

What If? An Alternative History of the War since 9/11

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Introduction

The essence of this speech is very simple.

Six years after the attack of 9/11/2001 we are having the wrong debate about the wrong report.

The heart of our problem is in attitude. Wars require bold efforts and undertaking real risks. We must recognize the requirements for change and we must adopt a spirit that it is better to make mistakes of commission and then fix them than it is to avoid achievement by avoiding failure.

Six years after the attack of 9/11/2001, the difference between the debate we ought to be having and the debate we are having is staggering.

The gap between where we are and where we should be is so large that it seems almost impossible to explain why the Petraeus Report, while important, will be a wholly inadequate explanation as to what is required to defeat our enemies and secure America and her allies.

Instead it seems more effective to describe this dramatic gap today by imagining how things might have turned out differently had we made different decisions for our national security starting the night of September 11, 2001. What if we had begun a great national dialogue about the nature of our enemies, the seriousness of their intent, the scale of their capabilities, and the requirements of victory over them? What might then have happened?

We must think about alternative pasts if we are to create a more successful future.

America is currently trapped between those who advocate “staying the course” and those who would legislate surrender and defeat for America.

America needs a more realistic and more powerful solution to the challenges of our enemies.

This rethinking of the last six years is designed to make it easier to be creative about the next six years.

The issuance of the Petraeus Report is the right time to challenge both the stay the course policies and the legislate defeat policies.

The Petraeus Report in Context of Winning the Larger War against the Irreconcilable Wing of Islam

Before we assess an alternative past, it is vital to place the Petraeus Report in its correct context. It is a campaign report about a specific campaign. Iraq is a campaign in a larger war just as Afghanistan is a campaign in a larger war.

The Petraeus Report is an important report. The debate over it will be an important debate.

Yet, this is not a report on “the war”. We are not having a debate about “the war”.

Imagine trying to explain the horrific casualties at Gettysburg without the context of the larger civil war still to be won as Lincoln so eloquently did in less than three hundred words, delivered at Gettysburg four months after that fateful battle.

Imagine trying to explain horror of Guadalcanal or our humiliating defeat at Kasserine Pass without the context of the larger world war still to be won.

Imagine trying to explain why President Reagan’s speech in front of the Berlin Wall mattered without understanding that there was a Cold War and the Soviet Union was a mortal threat to freedom.

Yet, that absence of context and framework is exactly where the American political and news media system are now operating.

Beyond the Petraeus Report: the Report on the Larger War

Beyond the Petraeus Report, we need a report on the larger war with the Irreconcilable Wing of Islam. This enemy is irreconcilable with the modern civilized world because its values would block any woman from being in this room, having a job, voting, being educated. It is irreconcilable because it cannot tolerate other religions or other life styles. It represents what some have called an Islamo-fascist approach to imposing its views on others and as such it is a mortal threat to our way of life, to freedom, and to the rule of law.

The Irreconcilable Wing of Islam has emerged as an extremist movement against not only non-Muslims but also against moderate Muslims who wish both to preserve their faith and to be a part of the modern world. This extremism has led to civil war in Algeria killing more than 100,000 Muslims. It has led to continuing violence in Lebanon, more than 2,000 killed in Thailand, the Philippines and a number of other places. It has

mobilized forces outside traditional trouble spots including recently Germany, Denmark and Great Britain. And while the vast majority of Muslims wish to be a part of the civilized world and do not want the extremists in the Irreconcilable Wing of Islam to win, the enemy's global reach, including in places like Paraguay and Venezuela, is greater than anyone might have expected a decade ago.

In a recent review of Norman Podhoretz's *World War IV*, William Buckley reflects on a section of the book that quotes Middle East expert Daniel Pipes. First, Pipes is quoted asking whether the challenge from the Irreconcilable Wing of Islam is really that great: "Islamists have nothing like the military machine the Axis deployed in World War Two, nor the Soviet Union during the Cold War. What do the Islamists have to compare with the Wehrmacht or the Red Army? The SS or Spetznaz? The Gestapo or the KGB? Or, for that matter, to Auschwitz or the Gulag?"

Pipes goes on to answer his own question:

The Islamists have:

- *A potential access to weapons of mass destruction that could devastate Western life.*
- *A religious appeal that provides deeper resonance and greater staying power than the artificial ideologies of fascism or communism.*
- *An impressively conceptualized, funded and organized institutional machinery that successfully builds credibility, goodwill and electoral success.*
- *An ideology capable of appealing to Muslims of every size and shape, from Lumpenproletariat to privileged, from illiterates to Ph.D.s, from the well-adjusted to psychopaths, from Yemenis to Canadians.*
- *A huge number of committed cadres. If Islamists constitute 10 percent to 15 percent of the Muslim population worldwide, they number some 125 million to 200 million persons, or a far greater total than all the fascists and communists, combined, who ever lived.*

Buckley concludes his book review this way: "Those critics who insist that it is only a small war-party faction of the Islamists that we have to fear might have been asked a generation ago if it was not merely a small number of Germans and Russians we were properly exercised about. Sixty million people were dead after that misreckoning."

Tom Friedman in a recent column captured the Muslim on Muslim nature of much of this threat: 'When I asked one of them, Omar Nassif, 32, why he had gone from shooting at Americans to working with them, he said, "I saw an Al Qaeda man behead an 8-year-old

girl with my own eyes ... We want American support because we fought the most vicious organization in the world here.”

In describing the threat posed by the Irreconcilable Wing of Islam, we don't need to rely on journalists. We can also quote the public speeches of the CIA Director.

Here is what CIA Director General Michael V. Hayden said just this past Friday, September 7, before the Council on Foreign Relations on his own judgment of the strategic threats facing the United States:

First, our analysts assess with high confidence that al-Qa'ida's central leadership is planning high-impact plots against the US homeland.

Second, they assess—also with high confidence—that al-Qa'ida has protected or regenerated key elements of its homeland attack capability. That means safe haven in the tribal areas of Pakistan, operational lieutenants, and a top leadership engaged in planning. Al-Qa'ida's success with the remaining element—planting operatives in this country—is less certain.

Third, we assess—again, with high confidence—that al-Qa'ida is focusing on targets that would produce mass casualties, dramatic destruction, and significant economic aftershocks.

This was General Hayden's assessment of the threats just three days ago.

In the same speech, General Hayden summarizes the fight at hand with these words:

We who study and target the enemy see a danger more real than anything our citizens at home have confronted since our Civil War....

This war is different. In a very real sense, anybody who lives or works in a major city is just as much a potential target as the victims of 9/11, or the London subway bombings, or the strikes in Madrid, or any of the other operations we've seen in Morocco, Jordan, Indonesia, Algeria, Pakistan, Kenya, and elsewhere.

Our very survival as a free people is challenged by a large threat and defeating it on a worldwide basis is inherently going to involve a large effort. That is why Norman Podhoretz has called it World War Four to compare its scale with World Wars One and Two and with the 44 year long Cold War which he calls World War Three.

It is why the Director of the Central Intelligence Agency General Hayden is making public speeches to make clear the very real and dangerous threats we face.

We need a debate about a vision of victory for the larger war in which we are engaged and the strategies needed to achieve that vision.

We need a debate about the genuine risks to America of losing cities to nuclear attack or losing millions of Americans to engineered biological attacks.

We need a calm reasoned dialogue about the genuine possibility of a second Holocaust if the Iranians get nuclear weapons and use them against Tel Aviv, Haifa, and Jerusalem.

We need a clear analysis of the potential for a second Holocaust if the Syrians were to use all the missiles with chemical and biological warheads they currently have targeted on Israel or if they were to transfer those missiles to Hezbollah and Hamas.

It makes no sense to have a Holocaust Museum in Washington and yet have no honest assessment of the threat of a 21st century Holocaust.

We also need an honest, factual, and realistic examination of the progress or lack of progress we are making in the larger war.

Hamas has won an enormous victory in Gaza and is busy preparing that region as a center of terrorism.

Hezbollah has won a substantial victory in South Lebanon, as illustrated by a museum that they have built in the Dahieh district south of Beirut celebrating their achievement and by their constant public promise that next time they will go further.

Iran continues to talk while funding terrorism, sustaining the Revolutionary Guards as a state terrorist organization, supplying weapons, training and financing to kill Americans in Iraq, building a domestic arms industry, and developing nuclear capability.

Syria continues to support terrorism, serve as a transshipment point for terrorists going into Iraq to kill Americans, house anti-freedom Iraqi refugees who lead and fund efforts from their Syrian sanctuary, and interfere in Lebanese affairs while helping sustain and arm Hezbollah.

In Afghanistan, the drug growing and processing industry is bigger than ever and the illegal economy may be a third or more of the total economy of the country. The Taliban continues to have a sanctuary in the Waziristan region of Northwest Pakistan and there is substantial instability in Pakistan.

In the Philippines, there continues to be a guerrilla war against the government and the guerrillas seem to be growing more sophisticated.

In Great Britain, eight terrorists have been charged with plotting bombing attacks, including six medical doctors employed by the British National Health Service. The estimates of terrorist sympathizers and potential sympathizers are far greater than the resources being applied to monitor them.

In the United States, we have recently arrested six would-be terrorists in New Jersey (three of whom had been in the United States illegally for 23 years) and four would be terrorists have been charged with plotting to blow up the jet fuel system at JFK international airport on Long Island.

Around the world and in the United States the spread of a militant extremist radical version of Islam with Saudi money continues unabated.

On the internet, on television, in extremist Mosques, and in schools (including in some countries, in the public, so-called 'secular schools') the advocacy of jihad, martyrdom, suicide bombing and violence against modern civilization continues to spread.

Iraq as One Campaign in the Larger War

Iraq has to be analyzed as only one campaign in this larger war. It is a very important campaign and it deserves thorough consideration but it should not be confused with the larger war.

As to Iraq, General Petraeus is as good an expert on counterinsurgency as America has produced in our lifetime.

The American team in Iraq has done an extraordinary job in the last few months in finally establishing the right approach and implementing the right tactics.

The results are impressive and worthy of our continued support.

Furthermore, on both moral and practical grounds it would be extraordinarily destructive for the American Congress to impose surrender and defeat on the United States by legislation which the enemy has been unable to impose by combat against our armed forces.

No one should be under any illusions about the simple test for America in Iraq.

At the end of the day are free people celebrating because the American people have sustained freedom against evil. Or, are violent, evil enemies of freedom celebrating because the Americans have been defeated?

Life would be easier if there was a more modulated answer. There is not.

In war there are winners and losers. If the American people will sustain this effort we will ultimately win. If the American politicians decide to legislate defeat, America will be defeated.

Given that choice, we must support General Petraeus. Furthermore, the Pentagon, the State Department, the intelligence community, and the Office of Management and Budget should be instructed to help him win the campaign in Iraq by meeting his needs rather than weakening him through slow bureaucracy, the imposition of lesser priorities, and the restriction of resources.

However, supporting General Petraeus in Iraq is not enough to win the larger war and it is to winning the larger war that this speech is dedicated.

The 1939-40 “Phoney War” and Its Lessons for America and Her Allies Today

One of the inspirations for this focus on the larger war is Lynne Olson’s new book *Troublesome Young Men: The Rebels Who Brought Churchill to Power and Helped Save England*. It is a fine work and I am delighted she will be speaking here at AEI later today. I urge all of you to attend her speech and read her book.

Olson makes the point that the Chamberlain Government sincerely sought first to avoid war with Hitler and then when war became unavoidable it sought to fight it with the fewest changes and within the least risky framework. This minimum risk, minimum effort strategy of Chamberlain came to be known as “the phoney war”. Tragically for the cause of freedom, all the “phoneyess” was on the allied side. There was no “phoney war” on the Nazi side.

All the reasonableness and caution of the Chamberlain government simply gave Hitler the time to energetically and aggressively organize and prepare for a series of attacks which defeated Poland, Denmark, Norway, Belgium, Luxemburg, Holland, France and came close to defeating Great Britain even under Churchill’s new and vigorous leadership.

Volume Six of Martin Gilbert’s biography of Winston Churchill gives an even more devastating and detailed picture of the “phoney war.” For months the British government vacillated and debated and planned but did nothing. The eight months from the beginning of war in September 1939 to the great German offensive of May 1940 are a period of lost energy and lost opportunity as the democracies talked while the Germans prepared.

This picture of bureaucratic timidity, establishment uncertainty, and political confusion contrasted sharply with three great examples of clear, focused, and vigorous leadership which I have been studying over the last six years.

Reagan, Lincoln, Roosevelt and The American Way of Winning Wars

President Reagan and Defining Victory

First, President Reagan. A number of books have recently been written about President Reagan’s clear vision of victory in the Cold War. The remarkable turnaround from the

confusion of 1980 under President Jimmy Carter to the clarity, drive, and focus of President Reagan in January 1981 is one of the most decisive examples of strategic leadership in American history. From stating that his vision of the Cold War was “we win, they lose” to his “evil empire” speech defining the unacceptability of the Soviet system to his grand call in Berlin “Mr. Gorbachev tear down this wall” President Reagan offered a continuing explanation of the conflict between freedom and tyranny.

President Bush has at times matched President Reagan in his eloquence and vividness of describing an axis of evil, the threats of terrorism, the evils that our opponents do. The difference has come in planning, preparation, and implementation. The Reagan team understood that this was a worldwide contest and that many different tools had to be used. The informal alliance of the Pope, the Prime Minister and the President (as John O’Sullivan has written brilliantly) led to the unraveling of communist dictatorship in Poland. Communications campaigns led to the defeat of Soviet financed so-called ‘peace’ movements in Europe, which were in reality appeasement movements. The steady support for anti-Soviet guerillas in Afghanistan and Nicaragua led to the end of the Soviet offensives of the 1970s. The CIA of Bill Casey under Reagan’s leadership was amazingly different from the CIA of Stansfield Turner under Carter’s leadership. The military investments of the Reagan Administration when combined with a very strict regime of blocking technology transfer led to the rapid obsolescence of Soviet military modernization. The deliberate lowering of the price of oil bankrupted the Soviet Union of hard currency.

All these efforts formed an integrated grand strategic assault on the viability of the Soviet dictatorship. From a seeming American decline in 1980, the Reagan strategies in alliance with Prime Minister Thatcher had by 1989 led to the fall of the Berlin Wall and by 1991 to the disappearance of the Soviet Union altogether.

There are few better examples of the power of grand strategy to defeat evil and advance freedom.

President Lincoln and Adapting Constantly to Win

Second, President Lincoln. Researching and writing three novels about the Civil War led to an immersion in Lincoln’s leadership and especially in his ability to focus on what was necessary and to communicate so effectively that the American people were prepared to support our bloodiest and most difficult war even during periods of enormous frustration and significant failure and even with over 620,000 dead. It also led to a better understanding of how Lincoln changed Generals and how he grew in wartime leadership from his initial appeal for 75,000 volunteers for 90 days to the scale of effort needed to win despite brilliant resistance by General Lee and his forces.

One of the keys to Lincoln’s leadership was his willingness and determination to learn. The Lincoln of 1861 was untutored in the management of war and it showed in a series of mistakes up through 1863. It took Lincoln eight changes in the East to finally find Grant

but he kept changing until he got the right team in place. The Lincoln of 1865 is an extraordinarily wise and knowledgeable war leader in full command of the system.

President Roosevelt and the Mobilization of the American People for Victory over Three Enemies Simultaneously

Third, President Roosevelt. More recently, the researching and writing of the novel *Pearl Harbor* and its sequel (which will come out next year) led to an immersion in President Franklin Delano Roosevelt's continuous efforts to convince the American people and their elected representatives in Congress that we had to have a massive program of preparedness before Pearl Harbor and an enormous program of forcing victory against three enemies simultaneously after Pearl Harbor (Germany, Japan, and Italy). His clarity of strategic purpose, ruthless management of the system and vision of unconditional victory are models of convincing a free people to bring their energies to bear on winning a better future by defeating an evil opponent.

As an example of that ruthless management, General Marshall retired 55 general officers and more than 500 colonels before Pearl Harbor thus clearing the way for younger energetic leaders like Eisenhower, who went from lieutenant colonel to three star general in 18 months because the less capable and the tired and timid had been retired. As an example of scale, remember that the United States built a two ocean navy, built over 299,000 aircraft, built over 88,000 tanks, mobilized 15,500,000 men and women in uniform, built the most expensive project of the war, the B-29, and used it to deliver the second most expensive project of the war, the Atomic Bomb. Because of the pre-Pearl Harbor preparedness campaign, the United States won the Second World War in three years and eight months—from December 7, 1941 to August 14, 1945.

American leaders during these three experiences -- the Civil War, World War Two, and the final campaign to win the Cold War -- all had common characteristics:

1. All had a clear definition of and focus on victory.
2. All understood the threat and were willing to describe the unacceptability of surrender and defeat and in so doing sustained the support of the American people.
3. All mobilized the resources of the American nation for victory.
4. All created new institutions and replaced old ones until victory was achieved.
5. All insisted on metrics of achievement and the replacement of personnel until they found the right people who could achieve the goals necessary for ultimate victory.

In short, they led based on the classic definition of sound strategy, which clearly defines ends and provides the means to achieve national objectives.

What If? Explaining the Larger War with the Irreconcilable Wing of Islam in a Novel Way

Let us build upon this historic pattern of American success and now ask what a realistic alternative history of the war might look like now, six years after 9/11. This alternative history is offered to dramatize what we as a nation need to do in the years ahead. And in so doing, see if we can discover a better path to ensure a safer America.

So let us look back six years. Let us engage in an exercise and imagine that we, as a nation, stunned by the bitter blows of the day before, now awake the day after and embark upon a different course of action.

Let's begin on September 12, 2001.

FIRST: Imagine that on the morning of September 12, 2001, the shocked national political leadership in both parties had understood the necessity to take a deep, long look at the Irreconcilable Wing of Islam.

SECOND: Imagine that the President and Congressional leaders on a bipartisan basis had mandated a series of public hearings on the scale of the radical Wahhabist financing from sources in Saudi Arabia, the degree of Iranian and Syrian support for terrorism, the various propagandizing and recruiting efforts that were underway to attract terrorists at a rate faster than we could kill or imprison them.

THIRD: Imagine that on September 12, 2001 the news media had begun a series of informative, in-depth explorations of the Iranian war against America (as Mark Bowden described it in *Guests of the Ayatollah*, his book about the 1979-80 hostage crisis,) and then went on to examine the goals of the various irreconcilable groups and the religious fervor with which they are willing to die for their beliefs. The Iranian dictatorship had been at war with America for 22 years before 9/11. The Iranian revolutionaries knew this and acted on it but we denied it and hid from it. But after 9/11, this explicit Iranian violence against Americans began to be outlined in the media and linked together into on continuous story of Iranian attacks and the deliberate self deception of the American elites.

FOURTH: Imagine that the great bureaucracies of national security and homeland security had immediately begun to place defeating the enemy above protecting their normal routine systems.

FIFTH: Imagine that the Office of Management and Budget had been instructed to set aside its peacetime formulas and attitudes and operate within a war footing to facilitate the mobilization and build up necessary to both win the war with the Irreconcilable Wing of Islam and preserve America's military and intelligence capabilities on other fronts.

Thinking Anew for Victory: Key Decisions of An Alternative History Since 9/11

With this starting context, an alternative history might well have played out with the following key decisions being taken and systematically implemented.

Decision No. 1 – Defining the Enemy and Understanding the Threat

First, in the days immediately after 9/11, senior political leaders decided that since the American people are the center of gravity in any American war an all out effort would have to be made to educate them about the dangers (nuclear and biological attacks, large scale civilian attacks) and the motivating forces behind those dangers.

As a result, the history of terrorism and violence in Lebanon, Algeria and against Israel became major topics for congressional hearings, for news media specials and for textbooks for high school and college. There were a series of Hollywood films and made for television films explaining the enemy and the scale of hatred and planning for violence against civilians. The Algerian experience of 100,000 killed in the 1990s was especially studied for its lessons about Muslim versus Muslim violence, which sharply curtailed the claims of those who typically blamed Israel as so many American and European elites tended to do in the 1990s. The Syrian and Iranian involvement in terrorism in Lebanon was highlighted to emphasize the duration of attacks on Americans going back to 1979 and the ruthless intervention against efforts to create democracy.

Our enemies' religious-political motivation leading to the repression of women, the killing of homosexuals, the violent repression of religious liberty, the elimination of free speech and a free press, and the replacement of a just civil law with unjust religious law were all emphatically placed before the American public. A special effort was made to reach out to the advocacy groups of the Left for whom in many ways these threats were the most intense.

In addition, a regular system of public information modeled on the World War Two efforts was established and was complemented by a weekly briefing for every member of Congress that kept them informed on the activities of our enemies and the progress or lack thereof of our efforts. These reports included ongoing estimates of propaganda and financial support coming from so-called allies and active efforts of dictatorships to sustain terrorism. This system of public information was tied directly to a rebirth of Public Diplomacy as a major instrument of American effort.

Every effort was made to engage the public, the news media, and the Congress in a broad bipartisan coalition for protecting America and winning the war.

Decision No. 2 - Establishing an Effective Homeland Defense

Second, after 9/11, since the defense of America is the top priority, a serious and effective Department of Homeland Security was immediately established. The department was organized to address three major functions: protecting the border,

preparing to recover from a nuclear event, and preparing for an engineered biological attack.

Protecting the Border

In the weeks just following 9/11, it was decided that we had an absolute national security requirement to secure our borders and know every person who was crossing our borders and coastline. Shortly thereafter, a capital investment plan was approved to develop high technology solutions to be implemented within two years (by December 2003). A component of serious anti-terrorist activities involves knowing who has already crossed the border and so a robust employer verification and identity verification program was also established using biometrics and establishing a requirement for law enforcement at every level of state and local government to help.

Responding to a Nuclear Event

Responding to a nuclear event and recovering from that event is the greatest challenge facing Homeland Security. The minimum requirement has to be the ability to respond simultaneously the same day to three nuclear events in three different cities around the country. To meet that requirement, the new Homeland Security Department moved immediately to meet the needs of local first responders at a speed reminiscent of Civil War and World War Two activities. The National Guard was expanded to include military police, mobile hospital and engineer elements appropriate to meet the three city requirement without cutting into the National Guard units designated for overseas use.

Protecting Against a Biological Attack

The anthrax attack in the fall of 2001 dramatically emphasized that the second greatest danger facing the country was an engineered biological attack. Because an engineered biological attack could have an incubation period and the carriers could spread unknowingly, its ultimate effect could actually be greater paralysis of the society and economy than from a nuclear attack. Such weapons are not easy to acquire but the effort has a much smaller footprint than nuclear weapons and the casualty rate could be as great as or greater than a nuclear attack. Prior to 9/11, these dangers of biological attack were consistently underestimated even though the numbers of doctors who have been involved in terrorist organizations had suggested that a significant number of our enemies possess the requisite knowledge to develop biological weapons.

One of the key steps after 9/11 was to establish a federal “National Security Electronic Health Record” program designed to give every American an electronic health record within four years (by January 2006). One positive side effect of this was that after Hurricane Katrina in 2005 the loss of thousands of paper medical records did not lead to chaos, as the new program ensured that all of the affected individuals had continuity in their health records

The federal government also quickly established a Reserve Medical Corps which drew on the 160,000 retired physicians, 350,000 retired nurses, and 40,000 retired dentists as a core of professionals that can be quickly mobilized in a crisis. Every pharmacy in the country was wired into a crisis network as the most efficient method of distributing needed medicines in a biological or nuclear attack and retired pharmacists were identified for emergency service. Finally, every active and retired veterinarian was identified and every veterinary surgical center was identified. In a real crisis, where a nuclear event had eliminated center city hospitals, the suburban veterinarian clinics were designated to be a primary replacement capacity for providing help to the victims.

With intense effort by the Department of Health and Human Services in collaboration with the department of Homeland Security this new medical response system made America dramatically safer and had the side effect of substantially improving healthcare in America. Just as the Eisenhower National Security Interstate Highway System, (built to evacuate cities facing nuclear attack) had created a system of transportation that revolutionized American life so the quality of information available through the National Security Electronic Health record system saved hundreds of thousands of lives and billions of dollars. It more than paid for itself in the first three years in Medicare and Medicaid cost reductions alone.

Since the only way to know if the new systems of defense would work was to practice them, the United States implemented, starting in 2002, highly publicized simulations of two nuclear and one biological attack each year. The public exercises had two powerful results. First, they reminded the American people, the news media, and the Congress every year about just how disastrous a terrorist attack with nuclear or biological weapons would be. The terms weapons of mass destruction and weapons of mass murder had new meaning when actually applied to the exercises that took place in Seattle, San Francisco, and Boston. Second, the process of rigorous exercises rapidly exposed many weaknesses in the system of response, recovery, and reconstruction which were systematically addressed and fixed. They also carried home the lesson that every American needs to be prepared.

By 2005, the homeland security system was ready for Katrina. The result was a dramatically smaller problem than might have occurred with an incompetent Department of Homeland Security or a complacent Corps of Engineers or a hopelessly mismanaged Federal Emergency Management Administration

Decision No. 3 -- Mobilizing Public Opinion At Home and Abroad

Third, as the President prepared for his historic September 20, 2001 speech to a joint session of Congress, it was decided that since a sound effort to defeat the terrorists would have to begin with the support of allies and world opinion, great effort was going to have to be made to mobilize and sustain world opinion and to work closely with every government willing to fight to sustain civilization and the rule of law. The lessons of

World War Two and the Cold War in developing both overt and covert Public Diplomacy were applied to winning this new struggle.

The following actions resulted from this key value judgment.

1. The President called for a meeting of the heads of state willing to oppose terrorism. Relying on the sympathy felt worldwide for the United States after the 9/11 attacks The President called for a new Geneva Convention against terrorism. This new convention emphasized the dangers of nuclear and biological weapons, the unacceptability of attacks on civilians and the unacceptability of vicious and barbaric actions (e.g. sawing off peoples' heads on television). Under this new Convention on Civilization, the Rule of Law and the Illegitimacy of Terrorism the advocating of terrorism and of suicide bombing was outlawed. This went far beyond acts of terrorism. This Convention emphasized the advocacy, preparation, supporting, planning, and actions would be treated with equal severity and were equally unacceptable. And that combatants who chose to live and work among civilian populations, essentially in disguise, should be dealt within in the same framework as spies during wartime. This Convention was not negotiated within the United Nations framework since the membership of terrorist states and their routine election to human rights commissions had made the United Nations a travesty when it came to protecting civilization and the rule of law. The United Nations was put on the defensive by the United States introducing resolutions condemning the repression of women and the repression of religion. The United States began to systematically build a coalition of the threatened who were determined to defeat terrorism.
2. Since maintaining popular support around the world was going to be a major challenge, a far greater effort was developed to have both a people to people campaign and a systematic official campaign involving a public-private partnership larger than anything seen since World War Two. Millions of Americans of foreign birth were recruited to help communicate with their native lands in their own language. The White House, recognizing the inability of the State Department to manage a program on this scale and with this intensity, established a new Office of Global Communications and recruited temporary staff from the ethnic communities and the media communities. In order to achieve this level of talent and energy, the new Global Communication Office had to be established completely outside normal federal employment rules and the World War Two rules were resurrected and adopted by Congress in response to the demand for effectiveness fueled in part by public awareness of the scale of the threat we were living under.
3. Since maintaining popular support worldwide was essential to the successful prosecution of the war, a new visa system was designed with a dual purpose. It had to protect America and it had to be easy and accessible for people who were pro-American. American Express, Visa, Master Card, Microsoft, Google and IBM were invited in to work with the nation's research universities, tourism agencies, airlines, and financial communities to create a Partnership for a Secure and Friendly America.

The new visa system provided very high levels of security combined with ease of use and convenience for the people America wanted to have come here.

4. Since a major part of winning the war against the Irreconcilable Wing of Islam was going to involve modernizing and strengthening the forces of moderation in Islam a substantial effort was made to recruit the American Muslim community to help with direct outreach and with economic development across the Middle East. This people to people approach (reminiscent of an Eisenhower Program) created much deeper waves of information and activity than any government bureaucracy could have achieved. The vast reconcilable majority of Muslims was strengthened, mobilized and assisted in its struggle with the militant minority irreconcilable wing.
5. In this context of modernity and civilization versus medievalism and repression, the United States directly challenged Saudi Arabia both on its repression of all other religions (clearly a violation of the United Nations Charter) and on its repression of women. The Saudis were also put on notice that their position as oil supplier would not protect them if money continued to flow to terrorists and to advocates of terror from Saudi citizens. While the Saudis had been conflicted between a governmental wing that seeks to collaborate with us and a clerical class that seeks to sustain the Irreconcilable Wing of Islam, the United States decided to make the choice very clear to the Saudi government. Either the United States would exist within Saudi rules that turned a blind eye to terrorist financing in which case we would ultimately lose the war or the Saudis would learn to exist within the rules of the modern world and control the terrorist financing in which case we would win the war. This decision also led directly to a national energy strategy which will be described later. Propaganda control is vital to winning this war and members of the Saudi clerical class were the leading financiers of propaganda against the rule of law and against the civilized world.

Decision No. 4 -- A Military Buildup and Dramatic Replacement of Outdated Institutions and Bureaucratic Processes

Fourth, within the revised framework of strategic communications, defense and diplomacy, a major revolution in the national security capabilities of the United States was undertaken post 9/11. The national security system had been grossly under funded in the 1990s. The intelligence community had been particularly weakened and was suffering from a generation of abuse going back to the Pike and Church Committees. The military itself was preparing for the wrong wars using the wrong doctrine. The State Department had been left under funded, under staffed, under trained and under supervised.

The requirements for change to prosecute a global war were recognized as immense. In the tradition of Lincoln and FDR, there was a fundamental change in the mentality of government management. The changes to carry out the new requirements were

undertaken ruthlessly and with a spirit that it was better to make mistakes of commission and then fix them than it was to avoid achievement by avoiding failure.

1. The President established A War Cabinet with himself as Chair. Following the Churchillian model, the President understood that in a modern system the Commander in Chief had to actually command and drive the machinery if real change was going to occur. This War Cabinet met weekly -- and in a crisis daily or more often -- under the direct leadership of the President. It was routinely expanded to include any agency or Department which was relevant to solving a problem. It established a speed of decision and responsibility for implementation unlike anything seen in modern American government. Like Lincoln and FDR, the Commander in Chief took personal charge of the fight.
2. The President established a system of metrics based on the Mayor Giuliani achievement system that dramatically reduced crime in New York. An Office of Metrics was established in the White House and many of Giuliani's best practitioners of planning and implementation were brought in to help the federal government move to a new system of accountability, focus, and constant change. Using an evidence based model of leadership Giuliani had established, a policing system which reduced crime in New York City by 75% between 1994 and 2006. This model enables senior leaders to define what matters, monitor what is happening, and change the system until it meets the goals. This new system allowed the National Security Council to shift from an ineffective, slow and unreliable interagency process to a new accountable, transparent and highly responsive integrated system which brought all the departments together into an integrated implementation structure and pattern. The President as Commander in Chief reviewed metrics in the War Cabinet setting every week and made changes accordingly.
3. Every time common sense solutions could not be applied because of existing federal regulations, the President issued waivers in a timely manner and clearly communicated to Congress and America the reasoning behind such waivers. The goal was to establish a tempo of real change and real achievement. Anyone who longed for the slow old days was urged to retire or find a new career. Anyone who was incapable of achieving results in the new tempo environment was relieved of duty. There was no confusion. After 9/11, the U.S. was at war and the entire federal government moved to a wartime posture and adopted a wartime urgency.
4. Every time something failed to work for systemic legal reasons, the President sent a report to Congress requesting changes in law based on national security and homeland security requirements. The pressure for change in personnel, procurement and other laws became unending. An advisory committee on Federal Transformation chaired by Fred Smith of FEDEX and involving highly effective CEOs from major American companies such as UPS, IBM, GE, and other high tempo, high productivity companies advised the President and educated the Congress about standards of management excellence in meeting the new wartime requirements. The World War

Two rules for dollar year volunteers was reinstated and first rate entrepreneurs, executives, and celebrities flooded into government to help defend America.

5. The President established an informal bipartisan advisory committee from the Congress which he met with every two weeks. This was very effective in beginning to establish a human bond which enabled the President to get far more out of Congress with far less partisanship than he could have gotten otherwise. In addition, the President soon discovered that members of the Congressional advisory group would bring him bad news and dissenting information which was very hard to get through official channels. This vital information allowed the President and his team to continuously address problems in wartime management of the federal government.
6. The National Security Budget for defense and intelligence was set at 5% of Gross Domestic Product. While this level of defense funding was arbitrary, it was lower than at any time during the Cold War and represented a smaller increase in overall defense spending than in any previous major war. By comparison in 1949 under President Truman the United States had spent 7.1% of its GDP on national security even though we were at peace. In 1955, under President Eisenhower we spent 11.4% of our GDP on national security even though we were at peace. In 1963, we spent 9.8% of our GDP even though we were at peace. In the historic context, a 5% of GDP national security budget was very modest and the minimum that could be sustained without major risk. For 2002, this represented a budget of \$525 billion compared with the \$343 billion which had been originally projected.

The extra \$181.6 billion went into a variety of major efforts:

- Investing in the capital equipment which the previous administration had starved for a decade;
- Funding the buildup of the Homeland Security components of the National Guard while modernizing the overseas contingents of the Guard and Reserve simultaneously;
- Expanding the Army and the Marine Corps substantially at a time when patriotic response to the attacks of 9/11 led to a large number of young Americans who wanted to serve their country;
- Building on that initial surge of enthusiasm with an educate and enlist program designed to create a significantly bigger volunteer base for military service;
- Expanding dramatically the Junior ROTC program so every high school in the country which could use one, had personnel and equipment to help grow a generation of trained and disciplined young men and women who would view the military favorably as a possible place of service;

- Creating a pool of linguists from first generation Americans whose language skills proved useful to the military and to intelligence;
- Developing a robust national security oriented system of Islamic and Middle Eastern regional studies comparable to the investment in understanding the Soviet system and in developing a generation of Soviet experts begun in the 1940s and 1950s and sustained throughout the Cold War;
- Investing in the science and technology necessary to sustain American leadership in a world in which China, India, Russia and other countries are increasingly going to have the economic and technological capacity to be competitive or even superior in key fields; and
- Investing in a fundamental overhaul and rebirth of the intelligence community including new ‘ground up’ covert systems capable of operating inside hostile countries and other covert systems capable of undertaking influence operations across the planet.

The decision to go to a modest war time funding of 5% (the smallest wartime budget in American history) enabled the military to avoid all supplemental spending and thus saved enormous time and effort in managing Pentagon spending. In addition, over the five years (2002 through 2006) after the 9/11 attack the national security system had \$627.8 billion more to spend in a rational investment strategy than it would have had under the OMB cheapness strategy and supplemental budgeting strategy that some had advocated.

This enabled the military to prepare for a variety of contingencies in a robust way with timely equipment purchases and no need to rob one area to cover another. It was the American way of waging and paying for war in its most effective manner.

7. Special note has to be made of one wrenching change in the national security system that was achieved, which was intellectually obvious but bureaucratically almost impossible to carry out. The American Army had come out of Viet Nam with a deep emotional, cultural, and organizational bias against counterinsurgency operations. The Army wanted to focus on dominating high technology battlefields against regular opponents. Yet, the lessons of Algeria, Afghanistan, Lebanon, Israel, Somalia, Sri Lanka, the Philippines, and elsewhere were that counter-terrorism in the end was a sophisticated urban form of counterinsurgency. The Israeli failure to create a peaceful solution in 34 years in the west Bank and Gaza (1967 to 2001), when they had overwhelming military power, was a serious warning that the Americans had better rethink their assumptions about how hard this fight was going to be and how difficult it would be to win.

Despite deep objections from the traditional Army and Marines who wanted to retain their focus on high technology regular warfare and the more muted objections of the Special Operations Command who thought they could already accomplish the mission, the President insisted that the highest investment strategy for the United States would be developing a system which would give the American forces the same dominance in urban terrorist campaigns that they had achieved at sea, in the air and in regular land warfare.

The team assigned to begin this program reported back that the scale of American investment required to achieve this same level of superiority would be massive. The President responded that that was precisely the point and that any expectation that we could solve this new counterinsurgency challenge on the cheap was foolish. We had become the dominant military power in other zones because we invested the manpower and the capital to create the systems, doctrines, technology and organizations that could defeat anyone. The Commander in Chief insisted that we now had to learn to do the same in urban terrorist warfare.

This visionary goal of making the world safe from terrorism by defeating terrorists wherever they appeared may have been the biggest breakthrough of the post 9/11 period and the one in which the American government drew best on the lessons of American history. We win by flooding the zone with resources and creative people. This would take time but it would work.

8. The State Department Budget was increased by 50% but off a much smaller base. Prior to 9/11, the State Department was an obsolescent system with inadequate information technology, inadequate training, and inadequate staffing for teamwork across the system. If America was going to lead the world it was going to have to have a high tempo, highly trained, highly capitalized State Department and the personnel of that Department had to be numerous enough to be available for the integrated system, for fellowships outside the Department, for rapid transfer to hot spots and to studying and learning from the constant changes in the global war environment.

The amazing thing was that a fully modernized and integrated State Department was relatively inexpensive by the standards of National Security. There were only 26,456 people on the State Department payroll in 2002. With a war time approach to budgeting, the State Department Budget grew by nearly \$5 billion and personnel by 13,000.

This investment would have been counterproductive if it was simply turned over to the traditional State Department mindset. What made the investment worthwhile was a new commitment to a proactive State Department actively engaged abroad side by side with other National Security organizations and actively integrated at home into a unified system of command, implementation, and accountability. The new resources came with a determination to change the culture of the Department from one that

seeks friendly relations with almost all nations at any cost, to one that is willing to confront others in order to promote American interests and win this war.

Part of the State Department's new assignment was a genuine Marshall Plan-scale effort to transform the poorest areas of the Islamic World and transform them into modern societies. It was recognized that freedom was competing with Iranian and Saudi money and that the social services of Hezbollah and Hamas were among their most potent tools. It was also recognized that countries like Afghanistan could never be modernized without a substantial investment in the rule of law, in information technology, in economic productivity to wean people off of drug production, and in highways to open up the country.

While the war with the Irreconcilable Wing of Islam was the major focus of the government during the six years following 9/11, it was not the only focus. Just as the Civil War led to the Transcontinental Railroad, the Homestead Act, the Land Grant colleges, and the rise of modern American Industry and just as the Second World War made America the most powerful economy in history, so too this period of focus on national security has served a longer range purpose than merely defeating terrorists.

Furthermore, the United States as the leading nation which had sustained the world market and the global trading system for the previous 60 years could not focus its national security attention entirely on defeating the Irreconcilable Wing of Islam. There were still potential competitors in China, Russia and elsewhere who had to be monitored and against whom preparedness was required.

There were two great overlapping realities which had to be addressed in the context of national security and homeland security threats post 9/11. The first involved science and the second involved the development of a new energy strategy.

1. Scientific Advancement. The greatest fact of the next quarter century will be the explosion of scientific knowledge. There will be four to seven times as much new science in the next 25 years (2007 to 2032) as there as in the last 25 years. At least 65% of this new science will come from outside the United States. For the last 165 years America's leadership has been based on the intersection of scientific and technological capability and economic activity. There is a grave chance that within 25 years the United States will have lost its scientific and technological leadership and with it will have gone its long term economic supremacy. The Hart-Rudman Commission recognized this in March 2001 when it warned that the second greatest threat to American national security (after a nuclear attack on an American city probably by a terrorist) was the collapse of math and science education. This report, which had been so prescient about the terrorist threat, led the President to call for a tripling of the National Science Foundation Budget, a dramatic increase in the Defense Department Science budget, and a substantial and bold overhaul of math and science learning in America.

2. A New Energy Strategy. Given the centrality of oil money to Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Iran, and Russia in 2001 and the degree to which we had been financing our own enemies, the President called in November 2001 for a massive and market oriented incentive program to develop alternatives to foreign oil including nuclear power, biofuels, conservation through radical breakthroughs in engines and in weight (note the 787 Dreamliner that Boeing is building), new exploration for oil and natural gas, a crash program for clean coal, and a program to move to a hydrogen economy as rapidly as possible. In fact, as plans were made to construct several new nuclear power plants, it was realized that if the United States used nuclear power to produce electricity to the same extent as the French, then the United States would reduce carbon in the atmosphere by 2,200,000,000 metric tons a year, or 15% better than Kyoto Treaty limits. Recognizing the slow and timid patterns of bureaucracy, the President announced a series of prizes which would enable anyone to compete in producing new technologies and new results. The result was a dramatic period of invention and innovation which rejuvenated the American economy and made us the leading exporter of energy technology on the planet.

Beyond an Alternative History: the National Dialogue We Need Today

This alternative history of the last six years is offered as a thought experiment.

This is an alternative history that could have indeed happened. And how profoundly different would our world be on this September 10, 2007. Sadly, it is not our history.

But nevertheless, we can draw upon this scenario, learn from it, and now take steps to envision a better future.

We still need to focus on the larger war.

We still need a debate about what is really at stake.

We still need a clear understanding of how much our enemies hate us, how hard they are working to defeat us, how serious and real their strategies are, and how much they rejoice when they find ways to attack us.

The key debate for the next year should not be the Petraeus Report and conditions in Iraq.

The key debate for the next year ought to be the larger war, the real enemies, the need for a real strategy, and solutions to the scale of the challenge we face.

There is nothing phoney about the threats we face today.

There is no question that the risks today from weapons of mass destruction are real and immediate if the wrong series of events transpire.

If they could acquire them, our enemies would not hesitate to use nuclear or biological weapons to kill millions of Americans. We fought for survival in the Civil War and World War Two. Our enemies have not yet made the situation dangerous enough so that most people understand that this is a battle of survival.

The question then for our generation is whether we can learn the lessons of history and understand that this is a battle for survival before we lose millions of Americans or whether we reject the lessons of history and only respond after a disaster.

Some will read this speech and ask whether the United States would have invaded Afghanistan and Iraq in this alternative history.

The answer is not immediately obvious but the principles are.

Afghanistan would have been dealt with in a regional context which would have included the Waziristan section of Pakistan. The Taliban would have been given no sanctuary. From day one, there would have been a dramatic effort to build highways and modernize Afghanistan and open it up so farmers could make money without relying on the illicit heroin trade for a living.

In the Middle East, the challenges of Iraq, Iran, Syria and Saudi Arabia would have been dealt with as a regional conflict. There would have been no safe harbors for Iraqi dictators to send their money and their key staffs. There would have been no free passage through Damascus for foreign terrorists to come kill Americans. There would have been no tolerance for Iranian subsidies, training, and weapons to kill Americans. A grand strategy would have built up sufficient economic, political and military power to confront the four nations with a simple choice: change your behavior or have your regimes changed.

In that world, there might have been less violence as weak dictatorships realized they could not survive against the fury of an American people mobilized to action or there could have been more violence as they banded together to defy America openly and claim the right to finance and support terrorism against civilization and against innocent civilians.

The details of the alternative Afghan and Middle Eastern campaigns might make for a good seminar and even a useful book.

Where We Are and Where We Must Go?

While there is much to learn from the past we are faced with the decisions of the present and the possibilities of the future.

This speech was developed to make the case that we need a much bigger context for thinking about those decisions.

We are engaged in a larger war, Podhoretz's World War Four, against a determined set of opponents who have survived six years of fragmented American and allied effort.

We will never win this larger war with limited efforts in one or two countries in isolation.

We must reject legislating American surrender and defeat in Iraq and Afghanistan but we must also reject stay the course as an answer.

We need a new course.

We need an honest national dialogue and a determination to be candid about our opponents, honest about the problems, and passionately committed to the survival of America as a free country in which its citizens can be safe.

We need to make changes today to have our 21st century national security structures ready for the challenges of the 21st century.

We need a blueprint for reform and success. It is not acceptable that we have more impediments to action than enablers for action.

We need a strategy—not a campaign—to rationalize ends and means to achieve our objectives in this long war against our way of life.

The American people are fully capable of understanding the scale of the threat, the dangers to our lives, the threats to our very survival.

The American people showed enormous patience through the great agony of the Civil War.

The American people sustained the Cold War for 44 years until the Soviet Union disappeared.

The problem is not with the American people.

The problem is with our politicians, our news media and our bureaucratic elites.

They are afraid to tell the American people the truth.

They are afraid to explain the scale of the threat and the inevitable scale of the needed response.

Let them trust in Americans.

Let us reason together, face the facts, invent the solutions and mobilize the resources for victory.

With leadership, it will be the terrorists who are defeated and the free people who are triumphant.

With leadership, the free people of the world will form an unshakable alliance against evil and an enormous system in defense of the innocent.

It is in the best American tradition that we have the courage at home that we expect on the battlefield.

There is no shortcut.

This is the road to victory over evil.

This is the road to safety, freedom and prosperity for the civilized world.