

provinces and figure out if you can grow some figs, or find out who your third cousin was who went to Jordan 30 years ago and go live with them. I think the most under-reported trend in Iraq over the last six months is in fact migration, both internal and external. There is no incentive to continue being a doctor in Iraq, and this is a country that desperately needs doctors. There is no incentive to be a university professor or to work for oil companies

I understand when people in the Bush administration say that it's because the terrorists are winning, but it's not just about the terrorists, it's about folks who didn't like the 500 pound bomb coming through the roof of their house in Fallujah and killing 12 innocent family members when the U.S. said it was on an anti-terrorist offensive. That 16 year old who watched his family die had no interest in growing up to be a terrorist but now he is, labeled by us because of the life circumstances he experienced. I think any one of us out there who witnessed a foreign government coming in and killing innocent family members would turn against them.

What we have been unwilling to distinguish from the start of this conflict is the difference between the very small number of al-Qaeda who are fighting us and the relatively small number of Sunnis who are disenchanted and want to bring somebody like Saddam back, versus the thousands and thousands who have turned against us because we have moved from the period of liberation the first three months to an army of occupation. History tells us, that armies of occupation under all conditions will have anywhere from 8 year olds to 80 years old fighting against them, and that's what we have in Iraq.

The estimates of what is being spent in Iraq by the United States runs anywhere from \$250 billion to almost \$400 billion. Think what a Nobel Prize winning economist said just a couple of months ago — the overall price tag by the time this is done a couple of years from now will be over a trillion dollars, and so the real costs are considerable. The interesting thing about this war and the way it's being financed is that it is essentially being deficit financed, which means that you and I don't really feel this in our pocket book right now. If you're on tough times, you will recognize that some aspects of your social programs may be cut. But it's very difficult to draw a direct line between the Bush administration's decisions to cut back on domestic, so-called entitlement programs and the war expenditures. That linkage is there, but it's hard to directly trace.

I think my friends on the left part of the political spectrum say that this is conservatism at its best: you get the ability to gut social programs because you say we have our higher priority needs for national security and you can run up deficits for the war on terror and at the same time say we have to be fiscally responsible on all these other programs even if the only ones left have to do with health care, education, job development, and the like. So the cost is really there, but we've never been good at educating one another politically about the impact of deficit spending. I think there are enough people around who remember the dangers we came out of the Reagan/Bush administration with, The Clinton people were of an economic view that they could never generate growth in the United States — never be able to put people back to work — unless they dealt with the deficit, and they worked hard to reduce that deficit.

The next administration, Republican or Democrat, will have to deal seriously with this deficit issue. There is only one of two ways to do this, even if the spending remains steady about Iraq: you're either going to have to increase taxes or and/or continue to cut social programs.

Think about a future debate at the Presidential level where a Democrat says, "let's be honest about what's going on



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here, we can't keep giving tax breaks to the rich, we've got to bring in that money, we've got to limit the costs to defense because we've got so much money tied up in defense we're taking the money out of the mouths of schoolchildren." And the Democrat is going to be lambasted by a Republican who says, "I'm not going to compromise the security of America if we have another 9/11 and I'm not going to raise taxes. This is what these Democrats always do, they tax and spend then tax and spend."

So what has happened in terms of the cost of the war is not only the real money, not only the delayed debt our children and grandchildren will pay, but the Bush people have cleverly defined the future of the debate and I think that's something we have to start taking back from them before these campaigns even begin.

There has been a relative decline in media coverage of the Iraq war over the last two years. It's interesting to even listen to National Public Radio and hear stories from Iraq that would be the fourth, fifth or sixth story down the line, and only on a day when there is large scale bombing do you get a report. I think it's very difficult for news agencies to get news; it's too risky to get past the Green Zone if the media has somebody there. If they don't have somebody there, they're dependent on the major news services, but Reuters, BBC and CNN are pretty sporadic with their coverage of a given day, and sometimes they talk about what's going on in the Saddam trial and don't give you any

idea about how many people were killed; the reporting is pretty choppy. It's not an easy thing. At the same time I think there's a kind of numbness that's developed in our body politic where it's not that we're adverse to the bad news, it's you're not bringing me any bad news lately, so why are we spending so much time on this coverage? I think that's happening in local newsrooms and in decisions about what to report. I think the President has been very effective in his blitz on the American people with his array of speeches to prop up American support. I think we have unfortunately fallen for the argument that says we have to limit our own discussion of an antiwar nature lest our troops lose heart, and that we can't fail to support our troops when there's never been any relation between troop morale over there and what you and I are talking about or what we are doing about protesting the war. This Washington based war has from the start also turned into a Washington focal point for political attitudes, and I think the media has generally failed us from the start in thinking not only about the prospects for going to war but in talking about the character of the war. The media, has fallen hook-line-and-sinker for the notion that the real issue is establishing an Iraqi government and averting civil war.

It is interesting to ask public audiences as I have: Does the United States plan to have permanent military bases in Iraq? Good business people stand up at Rotary Clubs and say, "No. Secretary Rumsfeld says we seek no permanent military bases." They don't understand that most of what American troops have been doing for the last three months is hardening and fastening at least three of those bases, maybe as many as six, because there is one scenario that says that if this thing goes even worse than it's going now, we essentially take a third of the troops and hunker down in the bases.

We have a contingent of National Guard in Iraq from northern Indiana that includes many of our folks who are in the state police who are set to go over for the third time. As I am sure is happening in other communities, this is hitting people here pretty hard and I detect great loyalty among those troops, but there's not a lot of smiles on these faces and their families are starting to get pretty bitter. I've heard even local employers who are some of our most loyal folks to the military, say they don't know how long they can keep jobs open when the government sends their reservist and National Guard employees to Iraq three times.

These are people who are making ultimate sacrifices and I think when they're there the camaraderie and training, the leadership, the spectrum of values they believe in is carrying them through some tough times. What I worry about is when they come home. I know what we've seen in our section here, the impact on marriages and families. I worry about the people who come back. The good news is that we are saving more and more people than we have ever saved before. We're talking on the average of 18,000 troops wounded — more than half of those in Vietnam or earlier wars would be dead. But that means people are coming back with devastating life-changing wounds, which also places a very heavy burden on their families and their surrounding communities.

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## THE LONG WAR POSTURE

BY GREGORY D. FOSTER

The American public is being lulled into a false sense of insecurity. And insecurity, construed or real, is what gives those in power — our purported protectors — their self-righteous aura of indispensability.

President Bush; Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld; the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Peter Pace; the head of the U.S. Central Command, General John P. Abizaid; and the recently released *Quadrennial Defense Review*, among other authoritative purveyors of received wisdom, all warn us that we're embroiled in — and destined to be further subjected to — what is to be known as a Long War.

It would be one thing if such semantic legerdemain reflected revelatory strategic insight or a more sophisticated appreciation of the intrinsic nature of postmodern conflicts and enemies. But that is not the case. In fact, it's hard to avoid the cynical view that America's senior military leaders are willfully playing public relations handmaiden to their political overlords at the expense of a naïve, trusting citizenry.

Even as Long War rhetoric artfully circumvents such politically discomfiting terminology as "insurgency," its underlying message should be clear: We dutiful subjects should be quietly patient and not expect too much (if anything) too soon (if at all) from our rulers as they prosecute their unilaterally proclaimed war without end against ubiquitous evil.

The intent of the message is to dull our senses, to dampen our expectations, to thereby deaden the critical dissenting forces of democracy that produce political turbulence and impede autocratic license. Being warned here amounts to being disarmed — intellectually and civically.

For the unsuspecting among us, this is what adopting and institutionalizing a Long War posture really means:

~It will give permanency to the manufactured state of collective fear and emergency that provides pretext for the further imperialization of the Presidency.

~It will thereby extend the self-marginalization of a cowardly Congress shamelessly willing to waive its constitutional prerogatives rather than stand up to a self-anointed wartime commander-in-chief.

~It will have a "cry wolf" effect by numbing the public, which is tired of the permanent state of false emergency, to real threats and emergencies when they arise.

~It will provide a defensible excuse for those in power to indefinitely postpone any meaningful demonstration of conclusive results, and thus full accountability, in their expanding martial forays abroad (except, of course, when it is politically expedient to declare that a successful end is at hand in a particular situation).

~It similarly will provide an excuse for the continued neglect of other critical national (especially "soft" domestic)

priorities — Social Security, health care, education, the environment — in favor of war's overriding importance.

~It will aggravate the undisciplined, unchecked practice of prolonged deficit spending that threatens to produce severe economic stagnations and budgetary crisis, especially as baby boomers become eligible for retirement.

~It will perpetuate the use of "emergency" supplemental military spending to circumvent the checks of the regular budget process and surreptitiously pad a bloated, gluttonous defense budget.

~It will lend continuing tacit legitimacy to the regularized use of force as a first (rather than a last) resort, diminishing the legitimacy and desirability of time-consuming, seemingly less decisive diplomacy.

~It will further blur the lines of demarcation between war and peace, domestic and international, military and police, criminal justice and intelligence, normalcy and emergency. The blurring of lines among military, police and intelligence activities will make the military less accountable to civilian authority.

~It will further threaten civil liberties, marginalize dissent and dissenters as unpatriotic, heighten government secrecy at the expense of transparency and engender continuing media self-censorship, all in the name of necessity, urgency and clear and present danger.

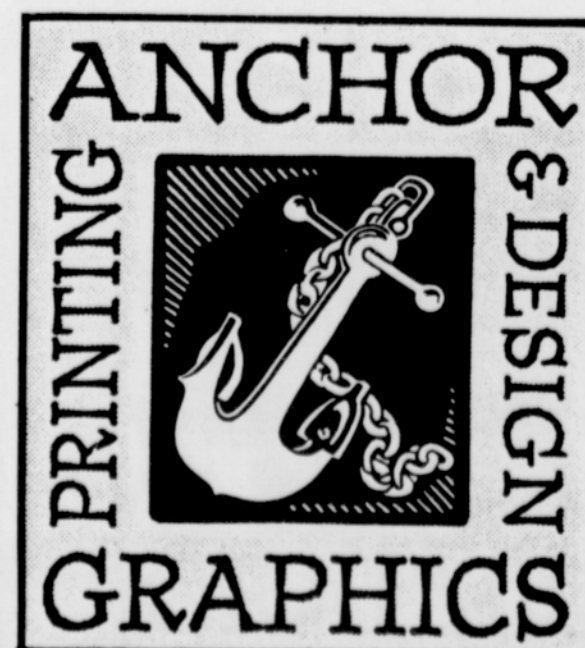
~It will perpetuate the self-serving Pentagon mythology of defense transformation by fostering the misleading impression that the rhetorical commitment to the Long War is matched by an underlying reality of overhaul in military missions, structure and capabilities.

~It will accentuate the alienation of the military from society in two ways: first, by reinforcing the belief of those in uniform that they are especially at risk and making undue sacrifices on behalf of a soft, lazy, unappreciative public; second, by exacerbating recruiting shortfalls and the attendant prospect of an increasingly unrepresentative force.

America's ruling elite has once again opted for rhetorical contrivance and the politics of fear over bold creative strategic leadership expected of the world's self-proclaimed only super-power.

Mesmerized by their own logic, they have failed to recognize that perpetual war can never lead to the ideal state of perpetual peace that Immanuel Kant spoke of over two centuries ago. It can only drain us of all we are and possess.

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