

The Battle of Fallujah

One Early Battle in a Long, Long World War

“We feel right now that we have, as I mentioned, broken the back of the insurgency,” Lieutenant General John F. Sattler, Commanding General, I Marine Expeditionary Force comment on the Battle of Fallujah.

Nonsense. But, a prime example why Marines command tactical engagements and don’t run wars (according to a USMC Command and Staff College graduate). The insurgency is alive and well, just about 1,200 insurgents shorter. The valor of Marines and Soldiers in the battle was significant, but the enemy isn’t near their culminating point – the real beginning of the end.

Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) isn’t about how many insurgents are killed. The center of gravity for OIF is how many people are willing to be insurgents. The fighting, truly, is politics by another means. The election in ’05 is a symbolic exercise. This fighting is the real election.

This election with guns and bombs is about who has the power to rule. It’s different from the Rule of Law. It’s the way of the world. The exception to the rule of ruthless power is the bubble in time called the Great Experiment (Democracy in America), parliamentary rule among English-speaking peoples and in Western Europe – on and off, and flattering imitators elsewhere. History mocks President Bush’s Wilsonian rhetoric of democracy fast flowering in the Islamic desert.

Islamic civilization, once triumphantly ascendant, has declined since the 1200s. Today, Islamic civilization, except for Egypt, Iran (Persia) and Turkey, is a tribal culture stuck in the 13th Century. Islam is as far behind the West – no Renaissance, no Reformation, no Enlightenment - as the Barbarians were behind Rome in the 5th Century. There is a 600-800 year gap. Islam produces Islamists and is the identity of Iraq’s culture.

Yet, using demeaning names for enemies in Iraq, like “terrorist, dead-ender, insurgent, foreign Islamist, etc.” is self-absorbed folly. The enemies of occupying Americans aren’t terrorists. They’re using terrorism as a tactic. Why are Iraqis fighting? The Iraqis are struggling for security and stability for their families and tribes.

The real election issue is which group of guys with guns is ruthless enough, willing enough, to win. That is their war.

America’s war is different. Our fight is for the winner in Iraq to not be hostile to the U.S. and go through the symbolism of elections periodically. As long as the successor government is better than Saddam Hussein, like warlord Afghanistan with elections is better than the Taliban, we win.

OIF fits into our World War IV - which may last for centuries. For each phase of the fight, for each location, the U.S. needs the strategic, operational and tactical levels of war to match properly. Metaphors might provide the right framework of understanding.

Strategy. The U.S. is in the same position as Rome after the defeat of Carthage (146 B.C.). No peer competitor. The Barbarians beyond our borders are the biggest threat. Our Culture War, which is a Civil War, and disputes among Allies are the conflicts that determine if the U.S. has the Will to defeat the Islamist Totalitarians.

Containment, which worked for Communist Totalitarianism to destroy itself with Marxist economics, has a parallel 'Munificent Destiny'. Nations must be willing to limit Islamic immigration. Nations must contend the Islamic immigration invasion with ideas of Evangelical Christianity or Pagan Secular Humanism. (Hint: Secular Humanist Totalitarianism like Islamist Totalitarianism limits freedom.) Promote capitalism. Share wealth with investments.

Operations. Punitive expeditions into Islamic country for specific missions and durations will be needed. However, the operational and tactical metaphor is the Indian Wars (1608-1892), not Rome. Two cultures are in conflict. Like the Indian Wars, we will use Muslim allies to fight Muslims.

Tactics. Every tactical engagement has a political and cultural message. It is an aspect of Information War. GEN. John Abizaid understands this culture well enough to make the connection from tactics to operational and strategic outcomes. The Army leads transformation for the Information Era of Modern Warfare - changing operations and organizations now. New technology from the Future Combat Systems will be fielded when ready.

The U.S. needs a lot more Army. The Army should grow to 600k or 800k. And, no, we don't need more Marines to do Land Warfare. The Marines are valiant warriors, but they are organized and equipped differently than the Army for Sea-based missions. The Marines move slower and take more casualties.

Fallujah was a tactical victory. Our operational victory will defeat the enemy's Will.

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