

Army Dives Into Cheney's Permanent War Scenario

by Carl Osgood

If there was any doubt that the senior leadership of the U.S. Army is fully committed to Samuel Huntington's "Clash of Civilizations," one need only have attended the relevant panels of the annual conference of the Association of the U.S. Army during the first week of October. There, one would have heard Brig. Gen. David Fastabend, the deputy director of the Army Training and Doctrine Command's Futures Center, declare that a significant percentage of the Muslim world is "violently opposed to our ideas," and that there could be 30-50 million potential combatants out there, all guaranteeing that the present U.S. war against terrorism, or against Islamic extremism, or whatever the label *du jour* is for this war, is going to last decades.

Of course, the Army did not come up with that outlook on its own. It comes straight from the top, from Vice President Dick Cheney and the cabal of neo-cons, whom *EIR* has shown to be fanatically committed to Leon Trotsky's doctrine of "permanent war/permanent revolution" (see "Cheney Revives Parvus 'Permanent War' Madness," *EIR*, Sept. 23). Cheney himself appeared at a luncheon at the Army Association conference, on Oct. 5 and two days earlier had spoken to Marines at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, to reinforce the notion that, for all practical purposes, the current war is permanent. "Now the terrorists are making a stand in Iraq," he declared, "testing our resolve and trying to shake our commitment to democracy in that part of the world." He echoed President Bush's recent declaration that "the only way the terrorists can win is if we lose our nerve and abandon our mission."

As Lyndon LaRouche pointed out in an Oct. 8 memo, Cheney is the tool of Anglo-Dutch neo-imperial interests, whose goal is to bring about an end to the system of nation-states in favor of the return of the *ultramontane* feudal system of Middle Ages-Europe. "These 'neo-conservative' Trotskyists associated with Cheney's war-making efforts, today, are each and all tools of the relevant neo-Venetian style in that mass of family-centered financier associations which are combined in the fashion of the individual member of a common slime-mold," LaRouche wrote. "They are typical of the petty fanatics who dream wet dreams, in the fashion of lackeys behind the curtains, of orchestrating the history of the world,

the naughty children following the whistle of the rat-catcher of Hamelin."

Into the Abyss

Fastabend's comments, made during a panel on how the Army is reorganizing itself for this future war, track very closely with the Clash of Civilizations outlook of Harvard's Samuel Huntington. Huntington wrote, in his 1993 article "The Clash of Civilizations?": "The great divisions among humankind and the dominating source of conflict will be cultural," meaning that the "clash of civilizations will be the battle lines of the future." Huntington described a phase of conflict beginning with the French Revolution, which he called "the Western phase," defined as nation-state versus nation-state, which ended with the Cold War. What has replaced it is "the interaction between Western and non-Western civilizations and among non-Western civilizations." Under the Bush Administration, Huntington's outlook has morphed into an ideological crusade, like that against Communism, or Woodrow Wilson's campaign to "make the world safe for democracy."

Fastabend spoke of a fundamental conflict of ideas. "We have ideas about . . . freedom of ideas, themselves, ideas about democracy, ideas about freedom of commerce, pluralism, rule of law," he said. "Our opponents do not share these ideas and a significant percentage of the Muslim world is violently, irreconcilably, violently opposed. People in the CIA will tell you, 'hey, it's only 2-3% of the Muslim world that is irreconcilably, violently opposed,' but if you do the math, you have 30-50 million irreconcilably, violently opposed combatants. The ideas are incredibly contradictory. So, we're going to have a long war." This is the world which the Army is reorganizing itself for, with its new modular brigades, which are more suited for long-term occupations of Iraq and whatever other countries the U.S. decides to invade.

Not addressed is the degree to which the policies of the present administration are *creating* the potential 30-50 million combatants that Fastabend spoke of. Putting aside, for a moment, the question of whether or not the U.S. should have invaded Iraq, if the Bush Administration had gone in with a different policy, of co-opting elements of the Iraqi Army for the reconstruction of the country, as opposed to then-U.S. viceroy Ambassador Paul Bremer's decision to disband the Army, perhaps the current insurgency would never have been able to get started. Bremer's decision, then, raises the question of *intent*. Was Bremer's order disbanding the Army, as well as his de-Ba'athification order in June 2003, dictated to him by Cheney and Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, with the *intent* of creating a violent, intractable insurgency by alienating a small, but significant portion of the population that would be both prepared and capable of fighting a protracted, asymmetric war?

‘Transforming’ the Army

The next step, then, in Cheney’s permanent war/permanent revolution scenario, is to reorganize the Army to fight for decades or more. Key to that is the Army’s reorganization into “modular” brigades, a process which was begun by Army Chief of Staff Gen. Peter Schoomaker in 2003, with the return of the 3rd Infantry and 101st Airborne Divisions from Iraq. The 3rd Infantry Division has already returned to Iraq in a partial modular configuration, with the 101st and the 4th Infantry Division in the process of returning, now, with four fully modular brigades each. Part of this process is taking 40,000 soldiers out of what is called the Institutional Army, the fixed branches of the Army that provide its logistical, industrial, and training base, and moving them into combat formations. Their jobs in the Institutional Army are to be taken largely by civilians.

One objective of this reorganization is that the Army is supposed to wind up with 43 brigades, up from the 33 it had at the beginning of 2003, without a permanent increase in overall end strength. The reorganization does require a temporary increase of 30,000 soldiers above the then-statutory limit of 480,000, over three years, which Rumsfeld granted in 2003. However, as Vice Chief of Staff Gen. Richard Cody admitted to reporters on Oct. 3, the crisis in recruiting is making it difficult to get those extra soldiers. The Army finished fiscal 2005 on Sept. 30 almost 7,000 soldiers short of its goal of 80,000 recruits. The result was that the Army would up with an end strength of around 494,000, about 8,000 short of its target of 502,000. One result of this, as Cody admitted, is the continuing use of “stop-loss” in certain military specialties, to force soldiers to stay in the Army past their contractual obligation.

The second piece of the Army’s transformation is the Future Combat System (FCS), a collection of 18 vehicles, as well as unmanned ground and air vehicles, all networked together, which is supposed to give future Army brigades both the mobility and sustainability to fight on future battlefields. The present modular brigades are part of the road to the FCS. But the FCS faces a tough road in the Congress because of concerns about its complexity and costs.

The Reality in Iraq

Meanwhile, the Iraq War has introduced a reality principle which even the senior Army leadership cannot suppress. While no one was openly declaring the war lost, as many officers in both the Army and the Marines are saying privately, and many retired officers, as well (see “The Greatest Strategic Disaster in U.S. History,” *EIR*, Oct. 14), the sentiment that information age warfare doesn’t work, did make itself felt.

One Army officer, Maj. Curtis D. Taylor of the 4th Infantry Division, presented a paper arguing that throughout the drive to Baghdad in the Spring of 2003, Army forces rarely had any definite construct of what the enemy formations in

front of them looked like. The much ballyhooed airborne and satellite systems did not provide them the kind of intelligence they needed. Instead, they depended for tactical intelligence on captured Iraqis and what the Army calls “movement to contact,” which essentially means advancing forward until you bump into the enemy. One brigade commander commented, “We got our intel from the lead tank.”

If U.S. forces had little reliable information on the enemy then, they have even less, now. Retired British Army Maj. Gen. Jonathan Bailey blasted the notions of “information superiority” and “information dominance.” “The problem we’ve got is that we saddle ourselves with all kinds of wonderful concepts and doctrine which are absolute delusions,” such as information dominance and “transparent battlefields,” Bailey said. “In Iraq, today, our forces do not have information superiority.” U.S. and British troops walk around in distinctive uniforms, operate from large, fixed bases, and drive around in distinctive vehicles on known routes, and “our intentions are not in any way unknown to the enemy.” In contrast, we know nearly nothing about the enemy because he just disappears into the terrain of Iraqi society. “This damaging assertion of information superiority, dominance, is absolute nonsense and it really does misguide our actions.”

While presenting himself as a “heretic,” Bailey was, in fact, representing the British imperial outlook, in that he was demanding that we rid ourselves of the delusion of quick, decisive victories, and be prepared to fight the long war. Such delusions mean that we are configured to fight one kind of war and are therefore not ready to deal with the war that we get. “The war we thought we were getting into was a war of choice, but history isn’t kind and very often people end up in operations which are not of the nature they originally thought,” he said. We should, instead, build forces which are capable of warfighting, nation building, counterinsurgency, or whatever task might be needed, in other words, for the entire “continuum of operations.”

One indication of just how difficult the insurgent war in Iraq has become, is the problem of roadside bombs, what the military calls “improvised explosive devices” or IEDs. IEDs are the single largest killer of U.S. troops in Iraq, and no small amount of effort is going into finding ways to counteract this threat. The problem is that there is no silver bullet that will overcome this threat, because whenever U.S. troops change tactics to avoid IEDs, the insurgents change their tactics to take advantage of whatever new vulnerability the new U.S. tactics expose. If U.S. convoys use jamming devices to block detonation of IEDs by cell phones, the insurgents switch to wired detonators. The myriad ways in which IEDs can be concealed on the side of the road makes detection a constant challenge and an ambush in conjunction with IEDs is an ever present danger. What possible solution to this problem could there be, besides changing the conditions, i.e., the policy of permanent war, which produced the problem?