

Intensified focus due

By F. Andy Messing
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The focus seems to be on a redesigned military strategy as Gen. Peter Pace, chairman of the Joint Chiefs, is reportedly finally convening a special group to examine the conduct of the war in Iraq and Afghanistan.

This after Gen. David Petraus, produced a "new" counterinsurgency manual designed to instruct conventional forces in how to operate in an irregular warfare environment. On top of that, we learn Gen. George Casey, our top commander in Iraq, has a "shake and bake" one-week course to instruct incoming commanders on irregular warfare techniques in that country. Meanwhile military service schools scramble to re-design courses to try to adapt to a deteriorating scenario in those two focus countries, breaking from their emphasis on NATO/Gulf war I type warfare with tanks and elaborate air power and such. All avoiding Sun Tzu's admonitions on the "long war" and neglecting the concepts of the late Gen. Edward Lansdale that war is more than a military issue.

The president blindly follows the axiom that he must allow his generals to have their way without real presidential oversight, riding the polls to the bottom, while the only person who has kept these generals in check, Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, is separated and replaced by a Bush family player with a mixed record, facing a huge learning curve.

Meanwhile, America passes more benchmarks like 3,500 killed in action, and \$600 billion spent, as newly empowered Democratic members of Congress run around in circles with their hair on fire like their Republican counterparts before them, knowing they now share the responsibility of potential failure.

Then you have the James Baker/ Lee Hamilton group ostensibly proposing warmed-over solutions like Delaware Sen. Joseph Biden's concept of partitioning Iraq so Europe and others can continue to get its oil. Fact-Finding groups keep rotating through the combat zones, using their World War II templates to analyze the situation, and coming back saying the acceptable thing: The troops are great. The Media, unskilled in irregular warfare for the most part, picks at the wrong things to make their points, further confusing our public.

Then, the Military-Industrial complex, that President Dwight Eisenhower warned us about, is trying to convince everyone, with slick TV commercials, that its expensive weapon systems are the answer to this war on terrorism. All this as a literally small band of radicals, supported by our CIA against the Soviets in the 1980s, has expanded 10,000-fold because of our actions and lack of actions.

The background becomes severe as the proliferation of nuclear devices increases and command and control by these crazies decreases. Then the American public torn, anxious, trying to trust but not trusting because of the ghosts of Vietnam and the incomplete actions of Gulf War I, votes humbly but forcefully for some change to protect themselves.

Now collectively we ponder our actions worldwide but particularly in these conflict zones, knowing we have run out of maneuvering room. Time is turning completely against us, and our enemies sense this. Unfortunately, when America is wounded near mortally, we lash out in dramatic and sometimes counterproductive ways. Accordingly, before we are in that situation, we must mobilize our society to completely engage, intellectually, psychologically and physically by revealing more details about the nature of the threat, this war. This conflict is on several levels, a

sociopolitical, economic and security contest that must be addressed. It is not enough to have 42-year-old recruits with two kids joining the military to fill the ranks, or encouraging tens of thousands of illegal aliens to join the military to gain citizenship, even waving flags and singing songs of support to our brave military at the cutting edge.

During World War II, the depth of commitment was shown, President Franklin Roosevelt's son was a soldier, the British Royal family was involved in uniform too. Citizens volunteered across the board at every level, leading by example.

It is not enough to have a tiny group of about seven members of Congress (out of 535) who have had their sons in this desperate fight. It is not enough to have had only a few nongovernmental and church groups porportionally involved with the civic action and civil affairs in these areas of turmoil. It is not enough to have had only a small segment of our own military and government doing this too.

Before the bottom blows out, we need figure out that within our military we have the resources in the irregular warfare community to design a successful outcome, apart from the conventional military element with the Stars that rules our defense politics. This would probably transform the conventional effort in these zones to an advisory one with irregular Special Forces warriors at the controls.

More importantly, we must have a strategy in that sociopolitical and economic realm that reflects America's compassion and creativity and entails the best in diplomacy and capitalism. It is not just a matter of a more coherent military strategy to enhance our security. Led by both the president and the new Democratic speaker, we must appeal to the American public to respond in support of a nation in crisis with across-the-board action, from helping their own community to communities abroad that are in need.

Directly enlist American Muslims, Christians and Jews, even Hollywood and business in this action. Only by tapping into our entire strength and leading by example can America come out the other side. We are in a desperate war: We ought figure it out, and act like it.

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