How We Lost the High-Tech War of 2007

A Warning from the Future

by Charles J. Dunlap, Jr.

The following is the transcript of a secret address delivered by the Holy Leader to the Supreme War Council late in the year 2007.

In the name of The One Above, I offer greetings to my fellow warriors! Today, with His grace, I speak of our great victory over our most evil enemy, America. A little more than 10 years ago experts thought that what became known as the Revolution in Military Affairs would leave developing nations like ours incapable of opposing a high-tech power like the United States. With the help of The One Above, we proved them wrong. They were guilty, as those who defy the sayings of the divine usually are, of idolatry—though in this case they did not worship graven images, but the silicon chip. As though a speck of sand could defeat the will of The One Above.

At the heart of the "revolution in military affairs" were the amazing new technologies that Americans believed "would make cyberwar and information war the distinguishing feature of future conflict," as one of their experts, Richard Szafranski, put it in 1995.

American thinking about the revolution in military affairs was based on grand visions of long-distance wars—push-button conflicts against cybernetically inferior foes. Once again, the Americans neglected to study history's many examples of supposedly outmatched combatants prevailing over better-equipped rivals. And they took it for granted that their potential adversaries would accept the American interpretation of this "revolution."

But America's most likely opponents were invariably unlike America and thus not beholden to the American interpretation. The late 20th and early 21st century saw the reemergence of what British historian John Keegan called "warrior" societies. Like us, they are "brought up to fight, think fighting honorable, and think killing in warfare glorious." A warrior in such societies, Keegan wrote, "prefers death to dishonor and kills without pity when he gets the chance." The Americans ignored a warning from one of their own, Maj. Ralph Peters, who wrote in 1994 that the "new warrior class already numbers in the millions." Peters wrote that:

> [America] will often face [warriors] who have acquired a taste for killing, who do not behave rationally according to our definition of rationality, who are capable of atrocities that challenge the descriptive powers of language, and who will sacrifice their own kind in order to survive.

Too many Americans assumed that warrior societies like ours lacked the sophistication to integrate new technology into a war-making doctrine that could defeat the United States. They neglected those, like Donald E. Ryan, who cautioned that "even technologically backward societies have a nasty habit of devising strategies to offset [America's] high-tech superiority."

Moreover, that "superiority" was never as great as the Americans hoped. The cyberscience that fueled the "revolution" did not require the mature infrastructures needed to produce traditional war-fighting platforms like ships, planes, and tanks. With such platforms the First World's military power once dominated global affairs. Information technology changed all that, because its requirements were far less demanding: Small numbers of people working with commercially available computers could perform more than adequate high-tech research and development.

Furthermore, Americans increasingly relied upon commercial, off-the-shelf cybertechnology. We could acquire the same products on international markets—

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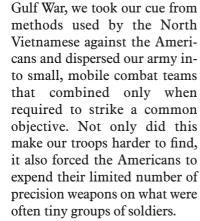
and often more quickly than the bureaucratic Americans, fettered as they were by complex contracting rules and regulations. Though the Americans claimed that information technology would allow them to get inside an enemy's "decision loop," the irony was that we repeatedly got inside their 'acquisition loop' and deployed newer systems before they finished buying already obsolescent ones. With the advent of off-the-shelf armaments, the American military no longer possessed a monopoly on the most advanced weaponry available.

Americans also underestimated the effect of rapidly declining cyber-costs—for, as George Gilder accurately predicted, in the year 2000 we could purchase silicon chips for $100 with as much power as the $320 million defense supercomputers of the early 1990s. The Americans discovered this when they sought to use information warfare to corrupt and destroy our command and control systems. The effort proved futile because many communications devices became so inexpensive and miniaturized that our armed forces could afford to make them ubiquitous and redundant. It was virtually impossible for cyber-assaults to negate them all. In the end, attacking these proliferating methods of communication typically made as much sense as using a laser-guided missile to disable the rifle of an individual soldier.

W ORSE YET FOR THE AMERICANS, ADVANCES IN computer software eroded the demand for highly trained specialists to operate complex weapons. Easy-to-learn graphic displays allowed poorly educated soldiers to quickly master elaborate but user-friendly war-fighting machines, rather like a 15-year-old American figuring out how to dispense Coca-Cola at a fast-food restaurant by pressing the right pictograph. Praise The One Above, the microchip ended the educational and training advantage the American military had enjoyed.

Because the Americans believed their information technologies reduced the need for conventional combat forces, they disbanded such forces in favor of trendy "information" units. These were filled not with well-trained, physically fit combatants, but rather, as Szafranski put it, "mind-nimble (not necessarily literate), fingertip-quick youth" who tended to equate their success at video games with competency to engage in real war. Thank The One Above, the easy capture of a few of these self-styled "digital warriors" yielded a treasure trove of intelligence data.

We found we could contend with the light, supposedly high-tech combat units that completed most of America's remaining battle forces. Since we no longer had to concentrate our forces to oppose the now-defunct armored formations that dominated the First Gulf War, we took our cue from methods used by the North Vietnamese against the Americans and dispersed our army into small, mobile combat teams that combined only when required to strike a common objective. Not only did this make our troops harder to find, it also forced the Americans to expend their limited number of precision weapons on what were often tiny groups of soldiers.

In any event, we decided not to worry too much if we could not always match the high-tech equipment of the U.S. military. We consoled ourselves with the knowledge that reliance on cybersystems was not an unqualified virtue. The prescient Ryan noted that "technologically advanced, information-intensive military organizations are more vulnerable to information warfare simply because they are information dependent." Besides, our technical deficiencies inspired us to innovation—approaches overlooked by the gadgetry-obsessed Americans.

For example, we viewed the technology-spurred globalization of the news industry as a means of making war. By the mid-1990s, international news organizations using the latest electronic wizardry no longer had to depend on government help in war zones. Operational security became impossible as news groups launched information-gathering and communications satellites, monitored proliferating Internet transmissions, gave their reporters self-contained communications suites, and even flew their own unmanned aerial reconnaissance vehicles to transmit real-time views of battle areas.

This phenomenally valuable information was, of course, available to us. We had no need to build costly satellites or even pay spies; instead, we could rely on the free flow of data, because the Americans rarely achieved the necessary political consensus to interfere with these modern "news-gathering" techniques. Furthermore, whatever patriotic or legalistic pressure the Americans could bring to bear on their domestic news people was wholly ineffective against scoop-hungry foreign reporters.

In fact, the technology-empowered media made "information equality," not "information dominance," the key to the "revolution in military affairs." For example, when the U.S. tried their pathetic cyber-based psychological operations to mislead our people, the world press quickly exposed the American deceit.

We agreed with those, like George J. Stein, who said that information warfare "is fundamentally not about satellites, wires, and computers. It is about influencing human beings and the decisions they make." And we were confident we could influence the American public and its poll-sensitive decisionmakers. Studying the Vietnam conflict, we were heartened by the remarks of a former North Vietnamese commander, Bui Tin:

> Support for the war from our rear was completely secure while the American rear was vulnerable. . . . The conscience of America was part of its warmaking capability, and we were turning that power in our favor. America lost because of its democracy; through dissent and protest it lost the ability to mobilize a will to win.

Our strategy was to make warfare so psychologically costly that the Americans would lose their "will to win." To do so we freed ourselves from the decadent West's notions of legal and moral restraint. And why not? Their so-called "laws of wars" were conceived by the First World to keep our people oppressed. Furthermore, their "law" presented no deterrent because the West demonstrated over and over that it lacked the conviction to enforce it. No, my friends, The One Above called upon us to use every tactic to defeat the cyberscience that the Americans thought would make them so superior. We would rather be feared than respected.

With that in mind, we found that the radical changes in news gathering and reporting allowed us to develop a strategy to exploit America's growing fear of casualties. We carefully noted how this obsession

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enabled far weaker adversaries to defeat the so-called "superpower." The deaths of 18 American soldiers in Somalia—followed by the telecast of a U.S. soldier's body dragged through Mogadishu's streets—caused a public outcry that forced a humiliated America to forsake its policy objectives. Similarly, the specter of casualties was enough to delay intervention in Bosnia in the 1990s despite the occurrence of outright genocide. The exasperated columnist George Will wrote that the "West . . . almost preens about having become too exquisitely sensitive to use force against barbarism."

Thus, it became part of our strategy to capitalize on television's power to influence decisionmakers by aiming to wage war in the most brutish—and public—way. This strategy fit our warrior nation well. Countries such as ours, organized as they are around exceptionally powerful ethnic, religious, or cultural forces and frequently endowed with potent internal security forces, are much more resistant to vacillations in public opinion than are the diverse, pluralistic democracies of the West. Because our people truly believed in America's wickedness, it was not necessary to hide our ferocity. Rather, we used ruthless tactics openly to intimidate the American people and break their resolve.

The "revolution in military affairs" did not, therefore, make warfare less murderous; war never developed into the almost genteel electronic exchange that some foresaw. To the contrary, with our strategy it became more savage than ever—at least in the eyes of the many Americans who in previous conflicts had been spared the unedited, real-time "virtual" battlefield presence that the new communication nets allowed. Families at home could now watch and hear their loved ones die.

SUCH HIDEOUS EXPERIENCES DESTROYED predictions of "non-lethal" conflicts made by over-enthusiastic cyberprophets. Those absurd forecasts, combined with the memory of a nearly casualty-free First Gulf War, caused many Americans to conclude erroneously that the occurrence of any casualties was irrefutable proof that a campaign was inherently flawed and should, therefore, be abandoned.

We expected that the U.S. would try to wage this supposedly "bloodless" war by assaulting us from afar with cyberarms. Only the soft, convenience-loving West would think that the loss of electrical power or phone service would stop us. Techno-offensives that

cripple civilian systems do not deter us. After all, our people are accustomed to far worse.

To counteract the effectiveness of cyber-attacks on our military forces, we trained them to operate autonomously if normal communications were cut. We used runners, low-tech signaling devices, and even coded statements of our leaders, broadcast on international news programs, to coordinate actions until contact was restored. As a last resort, our forces struck preplanned targets, martyring themselves in the process when necessary. Our primary aim, after all, was simply to cause casualties among the Americans.

We knew we would have that chance. The Americans eventually had to use troops to try to dislodge us because even in the 21st century, as Bevin Alexander put it in 1995, "victory comes from human beings moving into enemy territory and taking charge." Nothing else succeeds in conflicts waged against warriors of our zealotry. We anticipated, however, that the U.S. would first attempt to weaken us with its airpower.

Our analysis showed that we could not stop their high-tech aircraft from hitting anywhere in our country. To find a way to protect our key facilities, we once again examined history and recalled how Somali gunmen had effectively used their wives and children as human shields. We also remembered that after the uproar following the bombing of the Al Firdos bunker during the First Gulf War, when hundreds of Iraqi civilians died in an attack on what the Americans mistakenly believed to be a command center, very few strikes occurred against Baghdad. The Americans feared—rightly, we believe—that the spectacle of their pilots killing "innocent" civilians would be too much for their public (and world opinion) to bear.

Since our doctrine called upon us to present the Americans with moral conundrums that would complicate their efforts to attack us, we fully integrated our military infrastructure into civilian areas. We buried major command posts and logistics bases below schools, hospitals, apartment complexes, and even places of worship. Our most vital facilities were built underneath POW camps.

We saw how Serb forces back in the 1990s successfully countered NATO's sophisticated airpower by chaining U.N. hostages to targets. We also observed how rebel Chechens took 2,000 hostages at Budyonnovsk and cowed the Russians into meeting their demands. Accordingly, hostage-taking also became an important part of our "revolution in military affairs." In full view of the world media, we shackled captives to vital structures and openly bound them to tanks and military vehicles. We even put some on air transports and helicopters!

In order to create diplomatic pressure on the United States, we took lots of hostages from other nations, even neutrals. We used them to coerce their governments into allowing us access to essential international satellites and communications centers, while denying the same to the Americans. We also made a concerted effort to take hostages from militarily weak nations so that America would not gain valuable allies. Time and again our efforts earned a bonus: America—for political reasons—was obliged to accept new "allies" whose logistical requirements and marginal fighting ability made them more of a burden than a help.

WE CONSTANTLY LOOKED FOR IMAGINATIVE WAYS to turn our technological shortcomings into decisive strengths. With material and expertise gleaned from governments hostile to the U.S., as well as help from criminals in the former Soviet Union, we were able to assemble a handful of crude nuclear devices by 2006. But America's powerful information-technology weapons left us without a reliable way to deliver The Bomb. Their F-22 fighters, theater missile defenses, and ultra-modern hunter-killer submarines were systems we could not realistically overcome. Ultimately, however, we found a way to use our nuclear weapons against America.

Many of you have confused expressions on your faces. You are thinking: "It was the Americans, not we, who used nuclear weapons in the Great War." Yes, our Military City was destroyed by an atomic attack that killed 30,000 of our people. Sadly, it was the Will of

The One Above. But my friends, it was not an American weapon that exploded. It was our own.

I will explain. In warrior cultures such as ours nothing is more glorious than dying in battle. For us and for many non-Western peoples, martyrdom and self-sacrifice are cultural totems more valued than self-preservation. Accordingly, we allowed the people of our Military City the honor of dying for our cause. It was the Will of The One Above.

Shortly before the start of the war, we deployed a nuclear device to the Military City hidden in an ambulance (protected from air attack by its red crosses). Next, we induced the Americans to strike by constructing a genuine biological warfare laboratory in the heart of the City—realizing, of course, that their state-of-the-art intelligence sensors would easily identify it.

Predictably, the Americans sent their stealthful F-117 bombers and cruise missiles against the laboratory. Several journalists reported the progress of the raid on live TV. Just as the Americans dropped their bombs, we secretly detonated our atomic weapon. The spectacular fireball vaporized everything for miles, all to the horror of a global broadcast audience numbering in the hundreds of millions.

The world reaction to what was thought to be an American first-use of nuclear weapons was universal condemnation. The Japanese were especially appalled. Not only did they cease contributing to the effort against us, they also began systematically to withdraw billions of dollars invested in American bonds. U.S. financial markets panicked, and the American economy fell into chaos. Other important members of the world community turned against America as well.

Of course, the United States vigorously claimed innocence. But few believed its government, even among the nation's own people. Clearly, Americans had grown so cynical of their government that they were quite willing to believe it capable of anything.

POLITICAL DISSENT SOON BURNED AT THE FABRIC of American society, and we managed to inflame that controversy even more. We told the press that we would take reprisals against American POWs for the nuclear "attack." As you know, this was the first major war in which America deployed large numbers of female combat soldiers. To carry out our plan, our fighters captured a few dozen.

The Americans believed that their nation could endure the sight of women as POWs. Perhaps they were right. Whatever the case, America was shocked by what we did next: We used our infamous Boys Brigade to rape the women, and then to amputate their limbs and burn their faces. Though we let them suffer terribly, we were careful not to kill them. We told the world that our women suffered much more in the atomic catastrophe.

The events surrounding the 50th anniversary of the destruction of Hiroshima taught us that the condemnations would be few. We saw how many people—including plenty of Americans—overlooked Japanese atrocities during World War II to castigate the American use of The Bomb to end the war. We likewise portrayed ourselves as nuclear "victims" and gained a surprising amount of sympathy despite our acts against the prisoners.

We then returned the POWs to the Americans—we said it was a "humanitarian" gesture. We converted the repatriation into what they called a "media circus." In no way did we try to hide what we did; to the contrary, we advertised it—using video clips on the Internet—as a warning of things to come.

However prepared the Americans thought they were to see their daughters come back in body bags, they were not ready to see them returned home strapped to wheelchairs, horribly mutilated, and shrieking in agony.

> AMERICANS MIGHT HAVE BEEN PREPARED TO SEE THEIR DAUGHTERS COME BACK IN BODY BAGS; THEY WERE NOT READY TO SEE THEM TORTURED.

TRAUMATIZED RELATIVES FRANTICALLY DEMANDED the removal of their wives and daughters from the combat zone, and those demands were swiftly met. But by 2007, women had become so incorporated into the structure of the U.S. military that their sudden withdrawal wrecked the effectiveness of the deployed forces.

As successful as this strategy was, we still wanted to strike the American homeland. This was not easy. By the turn of the century, America had developed fairly sophisticated methodologies to protect their critical military and civilian computer systems from cyber-subversion. Of course, we hired the best hackers around the world to challenge the American safeguards. Although they enjoyed some success, this was really a diversion.

We knew that direct cyber-attack could not do the kind of damage necessary to defeat the United States. Adopting B.H. Liddell Hart's strategy of the indirect approach, however, led us to concentrate our efforts against America's soft underbelly, Mexico. The Mexican economy depended upon computers, but its machines were not as protected as those in the U.S.

Our hackers were able to disrupt and corrupt them on a massive scale. At the same time, we used modern document technologies to print billions in near-perfect counterfeit pesos to further sabotage the economy. Finally, our clandestine assistance re-ignited the simmering Zapatista revolt in Chiapas.

The synergistic effect of these schemes was devastating. The Mexican government collapsed and the economy disintegrated. Millions of refugees flooded the United States, prompting desperate calls for military assistance to control the influx. Angry Americans loudly objected to troops fighting thousands of miles away when a crisis existed quite literally in their own backyard. Our plan, thanks to The One Above, worked perfectly.

We developed additional methods of bringing the war home to America. Naturally, we used terror bombings, but we prudently avoided traditional targets. In the last 10 years industrialized countries have perfected security techniques that make attacks against defended facilities very difficult. So we chose a more exposed target: America's swelling population of politically influential elderly. We planted bombs in eldercare facilities, public parks, medical centers—anywhere we thought they would gather. Soon, frightened seniors joined the burgeoning antiwar movement.

Our search for other low-tech ways of attacking America drew us to environmental warfare. We waged it against U.S. agriculture because agriculture was virtually unprotected and within our means to strike. Our proxies spread destructive Mediterranean fruit flies throughout growing areas in California and Florida, and introduced various plant funguses and blights into Midwest grain crops. We also secretly inoculated farm animals with highly contagious diseases.

We used the indirect approach again by attacking other vulnerable targets outside the United States. For example, our agents set huge fires in equatorial rain forests, raising fears in ecologically conscious America that the world's oxygen supply would be jeopardized. From inside our own borders we attacked the ozone layer by releasing damaging chemicals into the atmosphere. Of course, we did not concern ourselves with the effects of these actions on our own people because our faith told us that The One Above would protect us.

We bragged about our responsibility for all these deeds, staggering Americans with our willingness to attack them in every conceivable way. By the grace of The One Above there was no method of warfare that we failed to consider: We left AIDS-infected needles on bathing beaches and polluted America's coastlines by scuttling oil tankers we covertly hired. Americans could not enjoy a meal, relax on a beach, or even breathe the air without wondering if they were about to become victims of yet another of our assaults. Just as we destroyed their confidence in government, we destroyed their trust in nature.

YOU KNOW THE REST, MY FRIENDS. THOUGH WE rarely defeated the Americans on the battlefield, we were able to inflict such punishment that they were soon pleading for peace at any price. With their economy in ruins, their borders compromised, their people demoralized, and civil unrest everywhere, they could not continue. We had broken their will! They had no choice but to leave us with the lands we conquered and the valuable resources they contain.

Of the many mistakes the U.S. made in adapting to the "revolution in military affairs," several stand out: America too often assumed that the revolution would favor technologically advanced nations like herself. She failed to consider how enemies with values and philosophies utterly at odds with hers might conduct war in the information age. Despite what many technology-infatuated strategists thought in 1995, cyber-science cannot elimi nate the vicious cruelty inherent in human conflict. We taught the Americans that no

computer wages war with the exquisite finality of a simple bayonet thrust.

Most critically, America failed to deal decisively with barbarism when confronted by it. Had she demonstrated the will to face her responsibilities as a superpower in the post-Cold War world, nations like ours might not have dared oppose her—we keenly understand brute force and its consequences.

Now the Americans beg for our scraps. So desperate are they that they send their children here to be our servants. We control their future! That is the price of defeat! This, my friends, is the ultimate meaning of the Revolution in Military Affairs! Let us praise The One Above! ♦