

Parson Malthus Joins The U.S. Military

by Carl Osgood

A great deal of alarm has been raised in recent months, both from within the military and outside it, about the long-term effects of the extended deployments in Iraq and Afghanistan on the military services, especially the ground forces. Readiness of non-deployed forces is at historic lows, both Army and Marine ground combat units are losing critical core skills because of the demands of counterinsurgency warfare and occupation duty, and the stress imposed on military personnel is measured in poor recruiting and retention, and the growing number of psychological casualties. However, bad as all of this is, there's an even greater threat to the long-term viability of the U.S. military: the shift from a nationally-oriented tradition emphasizing short, decisive wars, to a Malthusian outlook which has based itself on the British model of imperial policing.

That the model *is* British imperial policing is no supposition on the part of this author. Maj. Gen. Jonathon Riley, the senior British military officer assigned to U.S. Central Command, said as much in an address delivered to the annual meeting of the Association of the U.S. Army in October of 2006. He invoked the image of the 1950s British campaign in Malaya (today, Malaysia) "as the textbook example of counterinsurgency," and suggested that perhaps that may be the model for the future. British success in Malaya has been attributed to two things, Riley said: British experience in imperial policing, and the development of concepts and techniques for waging limited war. Riley noted the 1966 book by Sir Robert Thompson, *Defeating Communist Insurgency, Experiences from Malaya and Vietnam*, which enshrined Malaya as the "touchstone" of British expertise in counterinsurgency. Riley said, "Now that the Cold War is over, perhaps the long view may give us a different perspective, although I think [Thompson]'s wrong to dismiss imperial policing, which one can characterize as an expeditionary campaign to seize the territory followed by counterinsurgency to keep it."

That this is the model for American counterinsurgency doctrine is also no supposition. A statement to that effect, by Sarah Sewall, the director of the Carr Center for Human Rights Policy at the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University, can be found in the mass circulation paperback version of the Army-Marine Corps counterinsurgency manual. Sewall, who was one of many participants in the development of the counterinsurgency doctrine, notes that it "heartily embraces a traditional British method of fighting insurgency. It is based on principles learned during Britain's early period of imperial policing and relearned during re-

sponses to twentieth century independence struggles in Malaya and Kenya.” She admits that the British sanctioned tactics, such as starvation, forcible relocation of civilians, and torture, that would not pass moral muster today. Therefore, the new U.S. manual incorporates standards of behavior that meet today’s international expectations.

While that may be the case, nonetheless, the shift is a significant one, in that the U.S. now has a doctrine for intervening in foreign countries, and trying to remake them according to some other image of what those countries should be; the outlook underlying that doctrine is decidedly Malthusian. Now, instead of pursuing a policy of war avoidance, and, if war becomes unavoidable, ending it as decisively as possible, the policy of the U.S. military is to just keep fighting, globally, without any perspective of ending it. Senior Pentagon leaders speak of “an era of persistent conflict” to be met by a strategy of “persistent security.” They speak as if history, at least prior to Sept. 11, 2001, did not occur, or is irrelevant, and they look forward to a world where perpetual shortages of everything, from food to energy to water, will, inevitably, be the sources of future conflicts.

In short, it would seem that Parson Thomas Malthus, who served the British Empire against the American Revolution, and whose “science” of population was fake, has taken over the U.S. military, and turned it into what it was originally founded to oppose.

Say It Ain’t So, JOE

To operate in this world of perpetual shortages and conflict, the Bush Administration’s Pentagon has elevated so-called “stability operations” to the same level as offensive and defensive combat operations. “Winning hearts and minds” is the theme that runs throughout the Army and Marine Corps counterinsurgency manual. The Army’s new operations manual, designated FM 3-0, no longer limits itself to major combat operations, but now declares, “Whenever objectives involve controlling populations or dominating terrain, campaign success usually requires employing landpower for protracted periods.” This is the doctrine for perpetual war.

One of the signs of how this outlook has permeated the military is a document produced by U.S. Joint Forces Command entitled “Joint Operating Environment” or “JOE.” This document, dated December 2007, purports to lay out what the world will look like that, over the next 20 years or so, the U.S. Joint Force will have to operate in. It is pessimistic and Malthusian in outlook, and ignores history in favor of sociological explanations and scientific frauds such as global warming. “The logic of trends and shocks will allow us to examine a number of models of potential future operating environments by combining different trends together to form plausible alternative futures,” it declares at the outset. Like the typical Malthusian, the author of this document assumes an entropic future, in which there is no change in the mode of production. From that assumption, he extrapolates a future in which conflict results from growing shortages of the basic commodities of life, particularly

food and energy, where those who have little (especially in “failed states”) become the major threat to those who still have plenty, and national governments have little authority or power to defend the welfare of their populations.

By declaring the inevitability of mass population migrations, climate change, ethnic and religious radicalism, the rise of more failed states, the decline of state sovereignty, growing competition for increasingly scarce resources, and so on, it practically outlaws creative thinking to invent new technologies, or even the further development of currently existing technologies, such as nuclear power, that would help to improve the lives of the vast majority of the people on the planet.

It describes the globalized financial system and free trade as “a key source of power for the United States,” and adds that, “the defense of the global trade and finance regime, as well as key nodes that underpin the international trading networks may be a central element of U.S. national security strategy.” So, the JOE document not only basically commits the U.S. military to defending a system which is the cause of many of the problems that it says the U.S. military has to be prepared to face, but that system is also collapsing into a hyperinflationary blowout.

To institutionalize the outlook of the JOE, the Defense Department has undertaken a “trends and shocks” study, under the Undersecretary of Defense for Policy. This study was described by one Pentagon official, at a recent conference at the National Defense University, as an “alternative futures approach to force planning, not as point prediction but to stretch what forces may be called on to do.” The military no longer plans for periods of peace punctuated by “big wars.” Non-military events may have military implications, and so the military services are being confronted with new missions that they did not anticipate. The entire planning process at the level of the Defense Department has been reorganized on this basis.

While it is clearly not the role of the military to define overall strategic policies for the U.S. government—that being the work of the Executive and Legislative branches of the Federal Government—there is a tremendous danger, if the military conducts its long-range planning and force structuring, on the basis of axiomatic assumptions of a world of perpetual conflict, driven by overpopulation, and other scientific hoaxes like the current fad of global warming.

Playing Out Future Scenarios

The assumptions underlying “trends and shocks” and the JOE document, including the notion often stated by Pentagon officials, that “we are living in an era of persistent conflict,” were played out at the U.S. Army War College during the first week of May, in a war game entitled “Unified Quest 08,” co-sponsored by JFCom, the Army’s Training and Doctrine Command (TraDoc), and U.S. Special Operations Command. As described to reporters during a May 6 media day, the game played four conflict scenarios in different parts of the world, including, for the first time, Africa. Two of the four scenarios were U.S. Africa Command scenarios: a Horn of Africa scenario set in

2025, and a Nigeria scenario set in 2015-18. Africom was established last year, and, with heavy representation from the State Department and other agencies in its headquarters, sets the pattern for how future conflicts are to be managed. The two Africa scenarios assumed a fully, or nearly fully, established Africom (Africom is scheduled to reach initial operational capability later this year, but it might be years before all of the capabilities envisioned for it are available) with the ability to respond to a crisis not only with military forces, but also expeditionary civilian forces that go in with the military, and are fully integrated into the planning for the mission. This “Civilian Response Corps,” which is now under development in the State Department, would provide expertise in such areas as governance, law enforcement and justice, budgeting, agriculture, infrastructure, and so on, to establish a government that, ostensibly, would then provide stability, and satisfy U.S. national interests.

The scenarios are developed by essentially taking conditions as they exist in that part of the world now (in addition to the two Africa scenarios, there was also a South American scenario centered on Peru and a Pacific scenario centered in the Philippines) and extrapolating those conditions and trends into the future. Such a method ignores how those conditions developed in the first place, and rules out future decisions by governments, other entities, or even individuals that might change the direction of those trends. Game officials insist that the only purpose of the scenarios is to meet the game’s study

objectives, yet the method of developing the scenarios appears to mirror the JOE document’s “look” into the future.

Previous iterations of Unified Quest, by contrast, were focused on major combat operations to be followed by stability operations. However, in both 2003 and 2005, the U.S. forces in the game (called “Blue”) ran into unexpected problems stemming from the (“Red”) adversary’s unexpected use of certain tactics to counter the U.S. strategy—in some respects mirroring the kinds of problems that have arisen in Iraq and Afghanistan. The gamers discovered that potential adversaries watch and react to U.S. strategic policy and behavior in ways that are often unexpected. This aspect of the real world seemed to have been pushed aside in the 2008 game (though not entirely, as one Blue officer confided to this reporter, when asked if anything had happened to him that he wasn’t prepared for). The 2008 game seemed to be much more focused on “the whole of government” approach to operations and campaign design, and less on how potential adversaries might respond to U.S. policies and actions.

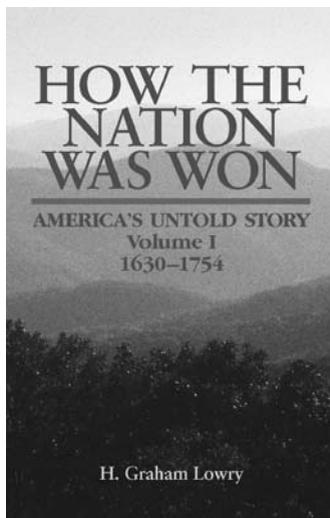
This “whole of government” approach was institutionalized by two policy documents, National Security Presidential Decision 44, issued on Dec. 7, 2005, and Department of Defense Directive Number 3000.05, dated Nov. 28, 2005. NSPD 44 directs the State Department to be the coordinating agency for all U.S. government efforts to prepare, plan for, and conduct stabilization and reconstruction activities. These activities are to be directed towards “foreign states and regions at risk of, in, or in transition from conflict or civil strife.” The DoD directive declares that “stability operations are a core U.S. military mission that the Department of Defense shall be prepared to conduct and support,” and shall be given a priority comparable to combat operations. Both documents list among the “long term goals” of U.S. strategy, the development of “a viable market economy” in the targeted countries. Africom, having been established after these two directives were issued, is the first U.S. military command to embody this approach from the ground up.

The military side of this “whole of government” approach is being implemented in Iraq by Gen. David Petraeus, the U.S. military commander in Iraq who is being elevated to commander of U.S. Central Command. Petraeus oversaw the development and production of the counterinsurgency doctrine while he was head of the Army’s Combined Arms Center at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas prior to taking up his current assignment. That doctrine has been largely declared a great success, except for a few dissident voices in the Army, who are concerned that the force is being turned into a counterinsurgency-only force and is losing the ability to conduct major combat operations. The larger issue is that the original American military tradition called for avoiding wars to the greatest extent possible and when they could not be avoided, for making them short and decisive. Maj. Gen. Fox Connor’s dictum: “Never fight unless you have to; never fight alone; and never fight for long,” has been overthrown and replaced by British methods of imperial policing, which mean you fight even when you don’t have to, and you fight protracted struggles.

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