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# What Kind of War Are We Fighting, and Can We Win It?

## *A Symposium*

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*To mark the publication of Norman Podhoretz's World War IV: The Long Struggle Against Islamofascism (Doubleday), the editors of COMMENTARY addressed the following questions to a group of leading thinkers:*

1. Do you accept the term "World War IV," or the idea behind it, as an apt characterization of the West's battle with Islamic extremism, and do you, like Norman Podhoretz, see Iraq as a crucial early theater in that conflict?
2. Six years after 9/11, how would you assess our progress? What would you like to see happen next?
3. On the specific issue of the spread of democracy—a linchpin of the Bush Doctrine and a point of acute controversy between foreign-policy realists and neoconservatives—do you agree or disagree with Podhoretz that "democratization represents the best and perhaps even the only way to defeat Islamofascism and the terrorism it uses as its main weapon against us"?
4. Turning to the political climate at home, do you think the Bush Doctrine has a chance of surviving the elections of 2008, and if so in what form?

*The responses, fifteen in all, appear below in alphabetical order.*

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### **Fouad Ajami**

NORMAN PODHORETZ'S depiction of the war against Islamist radicalism as World War IV is apt. I have no quarrel with the description: I take it as pedagogy and exhortation and a call to vigilance. The radical Islamists have been sly enemies of order; they have flown under the radar, as it were. Theirs is more, much more, than a problem

of freelance terror, to be met by police operations. They have declared nothing less than an unrelenting war against the American presence in the Arab-Islamic world, and they should be taken for the menace they are.

The region they contest—the Arab and Persian heartland of the Islamic world—cannot be ceded to them, for its obvious importance to the global economy. A challenge of this magnitude has to be

thoroughly defeated. It is commonplace—but “soft” in the main—to say that this is a war of ideas for the hearts and minds of the populations of that region. What happens on the battlefield will settle this great contest. Hearts and minds will follow, and mirror, the military outcome.

The origins and legitimacy of the Iraq war have been endlessly debated. For me, it is and remains a just and noble war, waged by an American leader who was fated to take on the troubles and malignancies of the Arab-Islamic world. The distinction between the Islamism of al Qaeda and the “secularism” of the Iraqi regime is a distinction without a difference. A road led from Kabul to Baghdad. We took the war from the Afghan front, which the Arab preachers and financiers and jihadists had secured as a base for their operations, to the Arab world itself. In Baghdad, a despot at once cruel and (fortunately) clumsy held out to the Arabs an example of defiance, proof that no price would be paid by those who took on American power. Once we pulled the trigger in 2003, Iraq became the central front in the war on terror. Fail there, and our enemies would have been emboldened beyond measure, and the world would have depicted our failure as evidence that history’s tide was running against us.

We have paid dearly in Iraq, but we held the line, we maintained the American position in the region, we supplied proof that we would not scurry for cover and that we believed there were things worth fighting for. The despots in the region feigned a lack of interest in the fate of Saddam’s brutal sons, and in Saddam’s execution. But make no mistake: these personalistic regimes got the message. There but for the grace of God, they thought, go we. The sacrifices in Iraq paid dividends in Iraq’s neighborhood.

WE HAVE DONE reasonably well since 9/11. American memory is unduly short, and the memory of 9/11 is steadily being lost to us. There is a growing conviction that this was a single day of grief, that the warrant given to our government back then by the most liberal of the liberals should now be withdrawn. The vigilance our country sanctioned after 9/11 is now seen as overly intrusive and given to paranoia. But we take the world as it is, and at least some of the illusions held about Arab and Muslim affairs, about the sources and wellsprings of anti-Americanism, have been shed.

I would very much want to see a more critical assessment of the role of Egypt and of Egyptians in the trail that led to 9/11. Here is a country on the

American payroll, a regime in the orbit of American power. But Egypt’s ruler has snookered us all along. He takes America’s coin but rides with its enemies. He has winked at, and fed, a culture suffused with anti-modernism and anti-Americanism—and anti-Semitism, their inevitable companion. The prestige of Egypt in Arab affairs is great, and so is the influence of its radicalism.

Those in the know—and those who pretend to be—have written and spoken about the influence exercised by the Egyptian thinker and pamphleteer Sayyid Qutb (executed by the Nasser regime in 1966) on the course of modern Islamism. This is good as far as it goes. What is needed is a more sustained analysis of the depth of Egyptian radicalism, and of the skill of that despotic regime in directing the wrath of its own thwarted population toward the United States. Beyond this lies the need for a proper response to the Hosni Mubarak regime. We need to cast that regime adrift.

But grant George W. Bush his due: he broke with Scowcroftian realism, he broke with the likes of James Baker. His speech of November 6, 2003, to the National Endowment for Democracy will remain, for decades, a noble American declaration. It had a startling *mea culpa*:

Sixty years of Western nations excusing and accommodating the lack of freedom in the Middle East did nothing to make us safe—because in the long run, stability cannot be purchased at the expense of liberty. As long as the Middle East remains a place where freedom does not flourish, it will remain a place for stagnation, resentment, and violence for export.

It was this declaration, and the larger Bush campaign for democracy, that gave heart to the Cedar Revolution in Lebanon, which rid that country of a long and cruel Syrian captivity; it was this drive that gave continued justification to the Iraq war after the hunt for weapons of mass destruction there ran aground. The historical truth of Bush’s declaration is indisputable. The Bush Doctrine brought about a veritable reversal in the realm of ideas: here was a conservative President asserting that freedom can travel to distant shores, that we can take it to strangers beyond, and here were his liberal critics at home falling back on a surly argument that Iraq, Lebanon, and other Arab and Islamic domains offer insurmountable obstacles to the spread of freedom.

Natan Sharansky is perhaps on the mark with his observation that Bush, in holding onto his belief, is a lonely man even within his own circle of power.

To come to that belief, Bush needed no great literacy in political theory. Intuitively, he grasped the connection between autocracy and terror. Norman Podhoretz's argument on behalf of liberty reads that landscape with clarity. The peace of pharaohs and autocrats, the stability presented by despotism, is deceptive. The politics of democracy can be messy, of new democracies messier still. But we ought to have the courage of running freedom's risks.

Yes, a poisoned Palestinian political culture opted for Hamas in a free election in early 2006. This is what it is: an expression of the malady of Palestinian politics. The larger case for democratic reform is bigger, and nobler, than the state of Palestinian politics. Travel to Iraq, as I have done repeatedly since 2003; go to Kurdistan, which had seen endless sorrow. Faith in democracy is all these populations have going for them, their solace and their pride.

What shall stick on the ground here at home of Bush's campaign for freedom? Hard to say. The peerless Henry Kissinger, in *Diplomacy* (1994), writes of the great paradox of Woodrow Wilson and his enduring influence on American thought. Wilson's program for the League of Nations was rebuffed, his dream of collective security was set aside. But oddly, Wilsonianism triumphed. "For three generations," Kissinger writes, "critics have savaged Wilson's analysis and conclusions; and yet, in all this time, Wilson's principles have remained the bedrock of American foreign-policy thinking."

Whether a similar fate awaits Bush's diplomacy of freedom cannot be known as yet. I suppose it will be in Iraq, a hard and tough soil, where the proposition on behalf of freedom will meet its test. But Bush rolled history's dice. He held out to the Arabs a respectful message: that despotism was not necessarily something fated—"written"—for them for all time.

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## John R. Bolton

NORMAN PODHORETZ correctly and concisely names the war we have been in, consciously or not, since well before September 11, 2001. He accurately depicts the failures of many in America and Europe to understand the nature of the Islamofascist threat, let alone formulate strategies to deal with it. He identifies the terrorist threat posed in Iraq, and places it in the larger context of what will unquestionably be a "long, hard slog."

Well and good, but let's cut to the chase: what does any of this have to do with promoting democracy? My response: in the short run, very little, and in the longer run, who knows?

First, I think our emphasis must be more on liberty than democracy, which a careful reading of President Bush's speeches shows is *his* real emphasis. To state the obvious, liberty is not the same as democracy, the first being freedom from government, the second being one way to select governments. Many Muslim societies—and many non-Muslim societies, while we are on the subject—need the former more urgently than the latter.

Second, "democracy" is a word used so frequently and so ritualistically that, like many incantations, it loses meaning over time. Parliamentary democracies, for example, merge executive and legislative powers in the hands of one electoral majority, something the framers of our Constitution rejected as dangerous to liberty. Moreover, proportional-representation systems, especially those with national party lists, are not as reflective of electorates as are single-member districts.

Is Europe, where these approaches predominate, as "democratic" as the United States? I think not. Moreover, democracy is not necessarily an end point in politics, but perhaps only a way station. Via the European Union, "Europe" may be passing from a pre-democratic feudal society to a post-democratic bureaucratic one, parts of the continent having sojourned only relatively briefly as actual democracies. Russia may be a place where democracy was a long time in coming but only a short time in going. China, home of the original Mandarins, may never get there. These are hardly models for the Middle East or other Muslim lands.

Third, how feasible is "democracy" right now? Writing in *COMMENTARY* in November 1979, Jeane Kirkpatrick rebuked the foreign-policy initiatives of the Carter administration by citing John Stuart Mill's conditions for representative government:

One, that the people should be willing to receive it; two, that they should be willing and able to do what is necessary for its preservation; three, that they should be willing and able to fulfill the duties and discharge the functions which it imposes on them.

And Kirkpatrick went on to observe:

In the relatively few places where they exist, democratic governments have come into being slowly, after extended prior experience with more limited forms of participation during which leaders have reluctantly grown accustomed to tolerating dissent and opposition, opponents have accepted the notion that they may defeat but not destroy incumbents, and people have become aware of government's effects on their lives and of their own possible effects on government. Decades, if not centuries, are normally required for people to acquire the necessary disciplines and habits.

FOURTH, HAVING a Burkean disposition, I shy away from abstract theory. Take three specific cases: Iraq, Iran, and Pakistan.

Iraq does not appear to measure up to the Mill-Kirkpatrick standard. Its Shiites and Kurds are settling scores, retaliating for decades of brutal Baathist rule. Sunnis, acutely aware of their minority status, are engaging in terrorism precisely to prevent scores from being settled. Meanwhile, Shiites are fighting their own internecine terrorist battles, facilitated by Iran.

Once again, Kirkpatrick called the shot: "leaders of all major sectors of the society must agree to pursue power only by legal means, must eschew (at least in principle) violence, theft, and fraud, and must accept defeat when necessary." Doesn't sound like Baghdad.

My solution in Iraq is prosaic: praise democracy, but pass the ammunition. Critics of the Bush Doctrine, unjustifiably, will gauge its success almost entirely according to the outcome in Iraq. To preserve the doctrine beyond January 19, 2009, American interests require that no part of Iraq become a base for terrorism. If that can be done with a democratic Iraq, wonderful; if it has to be done with less than Jeffersonian purity, fine.

Next, Iran's vigorous pursuit of deliverable nuclear weapons is a grave long-term threat to the United States, Israel, and our worldwide interests. Four-plus years of American deference to Europe's predilection for negotiation has brought Iran that much closer to its goal, and yielded precious few options to prevent it. Of these, unfortunately, only

regime change in Tehran or the use of force against Iran's nuclear program has any realistic prospect of success. Both are grim choices, to be sure. In these very pages, Norman Podhoretz has cogently argued for military action ("The Case for Bombing Iran," June 2007), eschewing the blossoming of democracy's flower children in favor of cold steel.

In Pakistan, finally, so far the only Islamic country with nuclear weapons, Pervez Musharraf's government is under siege by civilian politicians clamoring for a return to democracy. Pakistan's history is replete with corrupt and incompetent civilian politicians, replaced periodically by the military's "steel skeleton," but with neither experience yielding especially happy results. Musharraf is rightly faulted for many things, especially inadequately purging the army of Islamic militants and a listless pursuit of al Qaeda, but does anyone seriously argue that politicians will better harness Pakistan's military?

With a nuclear arsenal up for grabs, the stakes in Pakistan are high. Bolstered by the Bush administration's evident support, the politicians continue to try to force Musharraf out, which likely will be hailed as a triumph of democracy. That may be, but I am far from certain that elected civilians running Islamabad will make us safer from a loss of command-and-control over those nuclear weapons, or from the danger that they will come into terrorist hands. This is a risky way to experiment with democratic theory.

In prior world wars, we concentrated on victory first, not the purity of our allies. Similarly, I'd rather win World War IV distastefully than lose it for the sake of purity. I actually think Norman Podhoretz would agree.

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## Max Boot

BY PUBLISHING *World War IV*, Norman Podhoretz has performed yet another important public service, showing once again why he was such a worthy recipient of the Presidential Medal of Freedom. At a time when our political leaders are

split over whether we are actually at war with terrorists, when opposition to the war effort in Iraq is growing, and when apathy and complacency appear to be settling in among the public, he lucidly and compellingly explains why we are fighting, how we can prevail, and why we must do so.

My major disagreement with him is pretty minor. It concerns what to call this conflict. Labeling it World War IV assumes that the cold war was World War III, but almost nobody calls it that. Maybe they should, but they don't. As a matter of purely historical accuracy, moreover, the cold war should be called World War V, since the first world war was really the Seven Years' War, known in North America as the French and Indian War, while the second was the Napoleonic War. If we follow this logic, we would relabel the 1914-18 conflict World War III and the 1939-45 conflict World War IV, in the same way that George Lucas relabeled his first *Star Wars* film "Episode IV" after producing three "prequels."

But merely to advance this argument is to reveal its impracticality. Accurate or not, certain terms enter widespread public usage and cannot be dislodged by argumentation, no matter how persuasive. Thus the conflict against Communism was called the cold war, not World War III, and the current conflict has been called the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT) or the Long War. I am sympathetic to the objections to both those terms, but they have entered the lexicon, and for better or worse we're stuck with them.

In any case, there is a significant difference between World Wars I and II, on the one hand, and, on the other, the cold war and the GWOT. The former were relatively short bursts of highly concentrated violence in which the U.S. and its allies waged all-out war to defeat nation-states. The latter conflicts are longer and more amorphous. Sometimes they call for direct military action (e.g., the Korean and Vietnam wars, or the Afghanistan and Iraq wars) but more often they require the use of diplomacy, propaganda, intelligence, covert action, foreign military assistance, and other policy tools. And while we sometimes have to contend with nation-state foes, in many cases our enemies are semi-autonomous guerrilla groups or political organizations.

During the latter stages of the cold war, for instance, the U.S. had to deal with organized protests like the nuclear-freeze movement as well as with terrorist groups like the Red Brigades. Both had links to Moscow and its satellites, but were more than merely Russian puppets. Today, we face a wide variety of Islamofascist groups, many of which have

only the most tenuous connections with "al Qaeda Central."

The right way to defeat most of these groups is not to wage classic conventional conflict—as might be implied by the term World War IV—but instead to carry out a global counterinsurgency. This, like all successful counterinsurgencies, must be predominantly political, not military, in its focus.

How are we doing in that counterinsurgency six years after 9/11? By the most important measure—terrorist attacks in the United States—spectacularly well. By other measures, not so well: as a recent National Intelligence Estimate noted, al Qaeda Central has managed to reconstitute itself in Pakistan, and its affiliates around the world have continued to carry out vicious attacks.

Two of the most important fronts in this larger struggle are in Iraq and Afghanistan, and here again the situation is mixed. Afghanistan seems to be doing a bit better than Iraq, while Iraq seems to be doing a bit better than it was a year ago. But it is far too soon to know whether we will succeed in creating long-term stability and representative government in either country. In both cases, but especially in Iraq, our war effort has been marred by serious mistakes on the part of the Bush administration. Whether we can overcome those setbacks at this late date remains unclear, though I believe the "surge" in Iraq is making significant progress.

I AGREE with Norman Podhoretz that a commitment to democratization must remain a key American objective in the GWOT, and here again the progress report is mixed. I am more critical of the Bush administration than he is for not doing enough to live up to its soaring rhetoric about spreading freedom. In too many cases we are still dancing to the tune of dictators who insist "it's me or the mullahs" even as their own misrule actually strengthens the hand of the most radical agitators.

I admit that democracy promotion cannot be our only interest, and that we have to be careful about how we go about it. Nevertheless, I think there is more that the President could be doing to carry out his stated agenda. For a start, he should condition further aid to Egypt on the release from prison of the liberal opposition leader Ayman Nour.

For all its problems of implementation, I believe the Bush Doctrine will outlive this administration. Its two central tenets—promoting democracy and taking preemptive action when necessary—are not terribly controversial in the abstract even if one particular application, in Iraq, has become very controversial indeed. None of the major Demo-

cratic or Republican presidential contenders is pledging to eschew either one of these ideas. And that is not surprising, because both were a feature of American foreign policy long before George W. Bush was born. The Bush “revolution” primarily consists of elevating their importance rhetorically if not always in practice. (Note that we have not waged any preemptive wars since the invasion of Iraq, and that our support for democracy has become very attenuated in the second Bush term.)

Future Presidents may tone down the rhetoric, but they will still feel compelled to act preemptively against terrorists and in favor of democracy. At least sometimes. But then, as Norman Podhoretz also observes, no President, not even this one, is ever a model of consistency, and any “doctrine” inevitably simplifies the messy reality of policy implementation.

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## Reuel Marc Gerecht

IF ONE SEES the world as Islamic radicals do, Islam as a faith and as a civilization is locked in a brutal struggle with the West—usually described as a baleful place of aggressive Christians and Jews, or a seductive, immoral realm of atheists (who formerly were aggressive Christians and Jews). Where once this collision was confined primarily to the Middle East, today Islamic radicals regularly concern themselves with the situation, demands, and God-given rights of large Muslim communities living in the West itself. In the last 40 years, Islam has become a truly global faith—something that was not the case when the Egyptian Islamist Sayyid Qutb, one of the most influential modern radicals, was in his prime in the 1950's, or even when Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini joined the ranks of the most successful modern militants.

It is certainly fair to define one's enemies and their battles as they themselves do. Historians, diplomats, spies, and journalists who fail to do this often commit the sin of mirror-imaging—a common problem for secularized Westerners looking at the Muslim Middle East. So on these grounds it

is hard to disagree with Norman Podhoretz's use of the phrase World War IV to describe the violent onslaught of Islamic holy warriors against the West, and in particular against the United States, its cutting edge.

Nevertheless, I am uncomfortable with the appellation. My objection is both philosophical and mundane: it gives too much coherence to the enemy, and sociologically and geographically it leaves me frustrated.

ISLAMIC RADICALISM is still a leaderless tempest: the birth of al Qaeda was an attempt to give organization and charismatic inspiration to a movement that was easy to locate (find a Saudi-funded mosque, and you can usually find the component parts) but difficult to define consistently. Islamic extremism's greatest growth spurt in the 20th century occurred after Saudi Arabia, spooked by Khomeini's Islamic revolution, met Iranian proselytizing head-on. Absent this clash, which occurred concurrently with Osama bin Laden's efforts to rouse devout but often uninterested Muslims to war against the Soviets in Afghanistan, Sunni extremism would not be so globally developed today.

The United States was by no means incidental to that clash: at the mosque level, both sides gained adherents by preaching hostility to America. But this common hatred is messy and tense. Radical Iranian commentary on al Qaeda, for example, is a hodge-podge of envy, admiration, and disgust. For all Muslim holy warriors, modernity is the cause of the ethical freefall that in turn allows them to regard the slaughter of women and children as permissible. Nevertheless, these men are also at war with the vast majority of Muslims, who, regardless of their attitude toward the United States, are considered moral backsliders eagerly consuming the worst, if not the best, of the Western world.

Side by side with Sunni and Shiite holy warriors there exist fundamentalists who similarly loathe the United States and want to extirpate much of Western culture from their societies—but who are not themselves active participants in a jihad against America. In common with many liberal Arabs and (for that matter) European intellectuals, they may have experienced a gleeful *frisson* when the Twin Towers fell; and they would certainly prefer it if their governments limited their military and intelligence dealings with the United States. But, while knowing the risks of contamination, they might also well choose to send their children for higher education in the United States. (Iran's Islamic revolution was born of this contradiction.)

Either voluntarily or under police pressure, devout Muslims like these have been critical to the efforts of Sunni regimes to monitor, corral, and kill violent extremists. In Shiite Iran, clerics and intellectuals who are not really enemies of the regime are at the same time capable of making trenchant, devastating critiques of the ruling mullahs. No American should want to entrust a nuclear weapon to any of these people, but they are more at odds with the clerical regime than they are with the United States.

I do not feel enough of this nuance, contradiction, and internal Muslim turbulence in *World War IV*. Yes, the United States must defend itself militarily against those Muslims who define their identity inextricably through violent hatred of the West. But characterizing this necessary self-defense as a world war is too unwieldy, too brusque, and too easily abused by Muslims and Westerners who *really* want to see a more developed clash of civilizations.

Is IRAQ pivotal to the war against Islamic extremism? Absolutely. Al Qaeda now describes the ongoing struggle there in more momentous terms than those formerly used by bin Laden to describe the defeat of the Soviet Union in Afghanistan. The view of clerical Iran is not much different. Both parties intend to radicalize Iraq's Shiites: to create a Hizballah in Mesopotamia. It is difficult to foresee these dueling radicalisms exhausting each other to America's advantage.

Rating the Bush administration's progress likewise depends on Iraq. If the administration fails there, then we will have greatly strengthened the forces of radical Islam. By comparison, Bill Clinton, who failed altogether to rise to the challenge of bin Laden, could look very good.

Is democracy the answer to this extremism? Probably yes. Even thoughtful arguments to the contrary, such as those advanced by Martin Kramer, take us back to an embrace of Muslim dictatorships in the hope that under these "stable" regimes, Islamic radicalism will die out. That is possible. But I think Islamic history teaches the opposite. We have been waiting for decades for the Middle East's autocracies to permit, à la Atatürk, the emergence of the building blocks of freer societies. Instead, most of these oligarchies have gotten worse.

"Muslims as a community cannot agree upon an error" is an old Sunni dictum waiting to be tested in the democratic arena. Muslim democracy is not likely to be pretty or particularly liberal. But it offers a chance to imbue popular will with a divine sanction, and a chance for Muslims to deracinate

the holy warriors from their communities. It is hard to see anything more than continuing stagnation emerging from the Mubaraks, the ben Alis, the Assads, the Sauds, or even the Hashemites.

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## Victor Davis Hanson

I DO ACCEPT the term World War IV, as well as the idea behind it, and here is why I think Norman Podhoretz is right. We are in a long, terrible war with an Islamic fascist ideology that embodies an expansionist, authoritarian creed of religious hatred, anti-Semitism, and reactionary mythology. Fighting, albeit on a sub-state level and against relatively small numbers of combatants, transcends borders, with various fronts even outside the Middle East. Worldwide, Islamists feed on both stealthy state sanction and occasional tacit approval from an aggrieved Muslim "street." And the tenets of jihadism—best found in the rantings of Ayman al-Zawahiri and reified by the operations of bin Laden's al Qaeda—are no more disjointed than were the World War II anti-American creeds cobbled together by the various German, Italian, and Japanese militarists.

This present war, brutal though it is, is in military terms not as ghastly as past global wars that cost tens of thousands of American lives. (At least that is the case so far, without the terrorists' acquisition of nuclear devices.) But politically it is far harder to conduct because of international dependence on an oil-rich tribal Middle East, the influence of instantaneous global communications, and the therapeutic ethos of our own postmodern society. Another obvious difference from past global wars is that belligerents like Iran, Syria, Saudi Arabia, and Pakistan, all of which are involved in funding or aiding the main perpetrators, have denied culpability. Their insidious wink-and-nod diplomacy is aimed at codifying the idea of "stateless terrorists"—and, thus, the corollary idea that we cannot respond with conventional force to national practitioners or enablers of Islamic terror.

Still, this *is* a wholesale war against the idea of America, both in the real and metaphorical sense, conducted both through violent and non-violent means against us and our friends from Manhattan and London to Beirut and Anbar. The Islamists, like past ideological foes, are existential enemies who do indeed hate the contradictions and destabilization brought to traditional life by Western-inspired modernization. They also thirst to bring us down, empowered both by their alleged military victory over the Soviets in Afghanistan and by the long-term laxity of the West.

Iraqi democracy is an anathema to Islamists, and so Iraq is the crucial front that, magnet-like, draws in terrorists from far and wide. To suppose otherwise is to believe that we simply create terrorists *ex nihilo* who then flock to Iraq on the news we are there—and will leave and go home if only we would depart. But most will not leave unless and until they are driven out, and besides, their brothers are already ubiquitous and deadly in places where we have no real presence, landscapes as varied as Lebanon, Sudan, and Somalia, not to mention Europe.

PROGRESS: the two worst regimes in the Middle East are gone. In Afghanistan and Iraq, the war has shifted to a political/military struggle to stabilize reform governments. Most of the al-Qaeda leadership that started the war is either dead, scattered, or in custody, and bin Laden, supposedly still a magnetic Saladin, dares not leave his cave in Waziristan. More to the point, a recent Pew poll revealed that his popularity is falling in the Middle East, and with it overall support for the tactic of suicide bombing.

Recent changes in European governments and immigration policy, and security measures here at home, have created a Western climate much more inimical to radical Islam than before. Our counter-efforts bear fruit. It simply is harder now—though far from impossible—to pull off an attack of a 9/11 magnitude. Majority-party congressional Democrats may damn Guantanamo, wiretaps, and the Patriot Act, but they still have enough political savvy to do little if anything to repeal such successful instruments of deterrence.

On the downside, and on the ideological front, the jihadists have shown an uncanny ability to recycle or repackage old multiculturalist slurs against Western capitalist democracy, while we too often assert rather than explain why and how we do what we do. In the meantime, still thriving at home are the more outrageous conspiracy theories. The fraud

of Michael Moore, the bile of Patrick J. Buchanan, do take a toll; a Bill Maher, a MoveOn.org General “Betray Us” ad, or a Rosy O’Donnell lowers the bar of the shameful, and so too does the mainstream media’s standard narrative of Iraq as all IED’s and suicide belts. Vietnam aside, I cannot think of any prior war in which our soldiers have been compared with the likes of Nazis, Stalinists, and other mass murderers by senior members of Congress, or pronouncements *in mediis rebus* by a Senate majority leader that the war is “lost.” Our country is confused and angry, and we are not sure of the morrow.

As is usual in wars, the battlefield will adjudicate things better than those who offer mere opinions. If General David Petraeus stabilizes Iraq enough to allow reconciliation to proceed, then the world will start making the necessary political adjustments in our favor; if he should not, then catastrophe looms.

What next? Immediately there should be more urgent international efforts to isolate Iran entirely, and financially to squeeze that regime by boycotts, embargos, and blockades if its nuclear program continues as envisioned. But the key right now remains Iraq. We must remember that neither the Iranian nor the Syrian regime could spread terror, or perhaps even long endure, once truly reformed governments are in place in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Lebanon. In particular, the Iraqis’ success spells their failure.

I ADMIRE Norman Podhoretz for using the much-caricatured term “democratization.” Critics seek to equate this with some sort of naïve embrace of mere plebiscites, rather than an evolutionary process toward the entire framework of constitutional government, from independent judiciaries to human-rights guarantees and freedom of expression. In any case, are we to believe that, because the terrorists of Hamas were elected in Gaza, our efforts at stabilizing the Iraqi reform government or prodding Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak have thereby been refuted?

Advocacy of political reform offers choices other than dictatorship and theocracy. Despite the slander against it by opponents of the Bush Doctrine, promotion of democracy remains the best way to address the contradictions of fundamentalist tribal cultures that suddenly have trillions of petrodollars at their disposal to fund anti-Western terrorists. In the meantime, and along the way, a program to reduce the world price of oil through conservation, alternate energies, and increased petroleum production is now a matter not just of free-market economics but of national survival.

As for whether the Bush Doctrine will survive, in the short term I fear not. Today's Democrats, like so many old-fashioned right-wing isolationists, appear to regard the Iraqis as unworthy of American sacrifice, and the brave emergence of Iraqi voters and reformers as signifying no more than tribal or mob rule. How odd that our pessimistic Left seems rather to have resigned itself to the ultimate triumph of the often cowardly Islamists than mobilized to help the Iraqis who bravely fight them.

For their part, the Republican presidential candidates concentrate mainly on not "losing" Iraq. Most (but not all) would seem to welcome some undefined secular, perhaps authoritarian order that would at least allow us to leave *something* firm behind. But otherwise, on the Right as on the Left, advocating consensual government abroad now seems to be considered equivalent to engaging in child abuse.

But the long term? The desire for freedom under popular constitutional government will not die, and neither will our national penchant for promoting it—since the alternatives are far worse. A popular desire for reform has awakened in places as diverse and unlikely as Lebanon, Libya, and Pakistan. At some point, in the not-so-distant future, despite the ordeal in Iraq, most will see that the antidote to the current pathology in the Middle East is some constitutional framework wherein the challenge of modernity is dealt with through free inquiry and debate. Otherwise, the present mess will only grow and grow before passing into a far more dangerous nuclear stage.

It was not the neoconservative support for democratization, or a determination to remove fascist regimes, that led to 9/11, but the lethal combination of appeasement of terrorism and the cynical endorsement of a Middle East dictatorial order through the Carter, Reagan, Bush I, and Clinton administrations. How peculiar, and how sad, that a mere six years after September 11, many are prepared to deem such policies preferable, if not, absurdly, to proclaim them successful.

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## Daniel Henninger

**B**EFORE answering whether Norman Podhoretz is correct that we have the misfortune to be living through World War IV, permit me some relevant descriptive narrative.

On the Saturday I traveled down to the *Wall Street Journal's* offices in lower Manhattan to write this essay, my trip from the edge of Ground Zero through the World Financial Center's now-restored Winter Garden took me past five groups of tourists numbering about twenty each. All were there to see Ground Zero. One group was standing by a window overlooking the site itself—still mostly stained concrete walls—while a tour guide explained the events of September 11.

For six years, I have watched these tourist groups arrive here *every day*. Many are middle-class Europeans, young and old, from Italy, Spain, France, and Germany. Many snap photos, trying to capture the entire sixteen-acre pit. Why do they come? Because virtually everyone in the world, together, while the event was happening, watched the two towers burn and collapse. They know that fanatical Islamic men did it, and the details of their plot. I persist in believing that the world's watching those two office towers fall in real time produced an event of collective memory unique in history, and that its enduring effect on the consciousness of civilized peoples has been underestimated.

When I turned on my computer at the office that Saturday, the first news story I read was about the alleged leader of al Qaeda in Iraq, Abu Omar al-Baghdadi. On an Islamist website, the pseudonymous al-Baghdadi had offered \$100,000 for the murder of Lars Vilks, a cartoonist in Sweden whose drawing of Muhammad "dared insult our prophet." The offer was upped to \$150,000 if Vilks was "slaughtered like a lamb"—that is, with his throat cut. Al-Baghdadi also threatened attacks on Swedish companies, naming Ericsson, Volvo, Ikea, and Electrolux. All are global companies, which could be struck anywhere.

THAT WE ARE in a war touching most of the world's peoples, as did previous world wars, and that this war is with a strain of Islam infused with homicidal fanaticism, appears to me irrefutable. And I do not believe that the world's peoples, particularly here or in Europe, are complacent about it. They know that a determined enemy exists, know what that enemy can do, and, I believe, would like someone to figure out how to lead them against this enemy.

Right now, the world is not being led, in part be-

cause the Democratic party has resisted allowing this particular American President to serve in that role, instead dividing the country over the design of the war on terror—detentions, interrogations, surveillance, and the like. Therefore, a big question for the future success of this war is whether, should a Republican win in 2008, the Democratic party will continue its challenge to the traditional world-leadership role of the U.S. presidency.

One of the great benefits of Norman Podhoretz's intentionally provocative assertion that World War IV has begun is that it forces the argument toward defining the war. I am thinking in terms of a military doctrine. Obviously this war is not likely to involve the massed armies of the past century, much less the array of forces at Constantinople, which fell in 1453 to a Muslim army of several hundred thousand. After defeating Saddam's conventional army in 2003, the U.S., it seems clear in retrospect, did not find a military doctrine appropriate for the Islamic insurgency until it adopted General David Petraeus's counterinsurgency plan in January 2007. On the evidence, that plan is making substantial gains.

Its relevance as doctrine, however, is broader. The Iraq insurgency, as with Islamic terror so far, has consisted mainly of highly explosive and dramatic bombings. Bali, the Madrid train station, the London subways—all were bombings. In his testimony to Congress, General Petraeus summed up the components of a strategy to “counter” this kind of warfare:

To do counterterrorism requires conventional as well as all types of special-operations forces, and intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance assets.

This encapsulates the worldwide war that must be waged against Islamic extremism. What we face is not the least bit like a conventional world-war battlefield. This war is being fought wholly amid civilian population centers; thus, any conceivable doctrine will have to include surveillance and intelligence as crucial elements. What that means is that the unending political battle in Washington over electronic surveillance and “intel” has to be won. Otherwise, if this internal American political battle is not won, the world's cities will become increasingly vulnerable to bombs or, once the ingredients of WMD are purchased or assembled, worse.

AS FOR a political doctrine, democratization, in Norman Podhoretz's view, may be the only force strong enough to contain the centrifugal, messian-

ic ideology of jihadism. The “realist” opposition to this notion has been intense. As with the Democratic refusal to support, say, warrantless wiretaps, the realists' animosity to the Bush Doctrine and to “the neocons” seems as much personal grudge as theory. Both sides, however, err by undervaluing a force likely to play as great a role in taming Islam as either military containment or elections: namely, economics.

And specifically a more liberalized trade regime. Yes, it is boring, but it is also necessary, *and* it is explicitly part of the Bush Doctrine. Bush in 2003 proposed the Middle East Free Trade Agreement. Already, however, U.S. labor groups are in opposition to it, and mainly against Jordan, which has attracted investment from Wal-Mart, Liz Claiborne, Kohl's, L.L. Bean, and others.

What, across history, has been “normal” life for the world's males? Working at some job during the day and coming home to one's family at night. Autarky is dead. In the modern world, trade is imperative. If our politics ignore or thwart trade, why feign shock when the young men in Middle Eastern countries spend their idle hours at jihad rather than at an honest job?

The Bush Doctrine had better survive 2008. All the competing ideologies are malign or dangerous: Putin's market nationalism without democracy; China's soulless economic determinism; Iran's Hizballah-ism. Our political class should want, and publicly say it wants, Indonesia's nascent democracy of more than 200 million Muslims to improve. Why should it be any less difficult to say that we want and will encourage Iran's people to achieve a politics based on open party competition?

Those are the alternatives to what we have now. What we have now is this war.

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## Martin Kramer

NORMAN PODHORETZ wants to alarm us. At a time when many in America dismiss 9/11 as an aberration, and jihadism as a specter we have conjured up to justify military adventure, he insists that the enemy is real. Mired in denial, we have re-

fused to see the obvious pattern in the succession of attacks against us, of which 9/11 constituted one more escalation. And despite 9/11, we have slipped back into our default position of complacency, while our enemies build new capabilities, construct more outposts, and inculcate hatred in the minds of millions. This is a world war, he insists, and our refusal to *name* it is the most obvious sign of our confusion.

Yet the notion of “World War IV” is also meant to reassure us. The United States prevailed in every great global contest of the 20th century, whether it took four years (World War II) or forty (the cold war). Now we confront a threat from another ideology opposed to freedom and democracy. But we have defeated such ideologies before, we tell ourselves—indeed, they are *destined* to be defeated—and once we get ourselves in gear, the outcome cannot be in doubt. It will just take a while. This world war, Podhoretz tells us, “will almost certainly go on for three or four decades.”

That is *too* reassuring.

The 20th-century world wars were preceded by another species of global conflict. For more than a millennium after the rise of Islam in the 7th century, Christendom and Islam were locked in almost constant warfare. Today’s war, unlike the last three world wars, is being fought largely across the very same divide of religion and civilization that separated European Christendom and Islam. The ebb and flow of that conflict extended over centuries. It is a point our enemies emphasize. “This war is fundamentally religious,” bin Laden has said. “The people of the East are Muslims. They sympathize with Muslims against the people of the West, who are the Crusaders.” That is what bin Laden needs this war to be, if he is to fight it on *his* terms.

We shudder to think the world might be sliding back into that sort of conflict, and so we deny even the possibility while heaping praise on Islam. “This is not a clash of religions,” President Bush has said. “The faith of Islam teaches moral responsibility that ennobles men and women, and forbids the shedding of innocent blood. Instead, this is a clash of political visions.” That is what we need it to be, if we are to fight it on *our* terms.

Six years after 9/11, the problem is that most Muslims believe bin Laden is right. Over the summer, a poll showed that 80 percent of the people in Egypt, Indonesia, Morocco, and Pakistan agree that the United States is trying to “weaken and divide the Islamic world.” Not only have we failed to define the war for ourselves. We have failed to define it for the great mass of Muslims. The widespread belief among Muslims that we are waging

war against Islam could extend it well beyond three or four decades.

We also underestimate its breadth. We conveniently prefer to think that Iraq is the central front in this war, because the United States has 150,000 troops there. For all the defeatism deftly exposed by Podhoretz, most Americans know it would be difficult for the United States to lose in Iraq. But the danger now is that we might be outflanked. If Iran acquires nuclear weapons, or Pakistan falls to jihadists, or parts of Europe are colonized by Muslim radicals, the consequences could be dire.

Norman Podhoretz and I are foreign-policy advisers to presidential candidate Rudy Giuliani, who sees Iraq as one of many fronts. “The danger of focusing on Iraq too much,” he has said,

is that we miss the fact that the war on terror is broader than Iraq and that it will go on no matter what happens in Iraq. If we accomplish everything we want to accomplish and more in Iraq, it’s not going to win the war on terror. And if we don’t, it’s not going to lose the war on terror.

We have a tremendous stake in the battle for Iraq. But if we invest too little on other fronts because of it, we could lose the war.

FINALLY, WE have underestimated the resourcefulness of our enemies in exploiting our desire for democracy. Neoconservatives continue to deny the obvious: our Islamist enemies turn every “democratic” opening into their opportunity. Norman Podhoretz rightly pillories Jimmy Carter for having sacrificed the shah of Iran and allowed Ayatollah Khomeini, a “radical Islamist despot,” to seize power. The “blind” Carter administration “thought the United States would be better off without allies like the shah.” Alas, this blindness is perfectly emulated today by those who would cast aside Egypt’s Hosni Mubarak on the off chance that the Muslim Brotherhood will not replace him. Democracy promoters compete with jihadists in denouncing the evils of the Saudi monarchy, Pakistan’s president, and even Jordan’s king.

In World War II, Franklin Roosevelt allied with Stalin to defeat Hitler. Norman Podhoretz elsewhere has said that that alliance “was as much a moral imperative as it was a case of realpolitik.” This war cannot be won without similar alliances, and shunning them will only abet our enemies.

For the Bush Doctrine to survive Bush, it will have to incorporate all we have learned since he formulated it. Much of it comes down to this: the

Middle East is not Europe, Iraq is not Germany, and Afghanistan is not Japan. (They are not Vietnam, either.) The road to hell is paved with bad analogies, which are no substitute for lived experience and specific knowledge. According to the Greek poet Archilochus, “the fox knows many things, but the hedgehog knows one big thing.” The hedgehogs have taken the Bush Doctrine as far as they can. Now it is the turn of the foxes.

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## William Kristol

MANY OF THE quarrels that dominate American politics today turn on the status of 9/11. Is it to be understood primarily as a tragedy, or as an attack? A moment to move beyond, or a defining moment? A talking point, or a turning point?

Norman Podhoretz considers 9/11 an attack, a defining moment, and a turning point. The *New York Times* columnist Thomas Friedman, who is as prominent a figure in the liberal foreign-policy establishment as Podhoretz is in the neoconservative counterestablishment, would beg to differ. Three years after 9/11, Friedman criticized the Bush administration and its supporters for being “addicted to 9/11.” Friedman looked forward to the day when September 11 would once again be restored

to its rightful place on the calendar: as the day after September 10 and before September 12. I do not want it to become a day that defines us. Because ultimately September 11 is about them—the bad guys—not about us. We’re about the Fourth of July.

Now Norman Podhoretz, whose most recent memoir bears the title *My Love Affair with America*, is no slouch when it comes to celebrating the Fourth of July. But he would surely diagnose Friedman’s comments as symptomatic of liberals’ lack of seriousness. It would be nice to wish away the significance of 9/11 because one does not “want it to become a day that defines us.” But wishful thinking—however precious—is still wishful thinking.

What neoconservatives know is that we are not

simply free to choose what defines us. They also know that 9/11 was not simply “about them—the bad guys.” It was, and is, also about us. It is about acts of heroism in New York and at the Pentagon and aboard United Flight 93. And it is about our subsequent response to that day’s attack—a response that has featured a fair amount of courage and honor and even, on occasion, genuine nobility.

Podhoretz’s book is unembarrassedly framed by 9/11. He quotes one liberal internationalist bemoaning the “post-11 September reorientation of American foreign policy.” In response, he argues that 9/11 demanded just such a reorientation, and that the President deserves great credit for providing one. The Bush Doctrine—at least as proclaimed, if not always in practice—consists of an intolerance of terror or state sponsorship of terror, a willingness to consider preemption, especially against terror-states developing weapons of mass destruction, and a commitment to fostering liberal democracy as part of a solution to the problems of the Middle East. Podhoretz ably makes the case for such a reorientation of American foreign policy.

Is “WORLD WAR IV” the best term for the struggle we are in? About that I am less convinced. Analogies to the early years of the cold war, or to the rocky course of World War II, can be helpful in stimulating thinking about the challenges we face—but in the end an analogy is just an analogy. And, as is par for the course for many grand historical analogies, the differences in the cases cited are often as striking as the similarities, as Podhoretz himself sometimes acknowledges. I might add that I am also not convinced of the utility of the term Islamofascism, since the modifier seems more fundamental to the phenomenon than the noun. I would incline to use either jihadism, our enemies’ own term, or takfirism, the term favored by mainstream Muslims fighting the terrorists.

But whatever one’s terminological preferences, the core of Podhoretz’s case is eminently sensible: that, post-9/11, we live in a new world, requiring new thinking. He provides much useful guidance to such thinking, especially with respect to the war over the war: i.e., the domestic political fights both over Iraq and over the broader struggle against terror-sponsoring dictators and death-loving jihadists. Podhoretz is alarmed by the strength of the antiwar movement and of anti-Americanism more broadly. But he is heartened by the strengths of America, particularly “the young Americans in uniform, all volunteers.” To them, he offers a striking tribute: “In their determination, their courage, and

their love of country, they are by all accounts a match, and more than a match, for their forebears.” The 9/11 generation is one reason Podhoretz is able to resist Whittaker Chambers-like despair.

Doubts are harder to avoid when one turns to the question of our leaders. But here, too, there are reasons for hope. Bush has in many respects risen to the occasion, and today’s leading Republican presidential candidates do not seek to shirk our post-9/11 responsibilities. For their part, the Democratic candidates at least occasionally show signs of knowing better than their campaign rhetoric typically suggests. But it is true that the vacuousness of the mainstream media, the childishness of many in Congress, and the fatuousness of the foreign-policy establishment—these do not fill one with confidence.

The columnist Mark Steyn recently reported on a speech at a 9/11 commemoration ceremony by Deval Patrick, the liberal governor of Massachusetts. September 11, said Patrick, was “a failure of human beings to understand each other, to learn to love each other.” Steyn’s comment:

We should beware anyone who seeks to explain 9/11 by using the words “each other”: they posit a grubby equivalence between the perpetrator and the victim—that the “failure to understand” derives from the culpability of both parties.

And, Steyn continued:

It was the failure of one group of human beings to understand that the second group of human beings was determined to kill them that led the crew and passengers of those Boston flights to stick with the obsolescent 1970’s hijack procedures until it was too late. Unfortunately, the obsolescent 1970’s multiculti love-groove inclinations of society at large are harder to dislodge.

Since 9/11, these destructive inclinations have begun to be dislodged. They would be further dislodged—perhaps even routed—if more of our leaders were animated by just a bit of Norman Podhoretz’s implacable determination and fighting spirit.

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## Andrew C. McCarthy

IN HIS characteristically powerful new book, Norman Podhoretz could not be more right in describing our great struggle against Islamic extremism as World War IV, portraying the stakes involved, and identifying Iraq as a key early theater in the conflict. My disagreements, which are considerably less consequential than our agreements, lie in the area of democracy promotion—both its significance to the Bush Doctrine and its utility as a strategy for victory.

It is profoundly disappointing that, only six years after 9/11, and three decades after the onslaught of militant Islam in its latest iteration, it should still be necessary to discuss whether we are embroiled in an epic battle for the survival of our way of life. Yet that is where we find ourselves, notwithstanding the endurance—indeed, according to the latest National Intelligence Estimate, the resurgence—of an incorrigible enemy.

In several ways, we are better off today than we were six years ago. In the 1990’s, when radical Islam was at war and we were not, the point of the counterterrorism spear (in fact, pretty much its totality) was the criminal-justice system. But prosecutions neutralized only a tiny fraction of the growing enemy: fewer than three dozen convicted over eight years of attacks, and those mostly low-level players. This emboldened the extremists, inviting more attacks. Since President Bush has taken up the challenge and fought the war as a war, we have significantly improved internal security while killing and capturing thousands of jihadists, mainly overseas. It is not an accident that we have not been attacked domestically.

On the other hand, the administration has done a poor job communicating what we are doing and why we must do it—would that it had had Norman Podhoretz on the case full-time. Yes, the President has given several eloquent speeches. Contrary to the case in the first three world wars, however, the nation does not exhibit a vested interest in the outcome. It is as if the burdens of the war have been delegated to the American armed forces and their families while the rest of us blithely go about our lives—an oddity I wish I could better explain after a massive domestic attack and continuous, unabashed promises of a reprise. This national ennui couples dangerously with such revolutionary developments of our age as the rise of international law, the shift in civil-rights emphasis from the common weal to the individual and his privacy, and the suspicion with which we regard executive power.

The result is dangerous vulnerability. The national mood shifts away from war's sense of urgency, back toward the notion of jihadism as a nuisance to be managed by legal processes and diplomatic engagements. The enemy makes great inroads here at home, where concerns about due process for terrorists generate more angst than does the suffering of terror victims.

Concurrently, al Qaeda is emerging as a stronger network. Immediately after 9/11, with its command-and-control decimated and its hierarchy in flight, the movement became more dependent on widely dispersed cells, which became more autonomous but less capable. Now, however, even as these cells have adapted and become more effective, the network's leadership has been permitted to reestablish itself in Pakistan and other safe havens. Money (particularly Saudi money) and the Internet have also made the animating ideology more accessible than ever, meaning that cells can emerge without the need of an established jihadist organization to recruit and guide them. And behind it all, Iran grows more capable and menacing—harboring and nurturing al Qaeda, replicating its Hizballah model in Iraq and beyond, and pursuing nuclear weaponry while the West dithers.

This increases the stakes of Iraq—to say nothing of Afghanistan, where NATO's lack of commitment is a very disturbing development. I have been a supporter of the surge of U.S. forces because it is a necessary step; but it is far from sufficient. Meaningful progress in this war, as Podhoretz has argued, is going to require dealing with Iran. General David Petraeus's report underscores that unavoidable fact. Some say such talk is war-mongering, but it is actually war-recognition. Iran is at war with us now, just as it and the other components of the jihadist movement were at war with us in the 1990's. It should not take another 9/11 to come to grips with that reality. That is the cutting edge of the 2008 election: reality, or the return of September 10th America.

I DO NOT question that the rhetoric of democracy promotion has pervaded the President's articulation of the Bush Doctrine. Nevertheless, the fact that the doctrine has multiple tenets does not mean that each of them is equally important, or that the tenets cohere.

The issue here, moreover, is more complex than “neoconservatives versus realists.” I am a conservative who does not fit in either category. Contrary to the realists, I agree that democracy promotion is in our long-range interest and stability by tyranny is

not. But, with due respect to my neoconservative friends, a healthy respect for democracy worthy of the name recognizes that (a) it calls for a cultural transformation that cannot be brought about quickly, (b) it is of dubious value as a counterterrorism tool, and (c) it may be an impossibility in a society committed to maintaining an Islamic identity.

On the last two points, it is noteworthy that jihadist atrocities are commonly planned and carried out inside Western democracies. There are a variety of good reasons to promote democracy abroad, but protection against jihadism is evidently not one of them. Further, the principal root cause of terrorism is Islamic ideology, not a want of the benefits democracy affords; so the premise that democracy would eradicate radicalism is flawed. Finally, we conflate democracy with liberty, but the two are saliently different.

For many Muslims (not just terrorists), rejection of Western democracy is a free choice. In fact, the Islamic conception of freedom, which connotes willful submission to Allah and His law, is critically different from our understanding of the term. We need to understand better the ideology we are dealing with, and to be speaking the same language, before we can realistically assess the prospects of democratization.

In the meantime, as Norman Podhoretz shows, there is a war to be won. We did not start the Marshall Plan in 1943. Assuming for argument's sake that Muslim countries will eventually democratize (as we understand democracy), that would, at most, suppress this enemy's resurgence. But first the enemy has to be defeated.

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## David Pryce-Jones

NORMAN PODHORETZ clarifies the crisis in which we now find ourselves by describing it as World War IV. There are affinities to the preceding World War III, otherwise known as the cold war. Once more, it is hard to separate the hatred our enemies feel for us from their envy. The evident inferiority complex is irrational, therefore intractable. Ever since influential Muslims began

to maintain that the weaknesses of their societies were not their fault at all but were inflicted upon them by the malevolent West, World War IV has been in preparation. For a time, it was uncertain whether nationalists or Islamists would wage it.

Ayatollah Khomeini settled that issue. Iran is a country of great potential, and his seizure of power there in 1979 has proved as consequential as the Bolshevik coup of 1917. Khomeini transformed Iran into a testing ground for the view that Islamist jihad is a mobilizing principle strong enough to avenge the political and cultural supremacy of the West. He and now his heirs have made it plain that they see themselves engaged in outright war. In a similar spirit, and with comparable rhetoric, too, the Soviet Union used to project capitalism as a bogey incompatible with peaceful coexistence.

The comparison goes further. Communism divided into the Soviet and the Chinese versions, both of which masked nationalist impulses at their core; and Islamism contains Sunni and Shiite versions that also reflect core nationalist differences between Arabs and Persians. Alarmed by the Iranian Shiite revolution, and therefore fired to emulate it, Saudi Arabia, far and away the richest Sunni state, has fostered al Qaeda and the hate-mongering imams and madrassas behind many of the initial aggressions of World War IV. Although these Sunni and Shiite rivals occasionally collaborate—on the Israel front, for instance—they are more usually in competition to see who can do the most damage to the West while at the same time mustering for armed showdown between themselves.

ISLAMIST TERROR attacks have brought the war home in one country after another. Since 9/11, better intelligence and doses of luck, coupled with the disgust that many if not most Muslims feel for those committing murder in their name, have restricted these outrages. More directly, we have taken the war to the jihadists in Afghanistan, Somalia, and Iraq. We intend to defend ourselves, in other words, and have the means to do so. Although, for some unfathomable reason, the number of front-line jihadist casualties is never exactly specified, it runs into the thousands, with thousands more held in prison in the whole gamut of Muslim countries.

The hope, the ambition, is to construct peaceful nation-states out of the tribal and sectarian groupings whose various allegiances and identities have generated so much past violence, and are capable of generating still more in the present. The struggle for supremacy among tribes and sects is

the real cause of the weaknesses that for centuries have bedeviled Muslim society, and created the feelings of humiliation and inferiority vis-à-vis others. The likes of Khomeini and Saddam Hussein and Osama bin Laden acquire and hold power by accommodating only those of their very own kind, to the exclusion of everyone else. Absolute rule becomes a self-perpetuating process of oppression and tyranny.

During my own travels in the Middle East over many years, I have made a point of asking what political arrangements people would favor. The almost invariable answer is democracy. This is not to ask for bicameralism and the separation of powers, but more modestly for the rule of law, an end to corruption, and some form of accountability, some process of representation able to pay heed and respond to grievances and injustice.

Such an outcome, however imperfect, would confront the exclusivity of tribe and sect, of Sunni and Shiite, and allow differences to be resolved by compromise rather than violence. After World War I, the British tried to restructure Iraq on just such lines, but the experiment was deemed financially too costly. Ignominious in itself, the British withdrawal condemned the entire population to decades of absolute rule, oppression, and tyranny.

Today's American intervention is far more serious in scope and implication. Iraqis once more have the choice between a new, politically inclusive model and another relapse into absolute rule, oppression, and tyranny. America's immediate difficulties only serve to demonstrate beyond doubt that democratization offers the Arab and Muslim world an escape route from its structural weaknesses. Although critics like to denigrate Western pressure to democratize the region as imperialism, it is the way for Muslims and non-Muslims in the end to meet on equal terms.

NOR IS THIS just disinterested altruism. Whatever the outcome in Iraq, the Sunni-Shiite polarity will continue to condition the wider region. In the geostrategic dimension, the United States has created an unexpected three-cornered contest, whereby its armed forces, and therefore its political weight, are in place between Iran and Saudi Arabia. The mutual rivalry of these two countries is a dynamo driving Islamist jihad to spread destruction and death far and wide.

One possibility would be for the West to concede a victory to the Shiites in Iran and Iraq, leaving the Sunnis to make what they could of it. Alternatively, the Sunnis could be expected to be

grateful in the event of America's at last picking up the challenge so regularly and aggressively issued by Iran, and doing whatever has to be done to check the Khomeinist revolution and Iran's nuclear program. Whichever way one looks at it, the American military presence close to Iran's borders demonstrates superpower responsibility.

Crucial choices ahead will determine the course of World War IV, and the fate of millions with it. President Bush has put the United States in a position of potential strength as the arbiter of the future order in the Middle East, and it is dismaying that so many people refuse to recognize this. Norman Podhoretz rightly fears yet another possibility: that commentators in the media and opposition personalities have infected public opinion with a thoughtless and unworthy defeatism, and that party politics are assuming priority over the national interest.

If that is indeed the case, the indefinite prolongation of World War IV will have to be accepted, with who knows what damage inflicted by the Islamists on Muslims and non-Muslims alike and the quite unnecessary sacrifice of America's standing and ultimately its security. More likely, surely, is that whoever is next in the White House will carry on where President Bush left off. Too much is at stake for anything else.

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## Claudia Rosett

YES, WE HAVE entered World War IV—and the designation “IV” is telling. Norman Podhoretz correctly identifies this war as the latest round in the long and mutating struggle between totalitarianism and freedom. More broadly, we are entering the second century of a global showdown between systems in which governments answer to their people and systems in which they do not.

In this context, Islamofascism is clearly the most virulent and immediate danger. But the threat hardly ends there. If I have a criticism of Podhoretz's superb tour and analysis of the hot front in this new world war, it is that he underestimates the damage done to us in this war by some of the

major non-Islamic despotisms, which in their own efforts to deflect democracy are only too pleased to strike back-scratching deals with Islamofascist regimes.

Along with such obvious candidates as the totalitarian munitions-merchant North Korea, or our near-neighbor Venezuela, these regimes include the two great powers of Russia and China. Lest that list sound too alarmist, or simply too overwhelming, let me add that I agree with Podhoretz's warning that we cannot simultaneously tackle every villainous government on earth. But in understanding why we had to topple Saddam early on, and why democracy is the only real answer, I think we must keep in mind that behind Islamofascism is a brew of interests that, however disparate, have this in common: they shun democracy and in various ways tend to support each other in fighting and subverting its spread. Thus do we find China and Russia, our erstwhile allies against Islamo-terrorists, blocking one U.S. attempt after another to shut down or stymie the regimes that produce these killers and their medieval creeds.

IN THIS CONTEXT, Iraq has been a crucial early theater of World War IV, and not once but twice. To explain why, let us go back to the end of the cold war and exhume a phrase rarely mentioned these days: the New World Order. Whatever follies played out under that label in the 1990's, there was a basic truth to the idea that as the Soviet empire staggered toward its 1991 collapse, the world was in a greater state of flux than at any time since the end of World War II. For better or worse, much was up for grabs.

And in 1990, one of the first to grab was Saddam Hussein, testing the rules of the nascent order with his invasion of Kuwait. When a UN coalition drove Iraq's army back out of Kuwait, it was hailed as a victory for a new age of UN-coordinated multilateralism. The terrible mistake, however, was to leave Saddam in power in Baghdad. Not only was Saddam himself a malignant presence, but the message was sent that while there might be penalties to breaking the basic codes of international conduct, the penalties would not be equal to the offense. The rest of the feel-good decade of the 1990's, in which America tolerated everything from escalating terrorist attacks, to North Korea's nuclear extortion racket, to Yasir Arafat's grotesque manipulations of the “peace process,” did not help.

Rectifying that early, signal mistake over Saddam was a profoundly important reason for the current President Bush to choose Iraq as an early front in

America's response to September 11. So was the need to stop the brazen rejuvenation of an unrepentant, expansionist, terror-based Baghdad regime that by 2003 had spent years making a complete mockery of UN sanctions; cheating, corrupting, and rearming its way back into business with or without weapons of mass destruction.

The overthrow of Saddam, the toppling of the Taliban, the declaration of the Bush Doctrine—all these early, aggressive actions by America brought progress on a number of fronts. Libya gave up its nuclear program, Lebanon tried to shake the murderous occupation by Syria. Elsewhere in the Middle East, democratic dissent began bubbling up. And, as of this writing, America for more than six years has escaped any major terrorist assault, something I attribute not solely to our home-front measures but to the Bush Doctrine of preemption and democratization—which has helped keep our enemies preoccupied abroad.

If Bush could give us one parting gift, beyond his determination to stay the course in Iraq, it should be greatly to ease that course by bombing enough of Iran's nuclear-related infrastructure to persuade not only the mullahs but their Islamofascist neighbors, clients, and rivals that America has no interest in losing its wars. Given the climate in Washington, that seems unlikely. With the Left now ascendant in our domestic debates and howling for denial in our time, Bush himself has retreated on some fronts from the Bush Doctrine—negotiating with terror sponsors and deferring a reckoning with Iran.

Another folly has been our return, post-Saddam, to the corrupt councils of the UN. This institution more often than not comes between America and our would-be allies among the subjugated people of the world, not all of whom look forward to a life of jihad and repression. The UN, by dignifying dictators and attending upon their "votes," deals one blow after another to those among their captive subjects who aspire to remove them. The gross disservice done to Iranian dissidents by the annual UN-hosted celebrity appearance of Iran's Mahmoud Ahmadinejad in New York is one example. The UN's Orwellian "Human Rights Council" is another.

But if it looks as if America is now in the process of scrapping the Bush Doctrine altogether, I think the next President will not in practice find that so easy. We are in a world war that America cannot avoid. The challenges, if unmet, will continue to grow. The next big attack will come. Primed by the liberty and law of our own democratic system,

Americans did much to create today's world of high technology, instant messages, and global markets. The benefits are vast, including the spread in many quarters of greater wealth, health, and freedom. But along this network, poisonous ideologies and their foot soldiers can also hitch, or hijack, a high-speed ride. We are not fighting for democracy in foreign lands out of altruism—in any event, a treacherous guide. We are fighting to gain strategically vital ground against enemies who must put out the light of the great American experiment of democracy if they are to prevail in their dreams of power and plunder under cover of a new dark age.

That contest, not some whimsical U.S. mission of global good will, is why the Bush Doctrine has it so very right in putting democratization front and center as our natural cause and best hope. For most of us, despite the shock of September 11, the full character of the threat against us has yet to be felt in our daily lives. When it is, this country will go to war to win.

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## Amir Taheri

I HAVE NO problem describing the current struggle as World War IV. With varying degrees of intensity, this war is being fought in 22 countries across the globe—from Indonesia and Thailand to the Sudan and Algeria. Many other countries, among them almost all the 57 nations with a Muslim majority and several Western nations as well, are targets of occasional terrorist operations that the jihadists describe as *ghazva* (holy raids).

The fact that the conflict affects so many nations is not the only reason why we should agree with Norman Podhoretz in considering this a world war. Another and more important reason is that the conflict is not about such mundane things as borders, territory, or access to markets and resources. It is about the future of mankind as a whole. Here we have the clash of two visions of the world's future. One vision is that of a pluralistic global system based on the shared values of human rights, democracy, free enterprise, and international law. The other vision is inspired by a radical and rigid re-interpretation of Islam as the "Final Truth" dictated

by God, abrogating all other faiths and creeds.

The war, then, has clear ideological fronts. But its military fronts are not so clearly drawn, and this has caused some confusion. In this war, many Muslims, perhaps even a majority, are fighting against Islamism, whereas many in the West, including some late avatars of Stalinism and fascism, are objective allies of the Islamists. In other words, this is not a war between the West and the rest but between democracy, which has many supporters in non-democratic societies, and the latest challenger to democracy that is Islamofascism. At times, indeed, the war is an internal one, being fought within the same societies, and even within the same families, both in the Muslim world and in the Western democracies. Moreover, just as there were many kinds of Communism and fascism in World Wars II and III, so there are many different kinds of Islamofascism today. But all have one thing in common: their determination to reshape the world in accordance with their totalitarian vision.

THERE IS no doubt that Iraq is one of the key battlefields in World War IV—perhaps even the key one in this early phase of the global conflict. The reason is that, in Iraq, virtually all versions of Islamofascism, from Salafism to Khomeinism and including al-Qaeda-type terrorism, are present on the battlefield against a coalition of democracies led by the United States and backed by a coalition of Iraqis who reject the Islamofascist vision.

In my opinion, the larger war started in 1979 when Islamofascists seized power in Tehran. But there is no doubt that the 9/11 attacks against the United States led to a more urgent awareness. Today, six years after 9/11, the cause of the democracies and their Muslim allies has not done too badly at all.

Thus, Afghanistan and Iraq have been liberated and set on their respective paths to democratization. Lebanon has expelled the Syrian army of occupation. Algeria, Egypt, and Turkey have effectively defeated their respective terrorist enemies. Yemen has crushed both Sunni and Shiite terrorist groups that tried to create mini-“emirates” on its territory. The Islamofascists have also suffered defeat in Kashmir, Thailand, the Philippines, Indonesia, and Chechnya. In Iran, civil society has started to organize resistance to the Khomeinist regime, especially with the blossoming of an independent trade-union movement.

In addition, a number of Arab states have inaugurated constitutional reforms and free elections, both at national and municipal levels, in some cases

for the first time in their history. Certain democratic ideas, like popular consent as the key source of legitimacy, have similarly been introduced, and are beginning to strike roots in societies that hitherto shunned the global trend toward democratization.

In this connection, Norman Podhoretz is surely right in asserting that “democratization represents the best and perhaps even the only way to defeat Islamofascism and the terrorism it uses as its main weapon against us.”

Critics of the Bush Doctrine assert that democracy cannot be imposed by force. I agree. But as far as I am aware, Bush never suggested otherwise. In fact, he said: “America will not impose our own style of government on the unwilling. Our goal instead is to help others find their own voice, attain their own freedom, and make their own way.” Nevertheless, there are times and places where force can and must be used in order to remove impediments to democracy. Both the Taliban and the Baathists had to be uprooted by force before Afghanistan and Iraq could have a chance to consider democratization as an option.

I have no doubt that the Bush Doctrine will survive as a key element of American national security even if the Republicans lose the White House next year. As long as there are places on earth where terrorists can regroup, train, and prepare attacks, the U.S., and indeed all democracies, will be threatened. By taking action in Afghanistan and Iraq, the U.S. showed that it had not been cowed by the terrorist attacks and was prepared to fight in distant places and against deadly enemies.

Still, during the past six years, two key battlegrounds have not received the attention they merit. The first is the battleground of public opinion in Western democracies. There, under the banner of anti-Americanism, a broad coalition of Left and Right, in de-facto alliance with the Islamofascists, preaches a gospel of defeat and surrender. This anti-American coalition, which is, in fact, the enemy of democracy, must be taken on and defeated. Some time soon, the U.S. will also have to find ways and means of re-mobilizing its allies, especially in Europe, for the inevitable confrontation with the Khomeinist regime in Tehran.

The second battleground is that of public opinion in Muslim countries. Here, American public diplomacy has been nonexistent or even counterproductive. In some Muslim countries, U.S. diplomacy has even harmed the nascent democratic forces by emphasizing Washington’s support for authoritarian regimes in the name of realpolitik.

Democracy can and must win the current world war, just as it won all three previous ones.

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## Ruth Wedgwood

IN A SENSE it is true that “everything changed” on September 11—certainly in our understanding of where things were headed. Before the appearance of al Qaeda on these shores, only an army or an earthquake could kill 20,000 to 50,000 people in a morning. Had 9/11 not been primary day in New York, with many people going first to vote and thus being late for work, the lives lost in that single morning could easily have numbered in the tens of thousands. And that is what al Qaeda *wanted*.

This escalation in the methods of terror—linking eschatology and mass violence—means that other groups may aspire to at least the same degree of intimidation and wreckage. Violence has been reconceived, to focus on targets with a central place in a society's self-understanding. The destruction of an Irish pub on the Derry Road has been replaced by the collapse of a major landmark. Al Qaeda advertised this weird aesthetic of obliteration in its earlier 1993 plot in New York, interrupted by the police, that sought to blow up the United Nations, the George Washington bridge, and the Lincoln and Holland tunnels in one grand chaotic gesture. The same nihilism also yielded the al-Qaeda bombing of Iraq's Golden Mosque of Samarra in February 2006, which not only destroyed a sacred shrine but ransacked a tentative accord between Sunni and Shiite factions, and severely impeded the search for a new balance of power in Iraq.

America and its next President, regardless of party, will thus continue to face extreme difficulty in preserving the safety of our citizens and assisting Islam to regain its bearings. The political parlor game of should-we-or-should-we-not-have-intervened-in-Iraq-in-2003 should not distract from this verity. Even within the four corners of the “Iraq question”—and, with the ferocious intermeddling of Syria, Iran, and al Qaeda, Iraq does not have four corners—no critic of administration

policy has stopped to wonder whether the intervention against Saddam might have gone better if we had acted in 1998, when Saddam first kicked out the American inspectors. In the event, we undertook to fight a war after allowing our opponent five years to prepare. Saddam used the time to sequester billions of dollars, truck his equipment to Syria, and empty his prisons, preparing his turn-key resistance during the slow diplomatic burn that preceded the launch of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

And what if we had delayed intervention, past 2003? What then? In the face of French and Russian pressure, the lifting of Security Council sanctions and the opening of a new spigot of money for weapons purchases were all but ordained. And with the progress of Iran's nuclear program, would not Saddam inevitably have reconstituted his WMD portfolio to fight a second Iran-Iraq war?

WE HAVE been sorely challenged in adapting our methods of land warfare against the hydra-headed insurgency in Iraq. The fight has been costly and rugged. It is startling how often in our polite society, with its publishers and professors, we lose sight of the reasons why American soldiers on the ground think the mission is important. There is equally little sense, in our post-ROTC world, of the solemn virtues of selflessness and courage that soldiers live by. Writers who have railed at our passivity in Rwanda might celebrate the braver course we have sustained in Iraq, trying to protect innocent lives from death by car bomb.

The mélange of threats coming from the Muslim world and the demimonde of weapons proliferation will call for different skills and capacities in government. Within the intelligence community, a new generation of linguists must be trained to decrypt conversations conducted in Pashtun, Arabic, Farsi, and Korean, as well as in computer code. Intelligence collection can be stymied when the unit size for lethal combat is limited to al-Qaeda squads of three or four. Analyzing the loose chains of linkage, in phone numbers, leases, and itineraries, is not the conventional way to identify who is a “soldier,” and penetration is far more difficult in this unconventional war.

In addition, there is the problem of states that provide sanctuary. We will face real dilemmas when foreign governments cannot thwart the misuse of their territory by al Qaeda. But international law has been usefully changed by Security Council resolution 1373, and the UN's imperative demand that states must prevent the use of their soil as training platforms for insurgents.

In a June 2001 essay in the *Washington Post's* "Outlook" section, I paid tribute to a federal prosecutor in Manhattan for winning criminal convictions after the bombing attacks on our embassies in East Africa. Truck bombs prepared by al Qaeda had toppled the buildings in Kenya and Tanzania, killing 220 and wounding more than 4,000. Many of the victims were Muslim. Acknowledging a brilliantly-conducted trial, my essay also warned that criminal charges were not enough. Behind every conviction lay an intelligence failure, and our inability to dismantle the infrastructure that generated these attacks meant that more attacks would follow.

I was approached by several veterans of the intelligence community who reported that, to their similar alarm, there was no sharing of information between intelligence and law-enforcement agencies, and hence no integrated picture of al Qaeda. I relayed their account to the senior staff of an intelligence committee on Capitol Hill. The problem was real and serious. But as my interlocutors predicted, nothing would be done about it in the extant political climate.

9/11 changed all that, too, though not soon enough. The national-security doctrine propounded by the Bush administration now holds that it is not adequate to punish mass-casualty bombers after they have attacked. Rather, the duty of any President is to protect his fellow citizens, and other innocent life, before the harm is done. The means should be proportionate, and we should speak in the language of law. But the "responsibility to protect"—a foreign-policy ideal celebrated in both liberal and conservative circles—is not discharged by convicting the suicide bomber who survives a failed attack. The pooling of information and the denial of overseas sanctuary are practical necessities if we are to thwart a terrorist organization that operates in cyberspace before it mounts terrestrial and aerial attacks.

The new mode of catastrophic terrorism can be countered only by dismantling al Qaeda's leadership, funding, and ideology. Catalyzing the necessary institutional changes in American government, and mustering the courage to act when a moment of opportunity presents itself, are the burdens that belong to any responsible President.

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## James Q. Wilson

I THINK WE are and should be in a war against Islamofascist terrorism; whether we call it World War IV is, to me, immaterial. It is a war, and perhaps one of the longest and most difficult we will have ever fought.

The Bush Doctrine that defines this war may outlive the 2008 presidential elections, depending on public opinion. If the public believes, as I think it does, that we cannot fight this war on the defensive and that we must take the struggle, where appropriate and where it can make a difference, to rogue or failed nations that support terrorism, then the next President, whichever party he or she belongs to, will, perhaps after making politically suitable but largely rhetorical bows toward "the need for change," will continue the fight.

Whether this will be done effectively is another matter. As Norman Podhoretz points out in his book, scarcely any President for the last 30 years has responded to the long list of terrorist attacks to which this country has been subjected with anything more than a few cruise missiles fired into empty buildings. But the next terrorist attack (and I believe another one is very likely) will generate a demand for action that will be impossible to resist except among the agitated ranks led by George Soros and Michael Moore.

Apart from whether we will fight, the key issue is how we will know whether we have won. We have made dramatic gains in Afghanistan and Iraq, though much more needs to be done. And happily the American military has adopted a better strategy for doing it, one that we learned from the Marine Corps in Vietnam but that the Army managed to forget until General David Petraeus and his colleagues produced a masterful Army-Marines counterinsurgency field manual that is now being applied in Iraq.

IDEALLY, DEMOCRACY is our goal because, with perhaps only a few exceptions, democracies do not invade one another and they leave their people free to improve their lives. But democracy comes slowly and painfully even to countries well suited to receive it.

Of the two dozen or so predominantly Muslim nations in the world, only six can reasonably be called democratic, and acquiring that status required a long time and the overcoming of many reverses. According to Freedom House, Indonesia, Mali, and Senegal are free, and Afghanistan, Morocco, and Turkey are "partly free." These accom-

plishments took many years. Indonesia, although it became independent in 1949, was not a competitive democracy until 2003, and in the interim had to endure decades of one-party elections. Mali had an endless series of coups between its independence in 1960 and the establishment not long ago of a civilian government that has held generally free and honest elections. Senegal became independent at about the same time and managed to avoid military coups, but it also had to endure two decades of one-party rule. Today, however, it has a multiparty competition for votes.

Among the partly free Muslim countries, Afghanistan is well known to us since we brought the first hint of political freedom to that country. It is still struggling to end corruption, win the allegiance of independent tribal leaders to a central government, and empower local communities. Morocco has a powerful hereditary king, but the incumbent has helped create a popularly elected legislature and sponsored a reconciliation commission that has publicly criticized past civil-rights abuses and set forth recommendations for preventing them in the future. Turkey has been a secular state since the early 1920's, but several decades passed before it held genuinely competitive elections. The Turkish army has periodically intervened to protect the country's secular status, but today a moderate Muslim party is in power and has elected a Muslim president, albeit one who has promised to keep church and state separate.

Obviously the United States cannot be in Iraq for the 40 or 50 years it has taken other Muslim nations, several of which lack Iraq's ardent Sunni-Shiite rivalry, to become reasonably or wholly democratic. How long, then, do we stay? My answer: until Iraq has displayed the ability to maintain order with a police force that respects fundamental rights and an army that is committed to civilian rule. No doubt we will leave before Iraq enjoys democratic rule of the kind practiced in Canada, Great Britain, or the United States; but we must remain there until a reasonable observer can say that the nation is on a course leading to popular government.

As Max Boot has pointed out in the September COMMENTARY ("How Not to Get Out of Iraq"), no one has devised a "Plan B" that has any reasonable chance of success. It is logistically impossible to leave immediately; the country cannot be divided into religiously coherent states; and Americans must remain in significant numbers to keep Iraqi security forces intact and improving just as NATO forces have been kept in Bosnia for over a decade.

We cannot "guard the borders" without running concentration camps for seized infiltrators. Although we may be tempted to back a decent authoritarian (Boot calls this "Saddam Lite"), there is no one available who might play that role and has sufficient force to compel obedience.

The last thing we should do is to announce, as many members of Congress have done, "goals" that the current Iraqi government must meet in order to keep us there. When Congress recently instructed the Government Accountability Office to inform us whether Iraq had formed a constitutional-review committee, enacted a law on de-Baathification, or decided to create a High Electoral Commission, it was not "measuring progress," it was looking for excuses for us to leave.

In a co-authored September 10 essay in the *Wall Street Journal*, Senators John McCain and Joseph Lieberman made the central issue quite clear. The choice we face in Iraq is not between the current government and a perfect one, but "between a young, imperfect, struggling democracy . . . and the fanatical, al-Qaeda suicide bombers and Iranian-sponsored terrorists who are trying to destroy it." Though there are good reasons to worry that elections will from time to time bring to power undemocratic regimes, there is no reason to believe that Muslims are incapable of democratic government.

In refuting this notion, Podhoretz quotes Bernard Lewis: to think that the Islamic people are incapable of civilized government "shows ignorance of the Arab past, contempt for the Arab present, and unconcern for the Arab future." And, I would add, a profound ignorance of what has happened in Indonesia, the world's largest Muslim nation.

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## R. James Woolsey

I AGREE THAT "World War IV" is an accurate characterization of our war against Islamist totalitarianism. But although what the term denotes is sound—a lengthy world-wide struggle against a totalitarian enemy that is analogous to, especially, World War II and the cold war (World War III)—its connotation creates a problem. Hearing "world

war,” most people will think of D-Day, Iwo Jima, Stalingrad, etc. and thus quickly conclude that the speaker advocates principally large-scale military operations.

When I begin a conversation by calling the current struggle World War IV, I find that until the second glass of wine I am generally not successful in persuading a friend that I really do not want to invade all our enemies—especially since, like Norman Podhoretz, I supported the invasion of Iraq. So I lean toward “The Long War of the 21st Century,” which, yes, has its own connotation problems. In any case, his point—that we confront a sweeping, ideologically rooted, worldwide, determined enemy whom it will take years to defeat—is the crux of the matter.

Iraq threatens our success in this long World War IV. It is vital for us to prevail there, else we will leave a vacuum for both Sunni and Shiite Islamists to fill. But the current fighting there is, in my view, not an “early theater” in the overall war. We in the U.S. have been at war with the Middle East’s Islamist totalitarians for nearly three decades—at least since our embassy hostages were seized in Tehran in 1979. It is just that, until quite recently, only our enemies have been fighting. We should look at the Sunni and Shiite totalitarians together, since they cooperate with one another (and with secular totalitarians like Iraqi and Syrian Baathists) far more than our press, our diplomats, and our intelligence analysts have generally wanted to admit. These pundits and government officials have served us exactly as well as their grandfathers in the same professions who confidently told the world in the 1930’s that Nazis and Communists would never cooperate.

Beginning with the Carter administration’s dithering, we have done our best for a long time to convince the Islamist totalitarians that we are the “weak horse” that bin Laden rightly says will be disdained by all. In Lebanon, our embassy and our Marine barracks were blown up—and we left. Americans were thereafter kidnapped, tortured, and killed in the 1980’s—and we looked to law enforcement and tried to trade arms for hostages. In 1991 we had a half-million troops in Iraq and encouraged the Kurds and Shiites to rebel—and we then stood aside and watched them be massacred. There was an attempt to murder former President Bush in 1993—and we fired two dozen cruise missiles into an empty Iraqi intelligence headquarters at night, dealing decisively with Iraqi cleaning women and night watchmen. Our helicopters were shot down in Somalia in 1993—and we left. Our World Trade

Center was bombed in 1993—and we ignored the fact that one of the leading perpetrators took refuge in Iraq. Our East African embassies, our military barracks in Saudi Arabia, and an American warship were all bombed in the 1990’s—and we fired a few more cruise missiles ineffectually into the sands of Sudan and Afghanistan.

Now we have at least noticed that we are at war, and in Afghanistan and Iraq have begun to fight back. But in the latter case, until nearly four years into the war, we repeated the same ineffective search-and-destroy tactics used by General William Westmoreland for almost exactly the same stretch of years in Vietnam. General David Petraeus has finally been allowed to fight (clear-hold-protect) like General Creighton Abrams and the Marines. It is crucial that he be allowed to succeed. If he does, much else will go well in the overall war. If he does not, the consequences could be disastrous.

**A**S FOR OUR progress: the President made a huge mistake after 9/11 by telling us to “shop” instead of rallying us to a long struggle. One rallying point could have been to move us away from oil’s dominance (96 percent) of the world’s transportation market. The Saudi billionaires who fund al Qaeda, the Wahhabi imams who inspire suicide bombers to go to Iraq, the Iranian mullahs who pay for the explosive devices to kill our troops in Iraq—all get their resources from oil. We are late and are only now beginning to support real technologies—unlike such pipe dreams as hydrogen fuel cells for the family car—that can help this transition.

Our broadcasting to the Middle East has been inept and ineffective. The nation that invented Radio Free Europe forgot for years why it was so successful.

In this connection, although I agree with the Bush Doctrine’s emphasis on democratization, balloting may not come first. Instead, in many societies, one should often begin (following John Rawls and Amartya Sen) by building on existing “institutions of public reason” such as the Loya Jirga in Afghanistan. History and ownership of institutions matter. In Iraq, for example, we should have given back to the Iraqis their own 1925 constitution instead of drafting one for them, especially since in doing so we set up a copy of Weimar Germany’s historically disastrous structure of proportional representation and party lists—an electoral system that encourages factions instead of a more stable system based on single-member constituencies that encourage two parties to compete for the center.

But it is certainly true that democracies very

rarely fight one another. Since 1945, when there were about 20 democracies, Freedom House indicates that nearly 100 have been added. (Of these, admittedly, some 30 have serious problems like substantial corruption.) Those who said Japan and Germany could never be democracies have been proved wrong, as have those in years past who said the same thing of Asians, of Catholics, and of others. Mongolia, for example, is a well-functioning democracy.

However difficult the transition, giving up on any nation or people by assuming that because of their culture they will ultimately prefer tyranny to freedom is both dangerous and racist. Many of those who sign on to this assumption call themselves “realists”; they are the exact opposite.

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