Islamic world, until the greater part of Islamic culture changes its own Civilization. The inherent contradictions of Islamists should bring their downfall as surely as the lies of Marxism collapsed contained Communism. There is an outside chance the Islamists could convert all of Islam to bring a total war of civilizations. History happens. It's not deterministic until the very End Times.

Operationally, America and its willing Allies will stay on the offense. The Wars in Afghanistan and Iraq are, in fact, Operations – Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) and Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF). There will be other operations across the globe for many decades. Wherever Americans find a snake pit of Islamists, it will be exterminated. There are new requirements for very rapid, global response with credible, versatile forces. There are threats of ever-changing enemies. The military, like the Army's Future Combat systems, will be up to the challenges.

Tactically, the fighting units (Corps, Divisions, Brigades and below to the individual rifleman) will see new kind of war all the time. There will be a constant cycle of offensive and defensive tactics, techniques and procedures. The Islamists are a thinking enemy who will continuously evolve their tactics. So will America.

T.R. Fehrenbach described what was new in a limited, ideologically-based war and what was timeless his polemic history of the Korean War. The truth of This Kind of War is a cult for Army officers. There's a mix of new and ancient in *this new kind of war* against Islamist Terrorism too.

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