

A New Kind Of War

Observations by Alan Sadowsky

That's what the politicians are calling it - a new kind of war. Either the old kind of war wasn't quite good enough for the folks back in Washington, or the speechwriters got together with the press secretary and decided that since we didn't have a clue about how to handle a sneak attack on the United States, we would refer to it in terms completely unfamiliar to the public. That way, the public would have nothing historical to compare against, and any action taken by the administration would go on unquestioned. Even the comparisons to Pearl Harbor were brushed aside as being "different". If there is anything new about this war, it's the sad fact that the leadership of this country is still not prepared to fight it fearing the international backlash of world opinion.

In spite of the tragic events on September 11th, this country has done nothing in response to the deaths of over 6000 Americans. Yes, we have established a massive military buildup around Afghanistan. Yes, we have rallied the support of countries all over the world. Yes, we have traced and even interrupted the flow of money to various terrorist organizations. Yes, we have detained those we deem suspect, and labeled many more "most wanted". We sing patriotic songs at almost every public gathering, and we head off to work every morning because it's the "normal" thing to do. For some reason it's important to act as though things are normal. That's what the government wants us to believe. Personally, I think the government is stalling for time, but then what do I know... this is a new kind of war.

From the British Empire, to the Second World War, to the Soviet Union, we have seen nations collapse from greatness. The reasons why are not as important as the fact that this has happened before, and can certainly happen again. If anyone thinks that the United States is somehow immune to the weight of financial breakdown, or political indecision, or direct military attack, they're in for a rude awakening. The attacks at the World Trade Center and at the Pentagon, and in Pennsylvania cannot be passed off as a single coordinated attack by a group of suicidal fanatics. This was a military campaign that was well planned, well financed, and unfortunately, well executed. These were just the opening volleys in a war that can have only one winner. We face an enemy whose only objective is to kill Americans without any discrimination of targets to separate out the elderly, or the women and children. This is a fight to the death, and in the end only one side will remain standing.

If that means rounding up suspected people and holding them in jail for weeks or months, then so be it. If that means unrestrained attacks on civilian areas either supporting or harboring the enemy as we did against Germany and Japan, then so be it. If that means the sacrifice of American military personnel in order

to destroy those who threaten our liberties, our freedoms, and our very lives, then so be it. There is no such thing as a civilized war, and if this country thinks it can fight one, it has learned nothing from its own history.

We have been coddled by our advanced technology only to find ourselves at the mercy of unpretentious tactics. We face an enemy without an Air Force yet, we suffer a devastating attack from the air. We portray the Taliban as an ill-trained, ill-equipped opposition force, yet we're unable to affect their ability to fight. We open our borders and our universities to students from all over the world, teach them chemistry, biology, and nuclear physics, only to find ourselves terrified to open our mail. We may come to find that we are our own worst enemy.

Ernest May writes in his book Strange Victory: Hitler's Conquest of France; "*In the post Cold-War era, the U.S. and the other seemingly victorious Western democracies exhibit many of the same characteristics that France and Britain did in 1938-40 — arrogance, a strong disinclination to risk life in battle, heavy reliance in technology as a substitute, and government procedures poorly designed for anticipating or coping with ingenious challenges from the comparatively weak.*"

This is not a new kind of war. This is the same basic conflict that man has fought since the dawn of time. It is brutal, and it is ingrained in our very being. It is hidden in our DNA, and whether we launch our most sophisticated weapons, or grasp the first crude rocks and sticks as our primitive ancestors did, we are driven by the instinct to survive. This is not a new kind of war. This is a war for the survival of all things we hold dear as a nation and as a people. If it comes down to "them or us", the choice must be us, and we must use every means at our disposal to achieve that end no matter how barbaric we appear in the eyes of the rest of the world. When you get home tonight, take your children in your arms, and consider the true cost of choosing otherwise.

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