

PROSPECTS OF TERROR: AN INQUIRY INTO JIHADI ALTERNATIVES

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Part One

The first campaigns of the Long War are drawing to a close. The Jihadis have lost the opening rounds. What next?

There's an unconscious conviction that what happens next is... nothing. We go back to everyday life, the way things were before all that unpleasantness in lower Manhattan and Washington those long years ago. We shut out the harmful, hateful world once again, go our own way, and forget about jihads, and suicide belts, and dirty bombs, and beheadings, and all the other nightmares that have filled our days since 2001.

Unfortunately, that doesn't seem to be in the cards.

What happened on 9/11 was not an earthquake, over and done quickly, but a long, slow and complete reshuffling of the tectonic plates that comprise human civilization; something comparable to the deaths of empires and the passing of eras. Such events are not over in a day, or a year, or a decade. They take their time. And when it ends at last the world will be a different place, in ways that we now have no way of knowing. But the part we have played in it will, in some shape or form, match our position when it's all over, American or European or Arab, Muslim or Christian or Secular.

We are still amid early days, roughly the days of Midway and Guadalcanal and El Alamein in a previous great struggle. "Not the beginning of the end," as Churchill put it, "but the end of the beginning."

The Jihadis have lost Iraq and Afghanistan. It's true that fighting continues in both countries, but at this point it's effectively theater. It can't be repeated often enough that the type of war we are involved in is as much political as it is military. By any political measure, the Jihadis have been routed. Their only chance of prevailing was to appeal to the Iraqis and Afghans as a viable alternative to elected democratic governments. No such attempt was ever made. Instead, the Jihadis have relentlessly made the Iraqis and Afghans suffer. Their final chance in Iraq lay in derailing the political process last year. They failed at this, and now it is over. Not the violence – there will be car bombs going off in Iraq for years to come, unfortunately. But any opportunity of a Jihadi victory is gone.

(Skepticism on this point is understandable, considering the circumstances. Doubters are encouraged to read any of the myriad [milblogs](#) written by soldiers on the spot, or the recent reportage from Iraq by [Victor Davis Hanson](#) and [Ralph Peters](#). It's a sad comment on the nature of the times that anyone relying solely on the legacy media knows next to nothing of what's going on in Iraq, Afghanistan, or in truth most other areas of the world.)

The Jihadis must change or fade

The Islamists now have a choice of either changing or fading out the way the Anarchists did early in the last century. Like the Jihadis, the Anarchist followers of Bakunin and Galliani, no more than a vague memory today, were an international terror network bent on converting the world to their ideology. They had a good long run, set off a lot of bombs, and killed a lot of people, but they disappeared at last in the 1920s leaving behind only a legend far more romantic in tone that it deserves to be.

It's doubtful that the Jihadis will fade out yet, not after spending over twenty years organizing and laying the groundwork. They may be hurt, but they still have a punch. According to the Defense Department, at least eighteen distinct groups, active throughout the Islamic world, are currently operating under the Al-Qaeda umbrella. Organizing has been detected in Europe and elsewhere. Al-Qaeda has settled into Gaza (and probably the West Bank), and has been detected in Beirut. A lot of activity in a lot of places, in no way emblematic of a movement ready to give up.

But if the Jihadis want to continue, they'll need to adapt a strategy. Not modify the current one – they have never, up to this point, displayed the least signs of ever having one. Osama bin Laden's concept of action appears to have been to make his move, then sit back and wait for Allah to handle the rest. Allah has been disinclined to do any such thing. (In fact, if ObL actually believed that Allah's will is revealed in the course of events, he'd more than likely be devoting the rest of his days to prayer and repentance above all else.)

His followers and disciples have acted on the same principle, carrying out isolated actions in London, Madrid, or Bali, uncoordinated with each other and with a steadily decreasing effect. This randomness has been so striking as to lead some observers to postulate a deep and ornate plan beneath the surface irregularity. But after four years with no sign of such a thing, it's safe to say that a Jihadi uberplan does not exist.

This may change in the future. The intercepted [letter from Ayman al-Zawahiri to Abu Musab al-Zarqawi](#) suggests that deep thinking has been going on concerning the trend of Islamist fortunes. Many of the movement's wild men have been killed off by U.S. and Coalition action. The remainder will be more thoughtful, balanced, and cautious. Some will have had actual military training and experience. These last will be unwilling to take action only out of religious zeal, without a workable goal and a clear method of getting there – a strategy.

Actually, they would need three strategies, since their major targets – the Middle East, Europe, and the U.S. – differ so much as to require separate plans for each.

What follows is not a prediction, or advice, but something of the nature of what Einstein called a thought experiment. An attempt to envision the strategies a Jihadi and his allies might choose for the Long War's next campaign, and what moves should be taken to counteract them.

(I should mention here that you will find little concerning "4th Generation Warfare"—usually abbreviated to "4GW"—or "Asymmetrical Warfare". Both have deteriorated into fads with more noise than content. 4GW has gotten a lot of mileage by claiming, on little evidence, that terrorism is something other than what it actually is. Asymmetrical Warfare addresses a real phenomenon but the term has in recent years been abused to the point of near meaninglessness.

The first campaign has been a complete, if not unqualified success for the West. But this war will continue for a long time, and to assure that the campaigns to come end the same way, we must be well prepared. Because the Islamists certainly will be.

If you know the enemy and know yourself, you need not fear the result of a hundred battles. If you know yourself but not the enemy, for every victory gained you will suffer a defeat. If you know neither the enemy nor yourself, you will succumb in every battle.

—Sun Tzu, *The Art of War*

MidEast – Rollback

The Iraq War has been a serious embarrassment for the Jihadis. They had two goals in Iraq: to hand the U.S. a Vietnam-style humiliation and to prevent the creation of a working government. They have failed at both.

The roots of this failure lie in the fact that terror is not a strategy. That, in a nutshell, is what went wrong with the Islamist effort in Iraq. If killing a lot of people in novel ways was a war-winning plan, the Jihadis would have prevailed. Fortunately, there's a little more to it.

Terror has its uses in the type of campaign being fought in Iraq. But it also has limitations, overlooked for many years, limitations that the Jihadi leadership, in particular Osama bin Laden and Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, have been slow to recognize.

Iraqi insurgents transferred the Palestinian Intifada model of random bombings intact to Iraq (Zarqawi himself is a Palestinian), evidently expecting similar results. But conditions in Iraq were not quite the same. Unlike helpless Israeli civilians, many of the targets in Iraq were able to shoot back, and the resulting losses to no effect forced a switch to the roadside bomb or IED, the Jihadi's single innovation.

The IED reduced Jihadi strategy to one of pure attrition. IEDs were effective at causing casualties but little else. They were not adaptable to any other role besides the booby trap, and despite occasional spectacular hits, were useless at maneuver, engaging the enemy, taking and holding territory, or anything else a military asset is expected to do. (Early attempts at ambushes and holding cities and neighborhoods were dropped after it became apparent that Jihadi forces could not stand up against conventional infantry.) Nor did the insurgents see anything wrong with this. They viewed warfare as a terror operation writ large. And there was no one, evidently, not even Saddam Hussein's ex-army officers, to tell them otherwise.

The Western media, as ignorant of military affairs as the Islamists, played a large role in Jihadi self-deception by covering each explosion as if it were Stalingrad in and of itself. By this time, the insurgents must know better. But it's too late to do anything about it. (The destruction of Samarra's Golden Mosque has all the qualities of a last-ditch desperation move, and may well turn out to be exactly that.) Dependence on the IED deprived the Jihadis of any opportunity of adapting their tactics to the actual situation.

Another drawback of relying on the Palestinian model involved the Jihadis' lack of a political goal. Ouster of the Israelis, by any means necessary, was a goal shared by virtually all Palestinians, creating a level of support that Zarqawi's gangs could only dream of. Al Fatah and Hamas could persuade anyone from fathers of young families to teenage schoolgirls to sacrifice themselves in suicide bombings. In contrast, the Baathists and Al-Queda were operating in an environment where support was a wasting asset, with each attack further eroding the trust of the populace. (Victor Davis Hanson points out that much of the "insurgent" violence occurring in Iraq actually originates with the 100,000 criminals released by Saddam Hussein just prior to his downfall. The fact that Zarqawi allowed Jihadi actions to become identified with criminal activity, to a point where no differentiation was possible, speaks volumes about Jihadi political judgment.)

What, precisely, could the Baathists and Al-Queda offer the Iraqi people? A return to Saddamist dictatorship, or a Taliban-style theocracy? The lack of a viable political program crippled the insurgency. [Mao's theory of people's war](#), which formed the basis of every successful revolutionary movement of the late 20th century, emphasizes a struggle's political aspect over the military. A successful insurgency cultivates and holds on to popular support, as occurred in Algeria and Vietnam. Similar efforts were conspicuous in Iraq by their absence. (The Center for

Combating Terrorism's [report](#) on Al-Queda states that since Zarqawi's aims were limited, he "...does not need to be as careful about whom [he] inflicts casualties upon." Clearly an error, in light of how the war has progressed.)

The US Grand Strategy

The U.S., on the other hand, was carrying out an exercise in grand strategy. What is the distinction between grand strategy and strategy *per se*? Grand strategy is the strategy of the long view, derived from national policy, involving a nation's long-term goals, its ideals, and its place in the world. As defined by B.H. Liddell-Hart, grand strategy involves

the actual direction of military force, as distinct from the policy governing its employment, and combining it with other weapons: economic, political, psychological.

Grand strategy sets the goals; strategy fulfills them. Harry Truman was engaging in grand strategy with the [Truman Doctrine](#), as was Ronald Reagan in his proactive campaign that finally defeated the USSR. George W. Bush's grand strategy for defeating terrorism is of the same order: to remake the region, replacing dictatorships with democracies in order to deprive terrorists of support – in Maoist terms, drying up the water in which the insurgent fish swim.

It is a bold concept, as sweeping as anything that has occurred in the Middle East since the collapse of the Ottomans. Its execution will require years, if not decades – it's no accident that the administration has taken to calling the effort "the Long War."

This political goal set the agenda for the conduct of operations. The Coalition made few of the errors customary for a large army enmeshed in an insurgency – the mistakes of Vietnam were not repeated. Iraqis did not become "gooks"; their customs and culture remained respected. No free-fire zones were set up in the countryside. Apart from isolated imbecilities like Abu Ghraib, there was no brutality. Reprisals were avoided, as were deliberate attacks on civilians.

The Coalition displayed considerable adaptability once it became clear that insurgency was not simply gangs of stay-behinds but a broad and well-organized threat. Critics of the Coalition's performance in Iraq rarely mention that U.S. forces switched with no preparation or warning from a maneuver warfare campaign to a urban combat scenario (known by the unlovely acronym MOUT—Military Operations in Urbanized Terrain), and in truth one of the most difficult – battling an insurrection hiding among a friendly civilian population. The credit for this generally smooth transition goes to outstanding training and excellent commanders – the success of Gen. David Petraeus of the 101st Airborne in pacifying Mosul and that of Col. H.R. McMaster's 3rd Armored Combat Regiment in [Tal Afar](#) will be studied for years to come.

By locking himself into a strategy of attrition, Zarqawi enabled U.S. forces to vary their tactics in a search for what would work in the novel and complex Iraqi environment, an approach that might have been fatal against a nimbler opponent. Failed initiatives (e.g., the useless "[Fallujah Brigade](#)") were dropped, and the final strategy of "[clear and hold](#)", introduced in Fallujah in November 2004, began to pay off in 2005 as the appearance of capable Iraqi troops enabled the Coalition to clean out the Euphrates corridor and its "ratlines" to Syria. The recent "sand berm" technique, in which isolated towns are surrounded by sand walls to prevent both infiltration and escape by Jihadi forces, is an fine example of adapting imaginative tactics to a novel environment.

The Jihadi response was an increase in bomb size and what the Germans call "*Schrecklichkeit*" (frightfulness – literally, "shriekmaking"). The list of potential victims expanded to include children, hospital patients, and members of [funeral processions](#). Men seeking to join the police or military became particular targets, and were [murdered](#) in batches of a hundred at a time.

Losing among the Iraqis

As 2005 progressed, the operations of al-Qaeda in Iraq took on a form chillingly suggestive of the “disorderly” phase of psychopathic breakdown, with killings occurring with no rhyme or reason, as if the sole purpose was to pile the bodies high. When Zarqawi’s allies among the Sunnis began to distance themselves, he struck out at them as well, [assassinating four respected sheiks](#) in Anbar Province, his stronghold, along with others elsewhere, in the process triggering feuds that continue to this day. The bloody *walpurgnacht* culminated in an inexplicable [attack on three Jordanian hotels](#) (one of which was hosting a wedding party), resulting in near-universal obloquy throughout the Middle East. Lost amid all the bloodshed was any sign of the strategy that many onlookers claimed to detect – an attempt to trigger a civil war between Sunni and Shi’ite factions.

Faced with a choice between men who killed children and men who built schools, the Iraqis made the rational decision. The triple votes – two elections and a constitutional referendum – comprising the Purple Revolution were carried out peacefully, on schedule, and with acceptable results. Territory and bases were turned over to the newly-formed Iraqi military, and the police force, long the Achille’s heel of government efforts, began to come together. As 2006 opens, the Coalition’s political program is achieving its goals, as revealed by the response to the Golden Mosque bombing, in which security forces stood firm and Sunnis, Shi’ites, and Kurds joined to halt a potential catastrophic break. (It’s telling that even the thuggish Moqtada al-Sadr, whose militias were responsible for most of the killings that occurred, felt compelled to make overtures to his Sunni foes.) Recent [reports](#) tell of Sunni tribal fighters working with government troops to clean out the more troublesome provinces, which could well mean the end of Al-Queda in Iraq as a viable force. The Coalition effort has not been without errors and setbacks, but has been considerably more successful than critics are willing to grant.

Having failed in their two primary aims, the single Jihadi alternative is to roll back the Coalition program at any cost. What are their chances of bringing this off?

The Jihadis now face a serious dilemma. Their chosen weapon, the bomb, in its various manifestations, is losing effectiveness as Iraqi forces begin taking the lead. In short order, they’ll be killing only Muslims, which is unacceptable to the Iraqi populace. ([Recent polls](#) among Iraqis reveal that up to 94% oppose attacks on Iraqi security forces while 97% oppose attacks on civilians. Opposition to attacks on foreigners is much lower.)

But fight on they must, or give up their dream of a new caliphate, of a return to a ‘purified’ Islam, of a world in which they are dominant. The Zawahiri letter touches gingerly on this problem. (How else would one reproach a man like Zarqawi?)

“You know well,” wrote Zawahiri, “that purity of faith and the correct way of living are not connected necessarily to success in the field unless you take into consideration the reasons and practices which events are guided by.” The rest of Zawahiri’s advice – some of which is excellent – can be summed up by the ancient saying that “tragedy in politics is when what is necessary is no longer possible.”

So what possibilities are left? None open to the Jihadis acting on their own. Like guerillas, terrorists cannot prevail without intervention from an outside force. A coup or an invasion are the sole methods of destroying the budding Iraqi state (apart from the Iraqi’s own errors). Both would require the cooperation of the Jihadis’ local allies, and it’s not at all certain that this would be forthcoming. The Baathist remnants almost certainly have a coup plan worked out and infiltrators in place within the government, army, and police, and Syria and Iran would both be eager to send troops across the border to rescue their lost Islamic brethren.

But Iraq will, for the foreseeable future, remain a protege of the United States, with a U.S.

garrison maintained within the country's borders. Complete withdrawal is a fantasy – at least one base (and probably more) will remain, most likely in Kurdistan, with its America-loving population. Such a base would serve a large number of purposes that can't possibly be covered otherwise – air support and logistics, training of Iraqi forces, an intelligence window on Syria and Iran (and possibly a staging area for covert missions), and not the least, a barrier to prevent interference with the fledgling Iraqi state.

So the Jihadi problem may have no easy solution – which may explain why others in the region have been striking out on their own.

Two of the most surprising developments in the Middle East over the past year may well be responses to American success in Iraq.

Iran

The Iranian electoral system is one that fools a lot of people, almost all of whom are eager to claim that the election of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad “proves” something. In practice, a council of ayatollahs, answerable to no one, selects the candidates, using criteria known only to themselves. In Ahmadinejad's case, they went on to instruct local mullahs to order their flocks to vote for him. That may be an “election” in some sense of the term, but none that we recognize in this hemisphere.

The question remains as to why. The Iranian president is a figurehead, a mask for a theocratic despotism. Why go to such effort to elect a figurehead?

Iranian internal politics, the endless battles between “moderates” and “hard-liners”, can't be ruled out. But we also can't overlook the Iranian view of international affairs. They have not forgotten the phrase “Axis of Evil”, or the fact that Iran is number two on that list behind Saddam Hussein's Iraq. Everywhere they look, Kuwait, Dubai, Uzbekistan, Afghanistan, and Iraq, they find the U.S. military looking back. Under those circumstances, watching American forces at work in Axis Number One only a five-minute Tomahawk flight across the Persian Gulf must have been a sobering experience, particularly as Iraqi progress in 2005 began to free the most powerful land force in the world for potential duties elsewhere.

But the Iranians were also aware of the use to which Axis Number Three, North Korea (with which they had closely collaborated in the development of ballistic missiles), had put their nuclear weapons program. So they reached down into the country's political structure, plucked out the loudest, noisiest blusterer they could find (an ex-Revolutionary Guard and a “[Twelver](#)” to boot), one who could be depended on not to wilt under the spotlight, and threw him in front of the cameras.

It's interesting how closely the Iranian propaganda effort has matched that of North Korea's – the same stop and start activities with their nuclear programs, the same empty multinational negotiations, the same headline threats followed by back-door concessions. So far it has worked as well for Iran as it has for North Korea—Iran has become a problem, but, since the problem involves nuclear weapons, one that must be handled with caution.

Soviet premier Nikita Khrushchev did much the same thing in the 1950s, boasting that the Soviets were turning out nuclear-armed rockets “like sausages” and were simply blazing to fire some and see what they could do. This had results – it dampened any vague Western impulses toward aiding the [Hungarian rebels](#) in October 1956, and at the same time raised second thoughts concerning the [Suez incursion](#).

It even had an effect on U.S. presidential politics, through the notorious “[missile gap](#)” that played

a large role in the 1960 election.

But in the long run, it didn't work out well for the USSR – the U.S. response was a crash ICBM program which succeeded in deploying over 1,000 missiles by the mid-60s. Something similar is likely for Iran. Ahmadinejad has succeeded in uniting not only the U.S. and Europe, but also, *mirabile dictu*, the UN. By any rational analysis, Iran is in a worse position than it held last year. But from the point of view of the Iranians, they have bought some time.

The Cartoon Jihad

The other development is the Danish cartoon jihad. Despite inept mass media coverage, it's now widely understood that the scandal was a put-up job from first to last. But it's still unrecognized how broad-based the operation was. According to [Amir Taheri](#), it involved the Arab League, the Muslim Brotherhood (the granddaddy of all Islamic terror organizations), the Islamic Liberation Party, the Movement of the Exiles, Al Jazeera, half a dozen Middle Eastern governments, and the Syrian and Iranian secret police. And the web may very well extend farther – [Abu Laban](#), the Danish mullah who got the ball rolling, is an old associate of Ayman al Zawahiri.

This is an outlandishly large conspiracy for the sole purpose of embarrassing the mighty Danes. So the question arises once again: why? Why dig up a four-month-old provocation from a paper in Denmark, of all the innocuous places, and turn it into an international, umma-wide cause celebre? What got all these important figures involved? Why all the effort?

Taheri points out that the Syrians and Iranians had their reasons: Syria is under investigation for the [Hariri assassination](#) in Lebanon, while Denmark will be chairing the Security Council at the same time nuclear sanctions recommendations against Iran are making their way through the UN bureaucracy. But both were also late getting on the bandwagon. Iran originally dismissed Laban's troupe as Sunni pests, while Syria, these days, does nothing unless Iran moves first. Neither country got involved until the effort was well along.

A glance at the Middle Eastern timeline for late last year offers an explanation: what was the major event in the region between late September, when the cartoons first appeared to a universal yawn, and late January, when the mobs began howling? The answer: the December 15 parliamentary elections in Iraq, the keystone of U.S. efforts in the Middle East.

Clearly, the Danish cartoons are a pretext. Any other insult would have worked just as well. The actual target is the liberation of Iraq, and all that it portends for the region. The intended audience not the West, but the Muslim umma.

Viewed from that angle, it's no surprise that such heavy hitters became involved. American strategy embodies a threat to them all, Jihadis, religious throwbacks, and secular dictators alike. The advent of democracy marks the end of their way of doing business. What better method of forcing it back than to call on Muslim religious solidarity? Portraying the cartoons as an attack on Islam undercuts the attractions of democracy, drives an even wider wedge between Muslim states and the West, and characterizes the new Iraqi government as deluded servants of the Infidel, while the U.S. slips into its customary role as the Great Satan.

Several observers, among them Professor [Sari Hanafi](#) of American University in Beirut, concur, viewing the scandal as an attempt to limit the spread of democracy: "...you had regimes taking advantage saying, 'Look, this is the democracy they're talking about.'"

(The cartoon uproar scarcely registered in Iraq. The sole responses, some defiant [talk](#) from the minister of transport and a single demonstration in Baghdad, were instigated by Moqtadr al-Sadr, a man who would throw himself into a volcano if that would get him into the papers.)

There's an endless number of ways such campaigns can be played. More public scandals can be cooked up (or else pulled from the Western media – recall the Koran-in-the-toilet [uproar](#), which may well have inspired Laban in the first place.), each portraying democracy and the West at large as inveterate enemies of the Muslim umma, aided by the fact that Europe-based Muslims like Laban know exactly what buttons to push on both sides. The Iraqi insurrection can be characterized as a battle to save Iraqi Muslims from a depraved, secular West, with the Jihadis taking the role of defenders of Islam.

The sole drawbacks are that such campaigns are obviously a sign of Muslim weakness, not strength. It's also doubtful how far they can be taken – there's no such thing as keeping a population at constant fever pitch. Eventually the effort will reach a point of diminishing returns.

But these examples do suggest that the struggle in the Middle East has mutated, with the Islamists and their allies—the Arab nationalists and the old regimes—adapting a new strategy: the struggle to halt reform in the Middle East is no longer, for the moment, a military effort, but a political one.

A political attack requires a political response. Not that military efforts can be dropped – not while the Jihadis remain active in Iraq and the Iranians still present a threat. But the major effort for the near future will occur on the political plane. As for countermoves, three approaches suggest themselves.

The first is a more effective method of fighting public convulsions of the cartoon intifada type. The cartoon tempest was essentially a conspiracy involving individuals, NGOs, and governments. All of them can be targeted in one way or another, to clarify the point that any repetition will have a price. A first step would be the immediate expulsion of Abu Laban, who at last report was still roaming around Copenhagen. News comes today that Denmark has [arrested](#) Fadi Abdullatif for

threatening the government for distributing a leaflet urging Muslims to “eliminate” rulers that prevent them from joining the Iraq insurgency

Also advisable would be the defunding of [Yusuf al Qaradawi](#), the popular mullah (he has his own show on Al Jazeera) who signed the fatwa against Denmark, and whose branch of the Muslim Brotherhood is financed by none other than the EU. (I have racked my brains for some rational explanation for this, and have come up with nothing.)

Above all, the response must be consistent. This was not a conspiracy against Denmark, but against the West and all its values. The only way to face such provocations is with a united front. European attitudes toward such matters – the mixture of frivolity, fatalism, and avarice that has marked all their recent dealings with the Middle East—must in particular be brought up short. This may in fact be occurring in response to events.

The second approach should be engagement of Middle Eastern governments and ruling classes to persuade them that democracy is coming, that it cannot be stopped, and that it is not a threat. Apart from the mullahs, these people are the major roadblock to serious reform. They view democracy with deep suspicion, and with some reason. The shabby fate of the Hindu nobility, who willingly gave up their ancestral holdings to the Indian government only to have the promised subsidies cut off a few years later, must always be before their eyes. But other examples do exist: buried in the uproar elsewhere in the Gulf is the fact that [Bahrain](#) became a constitutional monarchy in February 2002, thanks to a wise decision by King Hamad. Some people are prepared to take the step. On the other hand, Iranian ex-president Mohamed Khatami's recent [call for democracy](#) should be viewed with caution – it's doubtful that he means the same as we do in the West. (This is also true of the results of the Palestinian election, taken by many observers as evidence that the Bush strategy is empty. There is simply no rational way

that a contest between two murderous terror organizations can be considered a “democratic election.”)

The recently-released [Quadrennial Defense Review](#) envisions a second stage in the war against terror involving active undercutting of AQAM's (al-Qaeda and Affiliated Movements, the military term) appeal to the Muslim populace. Condeleezza Rice's “[transformational diplomacy](#),” in which crucial assets of the U.S. Foreign Service will be shifted to the Middle East from Europe, is aimed at implementing a democratic program. But it can't simply be left to the Defense and State Departments. (I keep trying to picture Joseph C. Wilson IV carrying out the assignment, but the image simply won't gel.) Such a campaign of influence and persuasion seems tailor-made for NGOs and trade associations in business, the sciences, and the arts and entertainment. It's dismaying to consider how few of this country's resources have actually been brought to bear against the terrorist threat. Many people would be willing to act but lack necessary direction. Some effort must be made to provide this.

The third and most difficult task involves getting through to the Muslim masses. To read the Middle Eastern media is an exercise in despair. Absolutely nothing of the Western or American case gets through. The Muslim worldview is a sad morass of conspiracy theories, ethnic and religious hatreds, and paranoia. (Only a handful of exceptions exist—the Saudi *Arab News* and the *Beirut Daily Star* among them.)

Last year's [roadshow led by Karen Hughes](#) was supposed to help correct this, but went nowhere. Which doesn't mean that it should not be reattempted, with more in the way of resources and imagination. There are plenty of successful, happy, and well-integrated American Muslims. We need to recruit from among them to speak to people of their own backgrounds about the America that they themselves know. More sophisticated approaches can be worked out by bringing together Western figures familiar with the culture and politics of the Middle East, such as Mansoor Ijaz, Salim Mansur, Amir Taheri, Fouad Ajami, Ayaan Hirsi Ali, Wafa Sultan, and for that matter, Bernard Lewis and David Pryce-Jones. The U.S. has a lot to tell the people of the Muslim world. Some, at least, will listen. Every one who does is one less supporter of jihad.

A political solution is necessary to secure the military victories already won. This strategy will require patience, understanding, and willingness to overcome setbacks. Things are going to happen that we do not like. There will be disappointments and failures. These are not products of policy, but aspects of the human condition. None of them will be any reason to turn back or abandon the effort. Errors can be corrected, failures can be overcome. And it should never be forgotten that, in the words of Churchill, the ongoing liberation of the Middle East remains “one of the great unsordid acts of history.”

As it stands, there is little likelihood that the Jihadis will turn back U.S. gains. Al-Qaeda and its allies are paying the price of a flawed strategy. The Jihadis went into this war convinced that terror would carry all before it – a thesis disproven for all time. There is no practical action they can take to recover. (They might begin by replacing Zarqawi, but who would volunteer to bell that cat?) A nuclear-armed Iran would open new vistas, but that's the very reason, among many others, that Iran will not be allowed to procure them in the first place. The Iranian situation is an example of the type that Curtis LeMay used to dismiss with the words, “No alternative, so no problem.”

Paradoxically, the Jihadi field of action is more constricted in their own backyard, the Middle East, than elsewhere. Iraq has been a trap for the Islamist cause, costing them well over 50,000 casualties and prisoners. It's difficult to conceive a set of circumstances where it will ever be anything else. The Jihadis, and their allies, are always going to be in a position where resistance will cost them more than they're able to pay. And that's the way you want a war to go.

And besides, there are better targets elsewhere.

Part Two

The ultimate in disposing one's forces is to be without discernable shape
—Sun Tzu

It appears likely that Europe will be the next major battleground in the Long War.

The Jihadis, following public humiliation on their own home ground, will need a means of proving that they're still in the game, and Europe is vulnerable. It abuts directly against ancient Muslim homelands at several points, has a substantial and unintegrated Muslim population, has offered active Jihadis sanctuary within its borders, has pursued reckless immigration and security policies, and has supped with the Devil through its open support of Saddam Hussein (paid for with Iraqi oil funds) and Muslim terror organizations such as Al Fatah and Hamas.

Many observers believe it's already too late, that Europe is one with Sumeria and Byzantium, that all that remains is the funeral procession. They point to the numbers of native births – below replacement level of 2.1 children per couple in almost every country—compared to those of Muslim immigrants, which are two to three times higher, and echo Bernard Lewis's now-famous prediction, "Europe will be Muslim by the end of the century."

Europe is also unfortunate in that its overall government, the European Union, has established itself, in defiance of the experience of the past century, as the kind of managerial superstate proven unfeasible just about everywhere else on earth. EU bureaucrats have set out to demonstrate the obvious once again with considerable eagerness, meddling in international affairs while attempting to micromanage those of its own citizens, wasting immense amounts of resources on trivial aims, and generating completely avoidable crises to no rational purpose. The EU is about the last form of government capable of leading a fight for survival, but it's what the Europeans have.

Debellicized Europe

As if this wasn't enough, Europe has also been functionally *debellicized*, a word coined by British military historian Micheal Howard meaning "a refusal to consider armed force as a means of settling disputes." It's not quite the same thing as pacifism, which is based on an idealistic view of human relations. Anti-bellicism is held more as an unthought conviction, the cliché that "war never solves anything" raised to a rule of behavior.

Such a development may have been necessary to avoid further bloodlettings along the lines of the world wars, but never let it be said that it does not have drawbacks. It was anti-bellicism that lay behind Europe's shameful lack of response to the crimes of Bosnia and Kosovo during the 90s. While debellicized Europeans talked, thousands were massacred and thriving towns turned into wastelands. Anti-bellicism also explains the Spanish reaction to the March 2004 Madrid train bombings, the most successful attack by any Jihadi organization. The 191 victims prompted the defeat of the country's center-right government in ensuing elections in favor of an appeasement-oriented social democratic administration, by far the most favorable result the Jihadis have yet gained, and one that undoubtedly encouraged later efforts elsewhere in Europe.

But all the same, it's difficult to see how Europe, massive, far-flung, and variegated as it is, could simply devolve into Eurabia. Many seem to picture such an event as a reflection of the last chapters of Jean Rispail's dystopian [novel](#) *The Camp of the Saints*, with the Europeans meekly wandering off into extinction while the third-world interlopers settle into their places.

Straightforward conquest of the Ottoman type is another possibility – Muslims taking over by main force, using their weight of numbers to smother all resistance, converting large masses of the native population while subjecting the rest to dhimmitude.

The last possibility is the blazing civil war scenario, a return to the wars of religion, a replay of the Thirty Year's War fought out across the continent, with native Muslim youths, armed, trained, and led by a resurgent Islam, fighting a war to the death against an aroused European population.

None of these scenarios has the ring of plausibility. A major failing lies in the fact that they're all based on demography, a subtle field with many hidden variables, any one of which can [overthrow](#) the apparent results. It happens to be the case that every single long-term demographic prediction since Malthus introduced the concept two centuries ago has proven mistaken. At times, as in the catastrophic visions of "Population Bomb" theorist Paul Ehrlich, ludicrously so.

A major problem with such calculations is that the basic variable, the population of European Muslims, is unknown. Estimates range from 15 to 25 million, depending on how much weight is given to illegal immigration. In some cases, such as France, where the Muslim populace is stated as 5 -12%, the uncertainty exceeds 100%. Without a clear idea of how many Muslims are living in Europe, not to mention such subfactors as how many are females of childbearing age, the demography argument must be set aside. (There's also mounting evidence that such demographic swings are [cyclical](#). Native births have increased in the UK, France, and Germany over the past few years, if only by fractions of a percent.)

Also overlooked is the fact that the Muslim population of Europe is not a monolith, but divided into a number of factions, many of which have nothing at all in common beyond Islam. The older populations are often descendants of soldiers who fought beside Europeans in India, Africa, and the Middle East, well-settled and unlikely to turn against what they consider to be their own countries. The majority of the Muslims in Germany are Turks or Kurds, who would rather be flayed than follow the lead of any Arab. Finally there is the Sunni-Shi'ite gap, which is not often bridgeable.

So the idea that Europeans will be outbred, overwhelmed, or even challenged by a suitably numerous home-grown Islamist army can be set aside. But that does not let Europe completely off the hook. Recent events ranging from the London and Madrid bombings to last autumn's French car-burning festival to the Danish cartoon jihad make it clear that the Jihadis are active and have Europe in their sights. The more recent spate of savage [anti-Semitic attacks](#) serve only to highlight the danger. A large number of Muslim youths exist—up to 40% of the Muslim populace in France—isolated, embittered, jobless, and ready to be led. Finally, the failure of Europe to mount any kind of meaningful cultural resistance, to "up and play the game", in British parlance, has left the field open for Muslim radicals and their allies.

Targeted Violence: A Jihadi Political Strategy in Europe

So if I were an ambitious imam – ambitious both for myself and the European Muslim umma, what would I do? What is required is a strategy that delivers a political solution as opposed to one generating pure terrorist violence, one taking advantage of proven European weaknesses: bureaucracy, debellicism, multiculturalism, and that obscure sense of estrangement that has gripped Europe since the end of the imperial era and is commonly expressed in such salon philosophies as existentialism and deconstruction.

The first step involves lowering the sights. Rather than the apocalyptic scenarios already covered – and which may well not be possible anyway – we set the goal as something more within reach. Say, the complete political autonomy of the Muslim community, the umma, throughout Europe. In many areas, in France in particular, this situation is already half a reality. Something on the order of 800 "[no-go](#)" areas exist in Muslim suburbs where police and government officials are simply not allowed to enter and Sharia law is openly enforced. The French government has chosen to deal with this by ignoring it. These areas were the sources of the violence that broke out last autumn. They – and others across Europe like them—would be the centers of a new Jihadi effort.

In a European campaign, the political element would be paramount. Whatever violence occurred would be organized violence, limited and situational, a kind of *large-scale behavioral-modification procedure* aimed at the majority population and its government. This violence would be terrorist in nature, not reaching the levels that prevail in Iraq or Israel, while constantly threatening to match – or exceed – those levels. Examples would include repetitions of the 2005 auto-burning spree, with other targets added to give the impression of escalation. This could be accompanied by vandalistic attacks on landmarks and public artworks. The occasional bomb would also play a part, though it would be wise to avoid suicide bomb techniques, since this locks you into a certain image of kamikaze-like irrationality that would convince many onlookers that you cannot be reasoned with.

The campaign might proceed to threaten or shut down public utilities and transport, such as the electrical net (still virtually open to attack across the West, five years after 9/11), or the subways. Since the French, with admirable Gallic foresight, intelligently placed their prestressed concrete Muslim ghettos in rings around their major cities, access highways and ring roads are particularly vulnerable. Tourists would present a worthwhile target, both in violent attacks and kidnappings. A drop in tourist business would represent a serious economic blow to most areas of Europe.

All these actions would be carried out at a tempo fast enough to make it impossible for the authorities – slow-moving European governmental colossi in particular – to properly react. (In modern tactical terminology this is called “getting inside your opponent’s decision cycle.”)

Violent actions would be scheduled for greatest effect and targets selected with precision. Center-right governments and officials would be particularly at risk, since they can, with the open assistance of the media and the left-wing opposition, be painted as irreconcilable enemies of ethnic peace. The European Left would be viewed as a resource—many of them are already allied with terrorists among the Palestinians and almost all would be eager to show their solidarity with an oppressed minority. Note London Mayor Ken Livingstone’s sponsorship of Yusuf al Qaradawi, the well-known imam and Muslim Brotherhood leader who signed the fatwa against the Danish cartoonists.

Making Muslims Seem the Victims

Carom incidents can be fabricated, with bogus evidence pointing to innocents, who can then be held up as martyrs. The reverse can be done with the police, too-effective government officials, and right-of-center or nativist organizations, which can be set up as responsible for atrocities against Muslims, the more blameless the better. (Recall the Palestinian child Mohammed al Dura who was [shot by his own side](#) during a confrontation with Israeli troops, or the destruction of Samarra’s Golden Mosque.)

The goal would not be bloodshed for its own sake, but to create an utterly paranoid locked-down state in which even the simplest everyday activities would represent a challenge, maintaining the impression that it can always grow far worse, while holding up the possibility of shutting down the entire country.

But the terrorist aspect would be secondary, the anvil for the political hammer. Politics would be the dominant factor, with terror leveraged to gain political concessions. The first element of this would be to portray the terrorists as victims, neglected third-world types with legitimate grievances. (Not a difficult trick – consider how the Palestinians promoted their victim status over that of the Israelis.)

At the same time, the authorities must be painted as a brutal elite – never a problem in any contemporary European country – overreacting against sincere protest. While this won’t convince everybody (it never has), it will provide plenty of grist for the media and Left-wing activists, who can be relied on to carry the word without instruction or encouragement. Taking advantage of the political and social fault lines that exist within European society, and which in

no way have been ameliorated by the establishment of the EU, would be a key element of the campaign.

The Muslim “Man of Peace”

Once the lines are firmly drawn and the country in near-panic, the spokesman would appear. The man representing the “moderate” Muslim population, yearning for peace, wanting only the best for everyone involved. He would of course have a “legend” consisting of good works, cooperation between ethnicities, and membership in various service organizations. (And no connection, needless to say, to any Jihadi group.) Using a variant of Dick Morris-style triangulation, he would establish himself as the sole voice of moderation, the alternative between the terrorist minority and the reactionary government. He would present the impression – without actually stating as much – that connections with the violent few make him only force capable of holding them back. A call would arise from the “public” – the media and the Left – for negotiations. The spokesman would find himself appointed the main negotiator, the only figure acceptable to both sides.

Negotiations would proceed slowly and painfully over a lengthy period, punctuated by sudden bursts of violence. At last a crisis would break out, perhaps involving a number of assassinations, by shadowy figures, of individuals on both sides. The spokesman himself could nearly be victimized. He would threaten to break off his attempts to act as a go-between as pointless, only to be called back, if possible by representatives of the government eager for a settlement.

A Nation within a Nation

This would involve not a complete takeover or any other apocalyptic daydream, but the establishment of a nation within a nation, a formalization of the status of already existing Muslim areas in which Shari’a would rule, with independent government, police, schools, and so on. Other services would be provided by the host government, on the ‘reparations’ principle. The host population would have nothing to say about it.

The host government would reserve all rights of defense, foreign affairs and so forth – except for relations with the Muslim states, which would be handled by the new Muslim communities themselves. Of course, UN and EU representation would also be necessary, to protect the rights of the defenseless Muslim areas. The model would be something along the lines of Palestinian status.

The end result would be a kind of postmodern colonial regime, a reversal of the historic Western model in which the host country services, supports, and protects the Muslim colonies within. The Muslim homelands would thereafter act as bases for further operations, sanctuaries for Jihadis from outside Europe, and constant internal threats preventing Europeans from taking any further part in the war against terror.

This is a grossly oversimplified model, but it does plainly reveal how existing European failings, both social and political, can be exploited. It would require a shift in Jihadi attitudes, involving an abandonment of the eschatological expectations of bin Laden and Zarqawi in favor of an attainable political result.

This is clear break with previous Jihadi practice, possibly excepting the Madrid strike. (Which I strongly suspect surprised even the Jihadis themselves – there were, after all, no follow-up attacks on other vulnerable European targets, unless the London July bombings over a year later were intended as such.) But it’s clear that established Jihadi tactics melded with a plausible political objective would represent the most formidable challenge to Europe since the rise of last century’s police states. It should be taken for granted that no European Jihadi familiar with the works of the founders of modern political terrorism – Lenin, [George Sorel](#), and [Franz Fanon](#) – has not considered something of the sort.

Even as the above words were being typed, the British sociologist Dr. Patrick Sookhdeo revealed in the U.K. *Telegraph* that Muslim clerics interviewed by him all believe that Muslim areas in Britain will be self-governing within a decade. (The *Telegraph* has since [taken down](#) the article, but it is reprinted [here](#)). Their entire experience with the British government, which has capitulated in all confrontations with Muslims, leaves them with no doubt of the outcome.

The Danish Cartoon Crisis as a Model of Jihadist Victory

All the imams referred to the Danish cartoon jihad as a representative example. The incident's status as a *wholly manufactured crisis* is not as widely known as it should be, but is in no way in question. Although very likely intended to rally the international Muslim umma against democratic developments in the Middle East, it also served a useful purpose in Europe in driving a wedge between native Europeans and the Muslim population while seriously embarrassing the entire European establishment.

The cartoon jihad will serve as a model for future efforts at destabilizing the European community. (One overlooked aspect is the fact that Abu Laban, the Danish imam who engineered the crisis, attempted to present himself as a "spokesman" figure, loudly lamenting the riots on Danish television while at the same time urging his followers – in Arabic – to go for Danish throats. Future jihadi leaders are unlikely to be so easily exposed.)

Above all, the cartoon crisis has revealed Europe as a whole to be utterly defenseless against this kind of program. If viewed as a test of European governmental resolve, it has to be said that every single government in Europe, Denmark excepted, failed miserably. In Norway, government officials forced the editor of the Christian publication *Magazinet* to [publicly apologize](#) to a gathering of mullahs for reprinting the cartoons.

Two Swedish web sites featuring the drawings were shut down by police order. An Italian official who wore a t-shirt emblazoned with one of the drawings was forced to step down. In Britain, demonstrators were in effect defended by police from exposure by the press, and a man wearing a mock suicide belt was allowed to parade unmolested in front of the Danish embassy (he was later discovered to be a felon on parole and sent back to prison).

In no case did any European nation rebuke the demonstrators or demand civil behavior from their Muslim minorities. In the ensuing weeks, [critics of Islam](#) across continental Europe have been forced to request police protection, and some have decided to curtail their activities completely. In this sense, Europe is already under siege. (Curiously, the only country that failed to experience disturbances was France, which had been at a constant boil since late last summer. Whether this was due to exhaustion or the Jihadi element conserving its strength is impossible to say.)

European Appeasers in Control

In the 1960s, CIA operatives had a saying: "Whoever wins Africa loses the Cold War." The same mixture of frustration and contempt is inescapable in contemplating the spectacle of 21st-century Europe. The European response to the Jihadis has been an open scandal, the worst possible combination of bellicose rhetoric and craven behavior.

Abu Hamza, the infamous "Captain Hook" of the Finsbury Park mosque, receives a [lengthy sentence](#) for encouraging terrorism only for the British government to apologize for allowing him to run loose for seven years after discovering that he was directly involved in terrorist activities.

A [bold statement](#) from the EU's chief executive Jose Manuel Barosso pledging that Europe would fight "to protect democratic values" is followed the next day by a [promise](#) from the European Parliament to "weed out textbooks offensive to Islam". The same day, Italian judges [rule](#) that recruiting suicidebombers to attack U.S. troops is "Not terrorism", freeing three Jihadis to return to their activities.

Abu Laban, the P.T. Barnum of the cartoon intifada, is allowed to return to Denmark unmolested. An overlooked item in his CV reveals that he is a long-term associate of Ayman al-Zawahiri, Al-Qaeda's chief of operations.

Hizb ut-Tahrir (Islamic party of Liberation), commonly [known as HT](#), is the secretive organization responsible for most of the cartoon demonstrations around the EU. It shares goals similar to Al-Qaeda, and although banned throughout Asia and the Middle East, is allowed to act openly in Europe.

Even more telling is the fact, revealed in early February, even as the cartoon riots spread across Europe, that [military budgets](#) throughout the EU (and this includes the UK) have been allowed to drop following 9/11 until they now stand at 1.8% of GDP, less than half the total of U.S. spending. A greater sign of irresponsibility in the face of a global challenge would be hard to come by.

A list of such actions could continue for page after page. Clearly, Europe's open appeasers are in effective control of overall policy, much the same as in the great British appeasement debate of the 1930s. Today's appeasers seem to believe that they can persuade the public to live in a state of siege, much as they did during the [Baader-Meinhof](#) and [Red Brigades](#) terror campaigns of the 70s and 80s (and in the UK for much longer while battling the IRA).

The hope seems to be to placate the Muslim populace and take whatever losses are necessary while the secret services hold back the Jihadi threat long enough for the U.S. to roll them up overseas. (This is in no way meant as a criticism of European security and intelligence services, all of which have earned high praise from the U.S. Intelligence Community.)

Possible European Response

One useful result of the cartoon riots is that this fantasy has been swept off the table. It's no longer a matter of dealing with bombings widely scattered in time and space. If not an actual clash of civilizations, it's about as close as anybody will ever care to get. The response of the public at large promises to be much the same as that to the assassination of Theo van Gogh and the London bombings, only on a much vaster scale. Government will follow where the people lead. (It's curious to note that while many [commentaries](#) dwell on the decline of European religious belief as a fatal flaw, the steadiest resistance has come from two of the most secular European states, Denmark and the Netherlands. We may be witnessing a internal power shift, with leadership being transferred from the tired, moribund giants to the nimbler, more lively small states.)

The first challenge involves securing the public peace, accompanied by a quick and thorough housecleaning. The Dutch decision to broadly curtail immigration is a sensible and long overdue move, and will likely be duplicated across the continent. (A French law echoing Holland's was announced by French interior minister Nicolas Sarkozy in February.)

But there are literally hundreds of hostile imams already in residence throughout Europe—Abu Hamza and Abu Laban being only most well known—preaching the downfall of their adopted homes every Friday. A nation-state has a right to demand three things of immigrants: that they obey the law, that they learn the language, and that they respect the natives. Many Islamists violate at least two of these provisions, some of them all three. Such renegades must be taken in hand. They require investigation, confrontation, and if necessary, expulsion. The fact that many are facing prison or worse in their home countries is not a European problem. There are few things more contemptible than a refugee undermining the nation that gives him shelter.

An effective method of dealing with provocations like the cartoon jihad must be formulated and put into practice consistently across the EU. This was a deliberately conceived conspiracy, and should be treated as such. The people behind it must be arrested and expelled. The nations involved, which include Egypt, Iran, and Syria, must be confronted over their involvement and sanctioned if necessary. Otherwise, Europeans can expect repetition upon repetition, each one more widespread and frenetic than the last. (And it won't require Danes or cartoonists as a

trigger. The French car-burning marathon was kicked off by the deaths of two thugs – both forgotten now – hiding from the police in an electrical station. People died in Pakistan because a Koran was found lying in a gutter. Anything will serve to set off these frenzies.)

Hizb ut-Tahrirm (HT), which organized most of the demonstrations, must be banned, its resources seized, its networks destroyed. HT is already proscribed throughout the Muslim world, no doubt for good reasons. Numerous lesser organizations across Europe should also be rolled up. It would be wise to curtail Europe's difficult to comprehend support for international terrorists such as Al Fatah and Hamas. There is a point where appeasement reaches the level of the repellent. It has long been passed in these cases.

These actions will cause unrest among the Muslim populace, who have been allowed to go their own way for too long. This must be faced. European governments must lose their fear of these people. The power of the Islamic mob, fully established after the cartoon jihad, must be broken. Attempting to govern in the face of a hostile minority, whether criminals, religious fanatics, terrorists, or any combination, is an absurdity. Nor can a society function if it is held hostage by such a group.

If illegal violence occurs, it must be met and overcome by legal force. No other single action will be more important in curtailing Islamist ambitions.

The governments and native populations of Europe will very likely be surprised how many Muslims choose to stand with the authorities under such circumstances. If others find it impossible to endure, they will perhaps be better off in the Muslim world, where they need never be bothered by the sight of an infidel if they so desire. However harsh this may be, it is nowhere near as harsh as the prospect of a continent in chaos.

It's unlikely that any of these prescriptions will be followed voluntarily. No democratic government would willingly enter such a gauntlet if it could possibly be avoided. But welcome or not, something similar will inevitably come as events dictate. The current stock of appeasement-prone governments (among them, sadly, the otherwise estimable Tony Blair) are in their last days. The majority will be voted out in favor of figures such as the inflexible [Nicolas Sarkozy](#). A reaction from an aggressive and pampered minority can be anticipated.

It would be best for the U.S. not to become too closely involved. Not merely in response to Europe's incessant playing of the anti-American card, though such a reaction would not be unjustified. The Europeans can meet this challenge on their own. American power needs to be preserved for use where it is absolutely necessary, where there is no other alternative, as in Iraq. The U.S. cannot throw away its assets, either military or financial, on powers easily capable of taking care of themselves. The EU cynically sat back and manipulated the U.S. into taking responsibility in the Balkans, a situation that they had themselves triggered (through German recognition of Slovenia) and which could not be viewed as anything other than a European problem. Let them save their cynicism for the Jihadis, where it will do some good.

All military and security moves, no matter how far-reaching, will be at best short-term solutions to Europe's problem. A long-term approach must be social, and involve integrating the Muslim minority. This, as any American can tell you, is not an easy path, but it is the sole route out of the current impasse.

One thing the U.S. can do is teach Europe how to handle relations with minorities.

The Europeans, France in particular, have preened and posed while asserting that they had no racial problems. Today we know why – they deliberately isolated their Muslim minorities rather than confront the challenge in good time. (It's interesting to note that Muslim leadership fully concurred – in 1980, the Islamic Council of Europe deliberately chose to concentrate the Muslim population into areas easy to oversee and control. This is not only a European error.) What is this other than "separate but equal", a concept dismissed from the American legal landscape a half-century ago?

The Europeans have gotten themselves into this predicament through living a racist lie. The U.S., as the sole major country that has actually worked itself out of such a situation – rationally, intelligently, and over all justly—could play a role in educating both sides of the European divide.

Part Three

Invincibility lies in the defense; the possibility of victory in the attack. One defends when his strength is inadequate; he attacks when it is abundant.
-Sun Tzu

The first point to understand concerning future Jihadi plans for the U.S. is that the Bush Doctrine is dead, insofar as it involves preemption of terrorist threats. It will remain in formal effect for the balance of Bush's second term, and may be activated in a campaign against the Iranian nuclear program. But when George W. Bush leaves office, it will be a dead letter. Politics no longer ends at the water's edge, and relentless attacks by the political opposition, along with unbridled media criticism, have rendered the concept radioactive. No candidate of either party will dare lay claim to it after the current administration leaves office.

The second point is that most of the defensive programs put into place following 9/11 are also under threat. Many of them, including the Patriot Act, telecommunications surveillance, and the domestic nuclear-detection program, will be abandoned by a new administration, and the rest will be emasculated.

That is all the opening that the Jihadis will need.

Letting Down our Guard

It's necessary to point out – it never seems to arise in public debate - that the U.S. has been safe for the past five years solely because of active security efforts. There is no other reason – not laziness on the part of the Jihadis, not the bravery of New York Times reporters, not the guardianship of the UN. American efforts have been successful both overseas in disrupting Jihadi plans at the source (it's difficult to put a bomb together when you're being chased by a Predator drone) and here in the United States. Some of the stories – the Lackawanna, Portland, and Lodi cells, "dirty bomber" Jose Padilla, and the Republican convention bombers, are known to the public, and some of us have seen things that strongly suggest that others have been picked up in secret. Jihadi groups in the U.S. have either been broken up, forced underground, or have fled the country completely.

Yet at the same time, every security program introduced during the period was greeted with protest in the media, in Congress, and among the intelligentsia. That includes TIA (Total Information Awareness), the ADVISE program that replaced it (Analysis, Visualization, Insight, and Semantic Enhancement), Camp X-ray at Guantanamo Bay, the international rendition of dangerous prisoners, the CAPPs (Computer Assisted Passenger Prescreening System), the Secure Flight system that followed, the NSA phone tapping program, and the national radiation monitoring program.

All of these, no matter what their nature or targets, were attacked as threats to civil liberties from an out-of-control administration. Several, including TIA and CAPPs, were canceled outright. The others were kept alive only thanks to administration stubbornness. The cellphone tapping, rendition, and radiation programs were deliberately kept secret to avoid the controversy that greeted earlier efforts. We know how well this worked out. (Although it's strange that the radiation program— which involves monitoring certain Muslim-owned or operated domestic targets for evidence of nuclear activity—failed to take off as a public scandal. A possible answer is that the media reported it too soon after the cellphone revelations.)

The most telling example of this attitude occurred in Newton, Massachusetts, this January. After

a terror threat was received via a computer at the local library, the chief librarian prevented the FBI from examining the machine for nearly a day on “civil liberties” grounds. If the threat had been real, such grounds would of course been exposed as indefensible. We will see much more of such irresponsibility as time goes by.

Ironically, the Jihadis’ failure to succeed with a follow-up strike after 9/11 may very well work in their favor over the next few years.

There are few forces in the universe more powerful than the democratic insistence on a “return to normalcy” (as Warren Harding, the most appropriate figure imaginable, christened it) following a crisis. The four-years-plus of security since the 2001 strikes are not viewed as the product of the hard work of thousands of individuals in the military, the Intelligence Community, and law enforcement. No – the attacks were bizarre, abnormal events, and the quiet periods before and after represent normal life, a state requiring no extra efforts or programs or expense on anyone’s part.

So when politicians eager for votes begin vying with each other in promises to cut back on “unhealthy Bush era excesses” or “paranoid threats to ordinary Americans,” the majority of voters will go along. Once in office, the politicians will put the cuts into effect, full of promises that “care will be taken,” and “national security will not be jeopardized,” and the barn door will be open. (Anyone who doubts this is invited to contemplate the fate of the Able Danger program.) This is human nature, and there is no point in becoming frustrated over it.

Similarly, overseas efforts against the Jihadis, involving both U.S. and foreign security services carrying out operations of which we know little, will also begin to slacken off. There is a concept in tactics called the “culminating point,” where an attack, no matter how successful, inevitably begins to stall out, to lose power and coherence. After that, the assault can no longer be sustained, and the wise commander calls a halt to rest and reorganize his forces.

Eventually, the overseas campaign against the Jihadis will reach its culminating point (it’s possible this has already occurred), requiring replacement of personnel, rethinking of objectives, and perhaps a complete overhaul. How strongly a new administration will feel compelled to carry out such a process is anyone’s guess. The American record of facing long-term challenges – the Cold War, with its unending swings from one policy to its precise opposite, is a prime example – offers little encouragement.

Revenge on America

As for the Jihadis themselves, a major point to keep in mind is that Arabs possess a revenge culture, derived from their tribal roots and sanctioned by the Quran in both word (Surah 2:194: “If any one transgress the prohibition against you, transgress likewise against him.”) and deed (Muhammed’s execution of the mockers Al-Nadir and Uqba after the Battle of Badr, among many other examples). Revenge remains a primary motivation in Arab life, one to which all Arab males are exposed as a matter of upbringing. This is a major reason why Arab politics tends to be so bloodyminded, and also goes a long way toward explaining the Coalition’s difficulties in Iraq.

Much of the Jihadi worldview is conditioned by revenge. Osama Bin Laden speaks of little else. Even the tape released on January 19 of this year, which offered a truce to Europe, contained this statement directed at the U.S.:

We will take revenge as we did on 11 September, God willing, and until your minds are exhausted and your lives become miserable.

He has every reason in the world to feel that way, having had his personal terrorist empire overthrown, been chased into the backwoods, hunted by drones, seen his international networks rolled up or forced into hiding, seen thousands of his followers killed or captured, his entire agenda put in jeopardy, and his great enemy go from strength to strength. The Jihadi program

vis-a-vis the U.S. will be based on revenge, a very strong motivation indeed.

WMD Attacks

The next strike by Al-Qaeda will very likely involve WMDs. Not only does this fit the revenge motif (well over 50,000 Jihadis – and perhaps twice as many – have been killed or captured, a large number to make up for), it also fits al-Qaeda practice, which tries to outdo each attack with a gaudier or more massive effort. The two strikes against the World Trade Center in 1993 and 2001 offer an example. The 9/11 attacks set a very high standard for shock, damage, and bloodshed. Topping them requires moving into the realm of mass destruction.

Weapons of that order are widely misunderstood. Due to a hangover from the Cold War, along with the media's tendency to sensationalize, WMDs are viewed as the apocalypse in small packages. Without exception, they are regarded as more destructive, by several orders of magnitude, than they actually are. The general impression of weapons such as nuclear bombs, dirty bombs, war gases, and biological weapons, is that once they're triggered, every visible thing from horizon to horizon simply comes to an end. This, needless to say, is exactly what a terrorist would like people to believe. The fact that officials in this country have made next to no effort at education such as were attempted during the Cold War period is only one failure among many.

In truth, WMDs are simply weapons with a larger potential for destruction than other types. They are powerful and deadly, but their effects are strictly limited by a number of factors. Some of these effects – particularly involving chemical and biological weapons – are exceptionally ghastly, creating a profound sense of horror that must be held in check in order to evaluate them rationally.

Thanks to the Hiroshima and Nagasaki strikes that ended World War II, along with the lengthy series of tests made during the 1950s, nuclear weapons are understood better than the others of the class. The most important element of nuclear weapons (apart from radioactive fallout) is a factor called "yield," the bomb's explosive equivalent in tons of TNT. For a roughly twenty-year period beginning in the 1960s, bombs with a yield of up to 20 megatons – twenty million tons of explosives – became the standard. (The largest weapon ever tested – with a yield somewhere between 38 and 50 megatons – was set off in the USSR in 1962. Due to a miscalculation, the bomb exceeded its planned yield by a large margin. A perhaps apocryphal story holds that watching Soviet officials were so frightened by the result that they signed the Test Ban Treaty a short time later.) More recent years have seen a drop into the low kiloton (thousands of tons) level as missile accuracy has increased.

A terrorist bomb is very unlikely to match either of those levels. High yields are gained only from thermonuclear weapons – hydrogen bombs – which require an extremely advanced industrial base to manufacture. A terrorist weapon will almost certainly be a fission bomb, of yield well below a hundred kilotons.

To put this into perspective, the Hiroshima bomb, the Little Boy, yielded 18 kilotons, and destroyed most of the city. A calculation made concerning the World Trade Center attacks produced a "yield" (combining airliner mass, speed, and fuel) of 3 kilotons. A terrorist bomb will rank somewhere between these two yields, which gives us a general picture of what to expect. Such a bomb could either destroy a small city or cripple a large one. The number of deaths, from blast, fire, and radiation effects, would be considerably higher than the casualties of 9/11. But apart from fallout, which can be protected against, destruction would be limited to the immediate area of the explosion. Such an attack would be one of the great tragedies of American history, far outdoing 9/11, and perhaps even Antietam and Shiloh. But it would not be a death blow to the country as a whole.

Dirty bombs are an unknown factor, never having been tested by any nation, as far as is known. They consist of a quantity of radioactive material packed around a core of high explosives large enough to blast the material a considerable distance in all directions. Al-Qaeda has shown some

interest in such weapons. A dirty bomb was one of the projects Jose Padilla was working on when he returned to the U.S.

The point of a dirty bomb is not large-scale killing, but area denial. Apart from those killed in the explosion or heavily dosed by the fallout, the number of fatalities would be small, the effects of possible panic excluded. Fallout from a dirty bomb can be removed with concentrated effort, returning the area affected to regular use in relatively short order, although many people would be unwilling to return due to psychological factors. Dirty bombs are probably the least effective of all WMDs, which may explain why we haven't seen one yet.

War gases, ranging from mustard gas to nerve agents such as sarin and tabun, are another matter. Their effects are repellent, the fears surrounding them enormous. Much of this is due to media hysteria. The subject is usually introduced with the claim that an ounce or a gram of Gas X could kill the entire state of California, or wherever. The suitable answer to this is, yes – if you could get the population of California to stand on each other's shoulders. Horrifying as they are, war gases are simply not as effective as most people believe.

In 1995, Aum Shinrikyo, a Japanese apocalyptic cult, carried out a nerve gas attack on the Tokyo subways. Twelve people were killed, and more than 5,000 admitted to hospitals, only a handful of these injured seriously. An attack the previous year killed 7 people. There's little question that the cult was expecting a lot more—they had stockpiled hundreds of tons of chemicals useful for making nerve gas. What saved most of the victims was a clumsy delivery system – a series of containers with holes punched in them.

The other recent incident involving nerve gas was the March 1988 attack on the city of Halabja by Iraqi aircraft on orders of Saddam Hussein. The MiGs sprayed the town completely in several passes. The results were 5,000 killed and thousands more wounded. It is in no way intended to lessen the magnitude of this atrocity or the suffering of the victims to note that these results don't match predictions by chemical warfare specialists. Statements of the city's population vary from 45,000 to 100,000. In either case, the deaths were a fraction of those present, despite the fact that most of the victims did not know how to protect themselves and little or no medical care was available. Horrifying as it is, chemical warfare is not the last word. (The most troubling aspect is the deformed children that are still being born to women of the town nearly twenty years later.)

Which brings us to biological warfare, the most horrific threat of all, and probably the most overrated. Biowar is usually treated by the media much the same as chemical warfare, with the number of victims increased by a factor of ten to a thousand. This despite the fact that it has never been made to work.

Apart from attempts to spread plague during medieval sieges and small-scale use by the Japanese in China, germ warfare has a limited historical record. It's not widely known that Aum Shinrikyo attempted nine biological attacks before the subway strike. None was successful. Apart from that, there is the still-mysterious anthrax campaign that accompanied the 9/11 attack. (Admittedly, this may have been carried out by a third party, though the cancellation date on the first envelope would mark that fact as one of the greatest coincidences of all time.) One man who worked at a tabloid that had lampooned Osama bin Laden died of exposure, several others were taken ill, and the attacks ended as abruptly as they had begun.

A number of reasons have been advanced for these failures. The New York Times speculated that the Aum Shinrikyo bacteria "lacked sufficient virulence." This, as shown by the editor's death, was not the case with the anthrax spores, leading to questions as to why the overall effect wasn't greater. One factor is that microorganisms modified in the lab (military laboratories "weaponize" such organisms, rendering them more virulent) are often unable to survive in the wild. Beyond that, there's the question of lack of knowledge. Biological organisms are complex systems. I strongly suspect that a widespread epidemic cannot begin until certain very particular basic conditions prevail – otherwise the bubonic plague would be an annual event and new diseases would pop up every other week. Such conditions would probably not be present at the time that a bug is sprayed or otherwise distributed. Biowar, the most terrifying of possible

threats, may be the least of our worries.

(It should also be mentioned in passing that the Jihadis often display a surprising lack of competence with any kind of weapon. While public attention understandably remains fixed on such spectacular operations as 9/11, Madrid, and Bali, we must not forget incidents like Richard Reid and his shoe bomb or the second wave of London attackers racing off like so many purse snatchers after their bombs failed to explode. Another point of interest is that while the Jihadis undoubtedly have access to MANPADS – shoulder-fired missiles like the U.S. Stinger or the Soviet SA-7 – they have yet to down an aircraft with one, though several attempts have been made. Such weapons may simply be too complex for the Jihadi foot soldier.)

Panic – the Worst Threat

Those are the challenges facing the U.S. in the next campaign of the Long War. All serious, all worthy of the closest attention. But all of them must also be put in their place. The major worry with these weapons is panic – people stampeding out of fear, both at the site of the attack and across the country, jeopardizing themselves and others by jamming roads, stalling relief operations, and creating conditions of chaos.

On 9/11, I had to calm down several people in the New York area who were ready to take to the highways (one with small children in tow) due to a rumor that the hijacked airliners had contained biowar materials. (One of the best methods of dealing with biological and chemical strikes, and even small levels of fallout, is called “safe in place” – simply seal windows and doors and remain where you are until aid arrives.) A sly terrorist could use panic in a kind of one-two punch, first getting people out on the roads before carrying out a second attack there. But brute fear could create more casualties than any assault.

The fact that no government organization from Homeland Defense on down has made any serious attempt to address this issue is an indictment of the entire system.

A close look reveals that one element these threats have in common is the fact that they cannot, even if successful, even if carried out against multiple targets, destroy or cripple the United States. The U.S. is too large, too complex, and too powerful to be knocked out by a foe on this level. (Many take complexity as a synonym for ‘fragility.’ This is not the case. A complex society has more levels and resources to respond to a disaster or similar challenge. Consider how many deaths would have occurred if Hurricane Katrina had struck Africa or Southern Asia.) The Jihadis can hurt us, as they have in the past, but there is no conceivable action they can take that can drive us to our knees.

(I’m leaving out the possibility of EMP [ElectroMagnetic Pulse], in which a nuclear weapon triggered high over the Midwest would burn out electrical circuits across the country. This type of attack would require an Intermediate Range Ballistic Missile with a range of 1,500-1,800 miles, a high-yield, specially-designed nuclear warhead, and the ability to launch from a ship or submarine just off either coast. None of these is available to the Jihadis or their allies. EMP is a national weapon, not a terrorist weapon.)

The Next Phase of Homeland Defense

It’s doubtful that any of these considerations will affect the fate of current security programs. They will be shut down or truncated, the heroic librarians will bask in public applause, the lawyers will split their hairs, and the entire edifice of American defense will deteriorate, as it did after WW II and the Cold War. Large organizations with detailed charters and plans will remain, and some will carry out their duties to the best of their abilities. But enough gaps will exist to allow the Jihadis free entry. And Americans will be threatened with death.

So we must be prepared to take up the slack. This will not be easy. Most of the public appears to believe that Homeland Defense and FEMA have everything covered, and Katrina does not seem to have disabused them. The governmental response to 9/11 was the expected one, the same

response made to every challenge, problem, and issue since the days of the New Deal: throw on another layer of bureaucracy and forget about it. The end result is precisely what might have been predicted: waste of money and effort, diminution of responsibility, and emphasis on trivial goals. This cannot be fixed any more than it can be fixed as regards Social Security, Medicare, or any other federal bureaucracy. We have to look elsewhere.

In time, George W. Bush's greatest error in his response to the terror threat will not be seen as the Iraq intervention; or the UAE docks deal, but his failure to adequately rally the American people. This began with his speech of September 20, 2001, in which he outlined the plans for action only to end with,

“The rest of you – go on and live your lives....”

He has continued in the same vein ever since. It is impossible to picture FDR or Reagan making such an error. The reasons for this (I suspect Bush's advisors—the belief that the citizenry is a rabble that must be guided is a cherished notion among too many conservatives, both Paleo- and Neo-) are beside the point. The question is whether it is too late to alter the consequences, particularly as involves the conduct of American domestic defense.

As I have written elsewhere, it's appalling how little of America's resources have been utilized in the War on Terror. The U.S. boasts businesses larger than many countries, a number of them – construction, health care, and security firms, among many other types – operating in fields directly related to the terror threat. We possess the largest private computer network in the world, creating instant contact between individuals with every imaginable talent and skill. We have a vast reservoir of people with experience of enormous potential value to the struggle against terror – including, to give only one example, thousands who have worked in the Middle East for major U.S. companies. Yet all this potential has gone by the board in favor of the standard run of Beltway bureaucrat.

Citizens' Defense

Let's consider a single possibility: how to deal with a new attack on an American target. The simplest and most effective method of meeting such an eventuality would be a people's militia. This is a word that has been tarnished in recent years, so it's best to emphasize that what is meant is how the term is used in the Constitution: the people assembled for the purpose of the defense of the public liberty. The threat to the United States is effectively universal; the response should be as well.

I'm not referring here to the National Guard, which are state-based forces today serving as auxiliaries to the Army. The model would be the armed forces of Switzerland, which consist of every able-bodied man within a particular range of age. Swiss troops are assigned to units from their own towns, keep their weapons at home, and serve on active duty a few weeks a year. Only the officer cadre is professional. The system has served Switzerland well for two centuries, holding off among others an extremely annoyed Adolf Hitler. (In fact, it was the army itself, under General Guisan, that prompted a frightened government to stand up to the Fuhrer. This action, which under other circumstances would have been termed mutiny, could only have been carried out by a citizen's militia.)

The Swiss system, in modified form, served as a framework for the Israeli Defense Force. John McPhee, who wrote a very informative short book on the subject, calculated that the American equivalent would consist of over 9 million men, a number that would be considerably larger today. These numbers are more than enough to meet any eventuality facing the United States.

Such an organization could be officered by retired military men, law enforcement officers, or businessmen. Training would be carried out at military bases and cover not only basic soldiering but also emergency medical procedures and evacuation and decontamination. At this point, victims of a disaster are supposed to sit and wait until FEMA shows up with its laptops and forms in triplicate. We saw how well this worked in New Orleans. Suppose instead we had one house

in each neighborhood with a supply of atropine and potassium iodide, and people trained to use it? (The first of these is a specific against many types of nerve gas, the second a preventive medicine to stop radioactive isotopes from settling in the thyroid. Both are extremely simple to use, requiring little in the way of medical training.)

The armed units of such a militia would keep order and prevent terrorists from taking advantage of a strike. Medical units would carry out preventive treatment and first aid, evacuation units would either get people away from the scene or persuade them to remain in their homes, whichever response was appropriate, while acting as sources of legitimate information.

(Many people in this country already own suitable rescue vehicles; they're called pickups and SUVs.)

One of the few heartening things about 9/11 was watching people appear from all across the country to aid and assist the city of New York. Firemen, policemen, and ordinary people got into their cars and drove sometimes thousands of miles, simply to lend a hand. That is the response we'd be looking to harness. There is nothing more American than this, and the fact that no effort has been made to take advantage of it is difficult to fathom. Consider what the Katrina farce would have been like with such an organization in place. (A 4th-Generation Warfare enthusiast would call this a "network-centric solution", by the way; which is fine.)

Of course, it won't happen. It is straightforward, it's workable, and it utilizes the American traditions of competence, community, and initiative. But it's also against the spirit of the age, the rebirth of Big Government, the drift toward centralization and bureaucracy. In this paradigm, the U.S. citizenry is viewed not as a resource, as a reservoir of talent, ability, and good will, but as part of the problem, to be cajoled, hoodwinked, and manipulated into doing what the bureaucrats think is necessary. The results can be seen in Louisiana.

For the foreseeable future, we'll be stuck with organizations that respond to disasters by sending truckloads of ice from one end of the country to the other. Perhaps at some point such an idea will be considered, after the monster bureaucracies have fumbled the ball another four or five times.

Finally, is there any way that the Islamists can get what they want from another assault? Apart from revenge, what they seek more than anything else is an American withdrawal from the international stage, at least to the extent that we cease interfering with their particular projects. This was what lay behind the 9/11 strikes, with Osama bin Laden convinced by Lebanon and Somalia that the U.S. would run for home, shut the gates, and try to forget about the bad old world, leaving Al-Queda to rebuild the caliphate in peace.

Some commentators believe this could happen – among them James Taranto of the Wall Street Journal. But it's not very likely. Isolationism has always been a response to failures in relations to American allies and clients – Europe after WW I, Vietnam in the 1960s. We react to threats differently, as the U.S.S. Maine, the Zimmermann Telegram, Pearl Harbor, and 9/11 clearly show. No figure or nation, no matter how powerful, has ever gotten away with a direct attack on the U.S. (or even the perception of one, as with the Maine). A little more knowledge of real history—as opposed to the kind you get from William Blum – would have revealed this to Osama bin Laden.

Time is on Our Side

Over the long run, time is the enemy of the Jihadis. Muslim societies are starting to enter the same demographic transition that grips the nations of Europe. (Iran, with a growth rate of a little over 1%, already has.) The excess young males now serving as al-Qaeda's foot soldiers will have fewer to replace them. Islam's encounter with modernity, which is in large part responsible for triggering the crisis, will continue. The desire to embrace the comforts and luxuries of modern life while still retaining medieval mores and strictures is understandable, which does not mean that it will be successful. Islam will eventually work its way to a modus vivendi with modernity.

American Muslims have in large part accomplished exactly this. It could well be that the great and long overdue reform of Islam will come from the New World. ("Spengler", the Asia Times' impressive political columnist, points out that Pope Benedict XVI strongly doubts this, citing the fact that Quran is held to be the direct word of Allah, and not amenable to interpretation. I think that both Spengler and His Holiness are underestimating the power of human hypocrisy here.)

The vision of the Jihadis is wishful thinking. They are victims of forces beyond their control, products of a transitional epoch. They look back with yearning on a mythical "golden age" rather than face the uncertain and unsettling future. But that future will continue coming, at the same rate as for anyone else. Conditions will change around them, despite their rhetoric, despite their violence, despite all their strategies. The world will move on, leaving them merely so many mad clowns capering at the edge of civilization.

They will not be recalled with mixed feelings, unlike our enemies in previous conflicts – Yamamoto, Rommel, Peng, Giap – men of respect, men whom were held in a certain regard despite the fact that they were enemies, in awareness of their profound intelligence, skills, and dedication. The Jihadis – bin Laden, Zawahiri, Zarqawi—are no such thing, and it's unlikely that any respectable figure will arise at this point.

When men start out with vicious tactics – the car bomb, the suicide bomb, the airliner as missile – a door closes behind them, locking them away from all other possibilities. That was a lesson the Anarchists, the historical group most similar to the Jihadis, learned in their time. Though they began in the 1880s challenging the kings and emperors of Europe, they ended up forty years later murdering payroll messengers in Massachusetts and secretaries and errand boys on Wall Street, only a few steps away from the scene of 9/11.

We are not as they are, and we never shall be. We are the people who go out to see what's the matter when we hear sobbing in the darkness. This leads to much in the way of pain and trouble, but also to a share of glory that is ours alone because no one else, no empire or nation down the long ages, has ever quite done things the way we do them.

A last thought to keep in mind is that the Plan was for the U.S. by this time to be cowering in helpless terror while a resurgent caliphate consolidated its gains and prepared to expand. Nothing like this has occurred. Therefore, we're ahead. The challenge is to keep it that way.