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EXERCISE/EXERCICE

NEW HORIZONS

**Why The US Is Losing The Media War In Iraq:
Redefining Victory Through The Open Lens**

By /par Maj/

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ABSTRACT

Since the US invasion of Iraq, there has been considerably press about the legitimacy of the war, the overt or seemingly covert intentions of the US and indeed, whether or not US involvement has made any difference in Iraq. Daily breaking news of deaths, Internet blogs and sensationalized media propaganda has caused wavering public support of the US at home and to a greater extent that of the neighboring Iraqi Muslim communities. When Donald Rumsfeld made his address to the Senate that the US was losing the media war in Iraq, he was not indicating a failure per se of the military campaign and its multiple lines of operation on the Iraqi front. No, Secretary Rumsfeld, in his typical no-nonsense manner, was clearly articulating that in spite of US status in the world, the adversary, one less capable, was winning the greater battle...the hearts and minds of the people. On one side, the adversary was using media to demoralize the US and its coalition partners by quickly advertising or televising the deaths of US military or civilian deaths caused by the supposedly superior precision-guided bombs. On the other side, the publicized rhetoric of the adversary used the very foundation of US involvement, democracy, as a tool to galvanize the Muslim community...it is us against them. This paper uses Secretary Rumsfeld statement as the foundation for its research in determining why and who was responsible for the US losing the media war. Not the military men and women who bravely go forth and serve their country and humanity but rather, as the thesis will state, it is the incorrect application of an ideology that means different things to different people, the failure of an international stop-gap judicial system and the realization that the US is failing to get the right word out.

INTRODUCTION

Open up any internet website dealing with the war in Iraq and among the top five of “In The News” section you will likely find headlines such as: 37 die as car bomb hits near Iraq shrine, Bus station blast kills dozen in Iraq, Democrats' Iraq timeline offers enemies a victory, Bush says. Headlines of this nature have a negative impact on public support. So much so that Secretary of Defense, Donald Rumsfeld addressed the United States (US) Senate and stated the US is losing the media war in Iraq.¹ His statement becomes the foundation for this report.

This paper will examine and answer the question as to why Rumsfeld made his statement to the Senate and thereby offers solutions to redefining victory in Iraq through the open lens—the media. By using myriad of articles, previous research and papers related to the war in Iraq, this author will first look at the role of the military in Iraq, the role of media, and then look at current US-media relationship. Second, drawing on journal articles, political analyses, and various authors, this author will define three areas that will provide convincing data as to why the US is losing the media war in Iraq. That data will support the thesis of this monograph which is: This US is losing the media war in Iraq because of its ethnocentric ideology of democracy, its failed judicial process as exemplified by the Guantanamo Bay detention camps, and its failure to win over and sustain the hearts and minds of the public at home and abroad. Lastly, this author will

¹ Daniel Trotta, “Rumsfeld: we need to learn from al-Qaeda,” *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 19 February 2006, 1. [journal on-line]; available from <http://www.smh.com.au/news/world/rumsfeld-we-need-to-learn-from-alqaeda/2006/02/18/1140151849128.html>; Internet; accessed 3 Mar 2007.

culminate the data presented and offer some practical solutions to the US making lasting improvement that will help assist in redefining victory in Iraq through the open lens.

WHY THE US IS LOSING THE MEDIA WAR IN IRAQ

Any research addressing the US-media relationship in Iraq is incomplete without some historical accounting. Good summaries already exist, such as those by Harris,² and Christopher Paul, and James J. Kim,³ to name a few, in which their main theme covered how the media seemingly became the fourth body of three bodied governmental system (executive, legislative and judicial). This section will take a different approach by examining: the role of the military in Iraq, the role of the media and the current US-Media relationship as defined by Donald Rumsfeld.

Role of The Military In Iraq

The Iraq War (March 20, 2003 to present), often referred to as the second Gulf War, is an ongoing war that began when the US led the invasion of Iraq in 2003⁴. The rationale was that Iraq possessed weapons of mass destruction (WMD) which posed an

² Captain Brayton Harris USN (Retired). Military-Media Relations, 1848-2001. [journal on-line]; available from <http://www.civil-war-newspapers.com/military-media-relations.htm>; Internet; accessed 14 April 2007.

³ Christopher Paul, James J. Kim. Reporters on the Battlefield: The Embedded Press System in Historical Context. Excerpts. [journal on-line]; available. <http://www.rand.org/pubs/monographs/MG200/>; from Internet; accessed 14 April 2007.

⁴ "Iraq, Afghanistan & the Reach of War." New York Times. [magazine on-line]; available from. <http://www.nytimes.com/pages/world/worldspecial/>; Internet; accessed 29 Mar 2007.

“imminent threat”⁵ to the United States and the world community. The WMD claim has since been found to be false.⁶ From 2001 to 2003 leading up to the war in Iraq, the Iraq’s disarmament reached a crisis when President Bush demanded a complete end to Iraqi production of and use of WMD and that Iraq comply with United Nations (UN) Resolutions requiring UN inspectors unfettered access to areas those inspectors thought might have WMD production facilities. Iraq reluctantly agreed to the inspections in late 2002. The inspectors did not find any WMD stockpiles, but questions still remained as the inspectors did not view the Iraqi weapons declaration as credible either.

In March 2003, the US government announced that “diplomacy has failed” and that it would proceed with a coalition of the allied countries, named “coalition of the willing”⁷, to rid Iraq of all its alleged WMD. Iraq’s disarmament was supported by a majority of Congress, who passed the Joint Resolution to Authorize the Use of US Armed Forces against Iraq on 11 September 2002. This authorization was used by the Bush Administration as the legal basis for the US to invade Iraq.⁸ It is important to note that Kofi Annan, the Secretary General of the UN publicly announced he did not support the invasion as, from his point of view, it was illegal; a sentiment felt by most of the neighboring Muslim communities who wished to give peace and the UN sanctions more

⁵ United States. President Delivers "State of the Union"; [on-line]; available from <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2003/01/20030128-19.html>; Internet; accessed 9 January 2007, 8.

⁶ The Nation. Powell Admits False WMD Claim; [on-line]; available from <http://www.thenation.com/blogs/capitalgames?bid=3&pid=1442>; Internet; accessed 25 April 2007, 4.

⁷ Paolo Pasicolan and Carrie Satterlee. "Coalition of the Willing" Already Larger than the 1991 Gulf War coalition. [journal on-line; available. <http://www.heritage.org/Research/MiddleEast/wm225.cfm>; from Internet; accessed 7 April 2007.

⁸ “Iraq, Afghanistan & the Reach of War.” *New York Times*. [magazine on-line]; available from. <http://www.nytimes.com/pages/world/worldspecial/>; Internet; accessed 29 Mar 2007.

time. The supposed illegality of the invasion by many of the Muslim world would turn out to be an international media point that would be used against the US throughout the invasion.⁹

So began Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF), the US codename given to the invasion. Its mission: (1) find and destroy WMDs in Iraq, (2) overthrow the Iraqi Leader Saddam Hussein, and (3) establish a new governmental regime while bringing democracy in order to restore order to the entire country.¹⁰ Point one, moot. As already alluded to, no WMDs were ever found. Point two, successfully completed. Saddam Hussein's leadership was toppled and he was effectively removed, literally, from leadership. Point three is another matter and the one which continues to call for US presence in Iraq. While the US contemplated invading Iraq, Al Qaeda was engaging in a robust media, albeit information operation (I/O), campaign portraying the US as invaders who would never leave a Muslim country once they occupied it. Furthermore, Al Qaeda espoused the US wanted to spread their ideology of Democracy as a direct attack against the Muslim faith.¹¹ Therefore, Al Qaeda rallied its fellow Muslim communities and called for a Holy Jihad against the US led invaders. That rhetoric led to increased asymmetric

⁹ The reaction of the Iraqi population is a key element, and will depend upon a variety of factors, such as the nature and extent of the war damage and casualties, the demands of ethnic and religious minorities, the speed with which a credible government could be established.

¹⁰ Baker Spring. Operation Iraqi Freedom: Military Objectives Met. The Heritage Foundation. [journal on-line]; available from <http://www.heritage.org/Research/MiddleEast/wm261.cfm>; Internet; accessed 12 February 2007.

¹¹ James S. Robbins. Al-Qaeda Versus Democracy. International Security Affairs. [journal on-line]; available from <http://www.securityaffairs.org/issues/2005/09/robbins.php>; Internet; accessed 15 February 2007.

warfare with the Iraqi insurgency, sectarian warfare between Sunni and Shia Iraqis, and continued Al Qaeda operations in Iraq.

The Role of Media

The media adds another dimension to the battlefield.

- Capt Ellen K. Haddock¹²

The rising power of the United States in world affairs requires not a more compliant press, but a relentless barrage of facts and criticism. Our job in this age, as I see it, is not to serve as cheerleaders for our side, but to help the largest possible number of people to see the realities.

- James Reston¹³

What is the role of media? Simply put from a western society perspective, the role of media is to report the informed, and hopefully, unbiased truth as it happened and let the general public decide on the consequences of the actions that should or should not be taken. Yet, despite US initiatives, the fighting in Iraq only continues to intensify.

As Clausewitz espoused, the public is part of the Remarkable Trinity which are the public, the government and its' Army.¹⁴ Public opinion can ignite action as well as

¹² Capt Ellen K. Haddock. "Media on the Battlefield: An Underestimated Weapon." Marine Corps Gazette 76, no. 10 (October 1992): [30-32].

¹³ As quoted in Council on Foreign Relations, *Embedded Journalists in Iraq: Reality TV or Desert Mirage?* Transcript, Co-sponsored with the College of William and Mary, Washington, D.C., July 29, 2003. Online at <http://www.cfr.org/publication.php?id=6189#> (as of September 23, 2003). This, actually, is not a novel notion; the idea dates back to Benjamin Franklin ("Apology for Printers," in *Benjamin Franklin: Writings*, New York: Library of America, 1987, p. 172) who wrote the following: That the Opinions of Men are almost as various as their Faces; an Observation general enough to become a common Proverb, "So many Men so many Minds." . . . Printers are educated in the Belief, that when Men differ in Opinion, both Sides ought equally to have the Advantage of being heard by the Publick [sic]; and that when Truth and Error have fair Play, the former is always an overmatch for the latter: Hence they cheerfully [sic] serve all contending Writers that pay them well, without regarding on which side they are of the Question in Dispute.

halt it. Al Qaeda, and our own leaders at times, know that public opinion matters and can be exploited using the media. One example of media's influence on national politics and policy was exemplified during the Spanish-American War. William Randolph Hearst, owner of the New York Journal, was a powerful media tycoon who favored American intervention in the Cuban uprising against Spanish rule.¹⁵ Hearst is credited with replying via telegram to one of his field correspondents in Cuba seeking permission to return to US soil, "PLEASE REMAIN. YOU FURNISH PICTURES. I WILL FURNISH WAR."¹⁶ When the American battleship Maine exploded, headline stories inflamed public opinion with phrases like "Remember the Maine!" US involvement in the Spanish-American War soon followed. During WWI and WWII, censorship and propaganda worked hand-in-hand to maintain US public support for the war effort. The British actually targeted the American media to garner public support for US entry into the WWII.¹⁷ It worked. Thus, as early as the 1940s, the American public was a target of influence. In general, during these world wars, the media willingly published material intended to keep crucial public support high, often losing their objectivity along the way.¹⁸

¹⁴ Carl Von Clausewitz, *On War*, edited and translated by Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976).

¹⁵ Raymond R. Hill Jr.. *The Future Military-Media Relationship: The Media As An Actor In War Execution*; available from <http://www.au.af.mil/au/awc/awcgate/acsc/97-0307.pdf>. 51; Internet; accessed 15 April 2007.

¹⁶ LCDR William N. Nagy. "Department of Defense Combat Coverage Principles: Will They Serve Us in the Future?" Fort Leavenworth, Kansas: U. S. Army Command and General Staff College, 1995. 20.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 23. The British employed novelist Sir Gilbert Parker to analyze the American press and determine where [the British] might influence the [American] press.

¹⁸ Ronald L. Schultz. "Combat Media Coverage Principles: Doomed to Failure." Carlisle Barracks, Pa.: Army War College, 7 April 1993. 11.

Current US-Media Relationship

At their worst the military wraps itself in the flag and the media wrap themselves in the First Amendment and neither party listens to the other.

- Peter Andrew¹⁹

During DESERT SHIELD/STORM the US-media relationship was epitomized where the enemy's effectiveness had decreased due to negative press it received for the callous actions portrayed by the burning oil fields. Moreover, Gulf War I became linked to the "CNN War" or "CNN Factor."²⁰ Communication technology, especially satellite technology, changed how the media covered this conflict. The military and the media each recognized operational security as a concern. The military at times used the press as a force multiplier. The TV medium, particularly CNN, became defacto intelligence sources. Secretary of Defense Cheney and Chairman of the Joint Chief of Staff (CJCS) General Powell referenced CNN during Gulf War I as one of their intelligence sources.²¹ Defense officials routinely use the media to keep abreast of current affairs.²²

¹⁹ Peter Andrews, "The Media and the Military," *American Heritage*, Vol. 42, No. 4, July 1991, p. 79.

²⁰ Lt Col Frank J. Stech, "Winning CNN Wars," *Parameters* 24 (Autumn 1994), 38. Also, Lt Col Stuart W. Wagner, "Operational Art on the Superhighway...Success with the Press," (Newport, R.I.: Naval War College, 1995), 5.

²¹ Capt John E. Boyle, "Emerging News Media Communication Technologies in Future Military Conflicts," AFIT/CI/CIA-91-019 (Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio: Air Force Institute of Technology, 1991), 59.

²² Loren B. Thompson, *Defense Beat: The Dilemmas of Defense Coverage* (New York: Lexington Books, 1991), 63.

So, why was Gulf War I so different for the Gulf War II in Iraq?²³ Donald Rumsfeld answered it this way when he quoted Ayman al-Zawahri, the chief lieutenant of al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden, as saying that their terrorist network is in a media battle for the hearts and minds of Muslims. Rumsfeld agreed, saying that the battle for public opinion is at least as important as the battles on the ground in Iraq and Afghanistan.²⁴ Rumsfeld went further to say, "Our enemies have skillfully adapted to fighting wars in today's media age, but for the most part we — our country, our government — has not adapted."²⁵ Rumsfeld would further state that the extremist groups are able to act quickly on the information front, with relatively few people, while the US government bureaucracy has yet to keep up in an age of e-mail, blogs and instant messaging. "We in the government have barely even begun to compete in reaching their audiences,"²⁶. Rumsfeld often described the US government as being disadvantaged by its western approach to dealing with the media, and he pushed for the US military in particular to try innovative approaches to getting out its message to the Islamic world. He complained that the US media tended to focus too much on the negative aspects of US

²³ Gulf War I saw a successful US-media relationship. However, the significant role of the air campaign and the limited ground action restricted media coverage of actual conflict. Post-conflict, the media complained of military "access control" whereby the military shaped media images, in its own I/O campaign, by excessively controlling media access to the action and controlling all information regarding the conflict. These perceived controls led some members of the media into court to file suit for unrestricted battlefield access. The war ended before there was a court decision, but the issue remains unresolved. Wilcox, 50-51. The landmark case of *Near vs. Minnesota*, 1931, concerning the media's right to publish. Wilcox cites Chief Justice Hughes, who observed that the right to publish was not unlimited, stating, "No one would question but that a government might prevent . . . publication of sailing dates of transports or the number or location of troops." 48.

²⁴ Amy Westfeldt. Rumsfeld Says Extremists Winning Media War. Associated Press. [journal on-line]; available from <http://www.freerepublic.com/focus/f-news/1580753/posts>. Internet; accessed 15 April 2007.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ *Ibid.*

involvement in Iraq. In his speech, Rumsfeld stated the military needs to focus more on adapting to the changes in global media. "In some cases, military public affairs officials have had little communications training . . .," he said. The government's public affairs system is antiquated, he said, working mostly on an eight-hour, five-days-a-week schedule that cannot keep up with the rest of the world. "This is an unacceptable, dangerous deficiency."²⁷

Referring back to Clausewitz Remarkable Trinity,²⁸ questions then arise as to who among the Trinity is responsible for losing the media war in Iraq? Is it the failure of the government to adapt to an adversary imbued with technology that can push out unverified information in a matter of minutes, if not seconds around the globe? Has the public grown tired of the daily reports of deaths and inability of the military to capture key terrorist and prevent the uprising of another? Indeed, the role of the military is critical to Iraq's success and the media ability to stay true to its charter to report the press free from undue influence is paramount to maintaining the integrity of the press. Surely, there exists a void as espoused by Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld in his statement that the US is losing the media war. Using articles and journal publications, most notably by James Lacey²⁹, the following section will now answer the question of who is responsible for losing the media war in Iraq by looking at the ethnocentric ideology of democracy,

²⁷ *BBC NEWS*: "US 'losing media war to al-Qaeda'" [on-line]; available from <http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/1/hi/world/americas/4725992.stm>; Internet; accessed 17 April 2007.

²⁸ Carl Von Clausewitz, *On War*, edited and translated by Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976).

²⁹ James Lacey. "Who's Responsible for Losing the Media War in Iraq?" *Free Republic*. [journal on-line]; available from <http://www.freerepublic.com/focus/f-news/1235209/posts.10>. Internet; accessed 25 March 2007.

the detention camps at Guantanamo bay and US failure to win over and sustain the hearts and minds of the public.

WHO'S RESPONSIBLE FOR LOSING THE MEDIA WAR IN IRAQ?

While it is easy to blame the media for failing to get the true story or to accuse journalists of a liberal bias against military operations, this fails to identify the true culprits behind why the US is losing the media war in Iraq. Let's start with ideology. There is a perception by the Western world that countries like Iraq have a desire to be a Democracy. However, democracy is the very tool radical Muslims have claimed is a direct affront to all Muslim values; hence, justification for a Jihad against the US.

Ethnocentric Ideology of Democracy

The foe is no longer defined as "terror," which is simply a tool used by a well-defined adversary. The new "National Strategy for Combating Terrorism" acknowledges that the US's enemy is a "transnational movement of extremist organizations . . . which have in common that they exploit Islam and use terrorism for ideological ends." The report then outlines measures to confront that challenge. While short-term measures such as denying terrorists sanctuary or tracking their funds seem logical, the administration's long-term strategy is less straightforward.³⁰

³⁰ Vidino, Lorenzo. "Democracy in the Muslim World." [on-line]; available from http://counterterrorismblog.org/2006/09/democracy_in_the_muslim_world.php; Internet; accessed 15 April 2007.

By attacking the ideology, you attack the terror. The administration firmly believes -- almost blindly -- that democracy is the right medicine. According to the report, democracy diminishes the underlying conditions terrorists seek to exploit. Promotion of democracy is, therefore, the key element in the administration's long-term approach.³¹ Yet democracy does not always have these healing powers. The administration contends that individuals who enjoy political participation and can freely express themselves are less likely to embrace fundamentalist messages. The truth is that today democratic societies are spawning terrorists no less than dictatorships are.³²

The core Sept. 11 hijackers grew up under autocratic Middle Eastern regimes, yet embraced radical Islam only when they went to study in Germany. The young terrorist suspects arrested in London and Toronto, the vast majority of whom were second-generation Muslim immigrants in the West, shunned the values of their native societies and planned attacks against them. A recent round of routine Al Qaeda threats against the United States were delivered on tape by Adam Gahdan, who grew up in democratic Southern California.³³

Aside from not guaranteeing results, spreading democracy in the Muslim world is a monumental effort that requires changing cultures and overcoming embedded skepticisms. Some oppose the concept because it clashes with their divinely ordered

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² This remark is based on media coverage of the sub-way attack in London, extremist like Timothy McVay and the Oklahoma bombings, and the spoiled terrorist plot in Toronto, Canada, to name a few, by citizens of democracies.

³³ Vidino, Lorenzo. "Democracy in the Muslim world."

vision of government. For Islamists, a small but vocal minority in the Muslim world, the only source of legislation is God and his will is set in the Sharia; parliaments and other democratic institutions are illegitimately trying to replace God's will with man's. Others look at democracy with suspicion, as a form of government imposed by foreign forces. Moreover, democracy's difficult application, as in Iraq, only increases the doubts of skeptics who actively attack the US as criminals in the media.

At this point in time democracy is far from the magic bullet against fundamentalism. Spreading democracy to the Muslim world is an extremely difficult task whose achievement does not guarantee the end of radicalism; especially, when radicalism is not restricted to any one ideology. Let's now transition to yet another culprit, failed judicial due-process.

Failed Judicial Process at Guantanamo Bay Detention Camps

What part of democracy thought of the detention camp at Guantanamo Bay? Guantanamo Bay detainment camp serves as a joint military prison and interrogation camp under the leadership of Joint Task Force Guantanamo (JTF-GTMO) and has occupied a portion of the United States Navy's base at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba since 2002.³⁴ The prison holds people suspected by the executive branch of the US government of being al-Qaeda and Taliban operatives, as well as those no longer considered suspects who are being held pending relocation elsewhere. The prisoners were captured in Afghanistan and elsewhere around the world. The camp has drawn

³⁴ Afghan Prisoners Going to Gray Area: Military Unsure What Follows Transfer to US Base in Cuba, Washington Post, January 9, 2002.

strong criticism both in the US and world-wide for its detainment of prisoners without trial, and allegations of torture. The detainees held by the United States were classified as "enemy combatants". The US administration had claimed that they were not entitled to the protections of the Geneva Conventions, but the US Supreme Court ruled against this interpretation on June 29, 2006.³⁵ Following this, on July 7, 2006 the Department of Defense issued an internal memo stating that prisoners will in the future be entitled to protection under the Geneva Conventions.³⁶

Most of the detainees still at Guantanamo are not scheduled for trial. As of November 2006, according to MSNBC.com, out of 775 detainees who have been brought to Guantanamo, approximately 340 have been released, leaving 435 detainees. Of those 435, 110 have been labeled as ready for release. Of the other 325, only "more than 70" will face trial. That leaves about 250 who may be held indefinitely.³⁷ They are awaiting a trial because the US considers them to be dangerous or to possess intelligence information. The Supreme Court has upheld that the government may detain enemy combatants for the duration of hostilities - in an unconventional war that may never end. Given the latter, it is not a far stretch for a terrorist or suspected terrorist to feel the US will never give them a fair trial if captured, so why bother surrender? Indeed, what intelligence or threat to intelligence warrants their continued imprisonment?

³⁵ Hamdan v. Rumsfeld (29 June 2006). [on-line]; available from <http://www.supremecourtus.gov/opinions/05pdf/05-184.pdf>; Internet; accessed 13 April 2007.

³⁶ United States: Guantanamo Two Years On: US Detentions Undermine the Rule of Law. Human Rights Watch.; [journal online]; available from <http://www.hrw.org/english/docs/2004/01/09/usdom6917.htm>; Internet; accessed 7 April 2007.

³⁷ Dedman, Bill. In limbo: Cases are few against Gitmo detainees. MSNBC.com. [online]; available from <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/15361740/>; Internet; accessed 10 April 2007.

Intelligence: Failure to Win Over and Sustain the Hearts and Minds of the Public

Although the creation of the department of Homeland Defense is making great strides to amalgamate intelligence from many US departments, a serious problem still remains. US intelligence today in its relationship with the policymaking process is broken and needs repair. In the wake of the Iraq war, it became evident that official intelligence analysis was not relied on in making even the most significant national security decisions. That intelligence was misused publicly to justify decisions, seemingly already made, which was then politicized producing ill will among policymakers, the media, intelligence officers, and that of the intelligence community's.³⁸

Public discussion of prewar intelligence on Iraq focused on the errors made in assessing Saddam Hussein's unconventional weapons programs. At the same time, partisan debate ensued over whether the US manipulated and misused intelligence in making its case for war. The US defended itself by pointing out that it was not alone in its view that Saddam had WMD and active weapons programs, however mistaken that view may have been.

Perception of Saddam's weapons capacities was shared by the previous administration, congressional Democrats, and most other Western governments and intelligence services. Yet, was the Iraqi weapons system the real reason for going to

³⁸ Paul A. Pillar. "Intelligence, Policy, & The War In Iraq." *Foreign Affairs Magazine*. Apr/May 2006; [online]; available from <http://www.cavecybernation.com/jawad/news/2006/04apr2006/04052006intelligence.html>; Internet; accessed 20 Mar 2007.

war? A view broadly held in the United States and even more so overseas, particularly by Muslim communities, was that deterrence of Iraq was working, that Saddam was being kept "in his box," and that the best way to deal with the weapons problem was through an aggressive inspections program to supplement the sanctions already in place.³⁹ That the administration arrived at so different a policy solution indicates that its decision to topple Saddam was driven by other factors -- namely, the desire to shake up the stagnant power structures of the Middle East and hasten the spread of more liberal politics, i.e. democracy, and economics in the region.⁴⁰

If official intelligence analysis on Iraq had a policy implication, it was to avoid war or, if war was going to be launched, to prepare for the aftermath. What is most interesting about prewar US intelligence on Iraq is not that it got things wrong and misled policymakers, the media and the general public; it is that it had an opportunity to play a small role in one of the most important US policy decisions in recent decades by positively exploiting that intelligence in the media and within an I/O campaign we are only now just beginning to see and it did not.⁴¹

Thus far, this author has discussed three principle culprits which are responsible for why the US is losing the media war in Iraq. The ideology of democracy, although powerful, is not necessary a cure-all for all the chaos that frequently appear in the world.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

In fact, and to this author's chagrin, it may very well be a multiplier? Whereas Guantanamo Bay detention camps seemed like a great approach at the time, it slaps directly against the very ideology that democracy wishes to exalt; freedom and due-process under the law. Lastly, this section spoke about Intelligence. If any one thing other than 9/11 could be considered the spark that got the fire started, it would be the intelligence that stated Saddam Hussein had WMD and was prepared to use it against the US. Following suit, the next section will take all the previously discussed topics, briefly look at the latest media trends (foreign and domestic), emerging military doctrine, and thereby offer some answers to making lasting improvements that will allow the US to redefine victory in Iraq through the open lens--the media.

REDEFINING VICTORY THROUGH THE OPEN LENS

Emphasize Like-Mindedness over Democracy

A case can be made that no amount of conventional forces, using conventional tactics, can be effective against insurgencies. Nevertheless, emerging counterinsurgency doctrine is making some headway. But that argument strengthens the Powell doctrine, according to which the military should not be used for prolonged counter-insurgency wars, peacekeeping operations or occupation. The purpose of the military is to break the enemy's conventional forces. Other organizations, local allies, peacekeeping forces and civilian relief agencies are responsible for postwar reconstruction or pacification of

insurgents.⁴² In this regard, Canada, the US partners to the north, have adopted a doctrine of Defense, Diplomacy, Development and Commerce or 3D+C⁴³ that has made some great strides towards winning over the hearts and minds of the Afghans. Although understood, 3D+C does not flaunt the ideology of democracy but instead adopts a low-

audience (Islam) and changing the Ad to garner the greatest acceptance. How then could democracy be portrayed in the media as a better way of life yet openly reject the democratic principle of judicial due-process when detained terrorists or suspected terrorists?

Disband Guantanamo Bay Detention Camps

Today, six out of 10 Americans believe that the war in Iraq was a mistake and nearly half are opposed to the continuation of the Afghan war. Weary with inconclusive war on two fronts, the American people, in the absence of a further big terrorist attack or some other galvanizing shock, are unlikely to support further large-scale military interventions for years to come.⁴⁶ That said, it would seem inconceivable that Guantanamo Bay will stand the test of time. In fact, it would go a long way to show the Muslim communities that the US recognizes the negative perception the detention camp has created. Moreover, in an effort to build confidence in the international world and media at large, all prisoners without hard evidence of criminal activity should be released immediately. Carefully orchestrated, this would be spread throughout the media. However, an event of this magnitude will have its critics. To that end, why not go as far as to invite media organization such as Al-Jazeera and any other anti-US media to the news release conference to ensure equal opportunity is given to ask questions.

Guantanamo bay is like the Japanese concentration camps during WWII and the

⁴⁶ The backlash against the Vietnam war made former presidents cautious about sending troops. Reagan preferred to rely on US-backed proxies such as anti-Soviet Afghans and Nicaraguan contras. The next several presidents are likely to share that preference. Simultaneous wars in Afghanistan and Iraq have strained the military and forced it to realign its recruitment standards. It took a decade and a half to rebuild the armed forces after Vietnam, and rebuilding a demoralized and exhausted military after Iraq may be the work of several presidents, not one.

perceived Homeland Defense Muslim racial profiling as exaggerated in television prime time shows such as “24” on ABC. Both are not too bad as a natural inclination of thought but definitely terrible in the actual implementation and execution.

Get Better at Getting the Word Out

This nation, in world war and in Cold War, has never permitted the brutal and lawless to set history's course. Now, as before, we will secure our nation, protect our freedom, and help others to find freedom of their own.

-- President Bush, October 7, 2002

The war in Iraq is now a hearts and minds campaign. Since the breakdown of the Berlin Wall and the fall of the former Soviet Union, the US has been considered a superpower of the world.⁴⁷ As a superpower lauded for advances in modern computers and technology, communications should be the forefront its business; however, communication has not necessarily been its practice. The most popular view espoused by the present administration in the media is “the only way to make America safe from terrorists is to force democracy upon the Middle East.” That shows an ethnocentric attitude which can communicate to Muslim communities, forced America which is not the case. The key word is “freedom.” How one defines that in view of like-minded people may not be exact. In the Islam faith, there are only two sides, the house of Islam and everybody else.⁴⁸ That said, Islam does not preach hate or war but the radical fundamentalist use it and media to justify their actions. To the civilian Iraqis citizens,

⁴⁷ Robert Jay Lifton. “Superpower Syndrome: America's Apocalyptic.” The Nation: December 22, 2003 issue. [on-line]; available from <http://www.thenation.com/doc/20031222/lifton>; Internet; accessed 19 April 2007.

⁴⁸ Dr. Steve E.F. Samuel, conversation concerning the state of US-Israel relations and the war in Iraq, 12 April 2007.

there is a fine line between security and freedom. Under a dictatorship, there was stability but at a cost to their freedom. Under the present war conditions, it is hard for Iraqi citizens to fully embrace freedom when they fear that there will be retaliation by the insurgents who may be there long after the US departs Iraq.

Military troops on the ground in Iraq are critical to the achieving the end-state of Iraqi self-preservation but now more important is the positive work and achievement that the stability is producing. When ground troops first entered Iraq, there was antiquated doctrine to deal with the irregular nature of warfare. Now, the US Army and Marines are using the latest counterinsurgency (COIN) doctrine which is designed to fill the gap. “All insurgencies, even today’s highly adaptable strains, remain wars amongst the people.”⁴⁹ COIN doctrine requires soldiers and marines to employ a mix of both familiar combat tasks and skills more often associated with nonmilitary agencies, with the balance between them varying depending on the local situation. Far too often, soldiers and marines are captured in the media seemingly performing good deeds but the caption of a troop member with his hand on the head of a tribal leader sends a different message...one of submission. In Islamic culture, a great deal of strife center around one’s honor or the lack of it. There is a need to get the word out better through hands-on application and the media that the US gets it that it must work with the tribal chieftains as invested partners not subjects in the rebuilding of Iraq. This may entail relying more upon non-

⁴⁹ Lieutenant General, USA David H. Petraeus USA and Lieutenant General, USMC James F. Amos. Counterinsurgency. Field Manual (FM 3-24). 15 December 2006. Headquarters, Department of the Army. [on-line]; available from <http://www.fas.org/irp/doddir/army/fm3-24.pdf>; Internet; accessed 19 April 2007.

governmental agencies which typically do not like mixing with the military because of the negative press it receives.

The military public affairs office will need to work even closer with I/O operations to ensure the correct message about IEDs and report probable collateral damage areas without sacrificing operational security. It is and will be hard but nothing worth fighting for is typically easy. Lastly, the US should not be so concerned about getting things wrong. Embrace the faults as well as the successes. It is the failure to get the bad press out first that gives the media the frenzy to investigate or create its reality of true.

In summary, this section dealt with redefining victory in Iraq by examining three ways to utilize media to present a greater light for US involvement in Iraq. Namely, countering the ethnocentric ideology of democracy with a like-mindedness attitude, the disbandment of Guantanamo Bay detention camps, and getting better at spreading the word. Certainly democracy has its place in the world but perception can be reality and the reality is that US adversaries use the term democracy to their favor. This section also talked about how Guantanamo Bay has become a hindrance to getting a good message out which in turn lead to this author third means of redefining victory, getting the word out.

CONCLUSION

Since the US invasion of Iraq, there has been considerably press about the legitimacy of the war, the overt or seemingly covert intentions of the US and indeed, whether or not US involvement has made any difference in Iraq. Daily breaking news, Internet blogs and media propaganda has caused wavering public support of the US at home and to a greater extent that of the neighboring Iraqi Muslim communities. When Donald Rumsfeld made his address to the Senate that the US was losing the media war in Iraq, he was not indicating a failure per se of the military campaign and its multiple lines of operation on the Iraqi front. No, Secretary Rumsfeld, in his typical no-nonsense manner, was clearly articulating that in spite of US status in the world, the adversary, one less capable, was winning the greater battle...the hearts and minds of the people. On one side, the adversary was using media to demoralize the US and its coalition partners by quickly advertising or televising the deaths of US military or civilian deaths caused by the supposedly superior precision-guided bombs. On the other side, the publicized rhetoric of the adversary used the very foundation of US involvement, democracy, as a tool to galvanize the Muslim community...it is us against them. This monograph used Secretary Rumsfeld statement as the foundation for its research and in determining why, stated who was responsible for the losing the media war. Not the military men and women who bravely go forth and serve their country and humanity but rather, as this author thesis stated, it is the incorrect application of a ideology that means different things to different people, the failure of a stop-gap judicial system in the form of the Guantanamo detention camp and the realization that the US is failing to get the right word out. The solutions offered while simple are practical and pragmatic and what this author believes is the path to redefining victory in Iraq.

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