

# FAO JOURNAL

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**U.S. Global Power and Future Middle East  
Challenges**

**General Murtaji: Lessons From Egyptian  
Operational Failures During the 1967  
Six-Day War**

**Chinese Media Coverage Of Nepal's Insurgency**

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# ASSOCIATION NEWS

## FAO JOURNAL LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

This is my final Letter as President of the FAO Association. It is been a privilege to serve the FAO Community for the past year. I wish this Association, our Members, and indeed the entire Foreign Area Officer community a most successful future. It is no overstatement to say that our Nation's security depends in part on how well we harness the energy and expertise of our Foreign Area Officer corps in the Nation's service.

In January 2005, I will begin my next assignment as Deputy United States Military Representative to the NATO Military Committee in Brussels, Belgium. It will always be a pleasure to welcome

any of our FAO community to NATO Headquarters (and especially good to receive your professional advice on the political-military issues affecting our Alliance).

For those FAOs, Active, Reserve, or Retired, serving in harm's way throughout the globe, may God bless you and your families!

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## ***U.S. GLOBAL POWER AND FUTURE MIDDLE EAST CHALLENGES*** ***Security Threats and Alternatives to Confront and Subdue Them*** ***Major (P) David D. Wisyanski, U.S. Army***

The United States' (U.S.) strategic advantage of global power will face more challenges in the Middle East than any other region in the future. Current U.S. interests in the Middle East are central to its national security strategy and likely will remain so for the next decade. Consequently, as the U.S. continues its military transformation to protect these interests, it probably will require mid-course corrections to deal with threats peculiar to the region that will evolve in this time period. While these threats could be directed against the U.S. homeland, they more likely will be perpetrated within the Middle East itself . . . . . where potential targets of opportunity offer the advantages of operational proximity and fewer coordination complexities.

This will be the case as the U.S. continues prosecuting the War on Terror while securing Middle Eastern oil resources for its own and the world economy, resolving the Arab-Israeli conflict, and building democracy in Iraq. Most challenges will come in the form of state and non-state actors employing asymmetric strategies such as terrorism and, to a lesser extent, WMD tactics that may be emboldened by the development of improved capabilities. Motivations for these actions will come from perceptions of unequivocal backing of Israel at the expense of Palestinian Arabs, exacerbated by a protracted occupation of Iraq, and underpinned by seemingly unjust economic disparities and undesirable cultural influences.

## The Global Context

The U.S. will continue to be the wealthiest and most powerful nation in the world. Its strong economic position in large part will be attributable to its superiority in scientific research, technological know-how, and capital holdings. This position also will be the case because the world will continue to take its consumer trend cues from the U.S. as it has for decades. Hence, the U.S. will continue to export its ideas to other nations who in turn will attempt to develop their economies through manufacturing with assistance from the U.S. market.

However, it is probable that U.S. global economic leadership will not benefit all equally

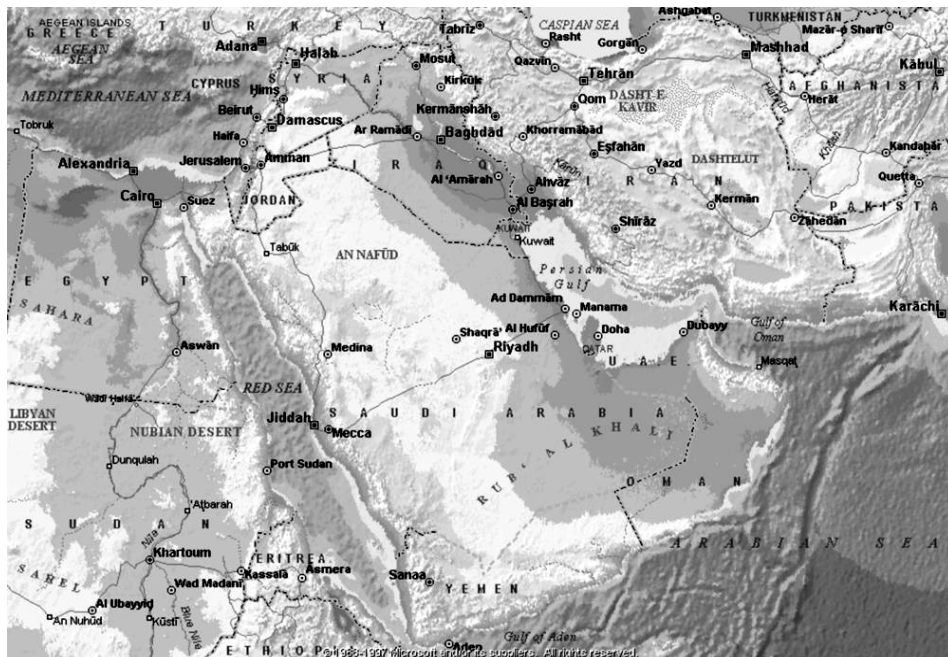
and may be a cause for political violence. So, while the global community's prosperity becomes more widespread by virtue of U.S. economic power, the world also will look toward the U.S. as the guarantor of the global economy, compelling it to be the guardian of its secure functioning and equitable distribution. Being positioned at the epicenter of the international political economy in this way will oblige the U.S. to maintain its mantle of leadership of international security.

## Nature of Conflict

In contravention to current strategic thought, the U.S. likely will not be challenged by

a "near-peer competitor" within the next decade. Other nations will not seek to compete with the U.S. for global political-economic primacy, but instead will try to leverage, or profit from, U.S. leadership of the global political economy and international security. This leverage would be made possible by mutual commercial ties and shared political interests, compelling the U.S. to remain engaged in global security. Even China, thought to be the likeliest future rival to U.S. power, seems to be on a strategic path toward leverage of, rather than competition with, the American economy. Moreover, its current security focus is regional rather than global, i.e., Taiwan. A revanchist Russia is less likely as it continues to strive for internal stability and economic growth. Europe also is an unlikely candidate as it will seek to match U.S. economic power at the

expense of its defense-related GDP. Most European countries will continue to rely on U.S. security guarantees via NATO despite disagreements over Iraq. Thus, conflict will not be the result of another peer nation, rival empire, or political-military bloc seeking to



supplant U.S. global leadership.

Future conflict will emerge from state and non-state actors who perceive themselves as not benefiting from or culturally suborned by U.S.-led globalism. The U.S. will remain the world's most materially abundant and culturally sophisticated society and likely be envied or disdained for being so. Some of the world's socie-

ties/groups will believe they have been deprived of expected benefits from U.S. global political and economic leadership and resort to violence as a means of redress. Consequently, the U.S. will be viewed both as the solution to and the cause of instability.

Seeds of social discontent will be sown as nations are unable to satisfy material needs for their populations. This discontent likely will be expressed through grievances about economic parity or cultural marginalization, and possibly vented through political radicalism. Islamic religious extremism will have a central role in fanning the flames of conflict, but not to the degree whereby politically radicalized religious groups/nations will seek to superimpose Sharia law on others. Islam will not be the new monolithic threat to Western society as was Communism in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, the Al Qaeda vision of a revived Islamic Caliphate notwithstanding. However, Islamist-based movements could find fertile ground within Arab/Muslim societies that believe they are not equally benefiting from the global economy. These threats could be given energy by religion—especially radical religious leaders working to convince people that moral aberrations are at the root of socio-economic inequities. Thus, Islam probably will serve more as a catalyst rather than a foundation for conflict.

Fundamentally, the world system will move toward secularism or pantheism wherein religion will be seen either as a hindrance to, or irrelevant in maintaining, a stable world order. Worldwide Islamic radicalism more likely will be viewed as a nuisance to be dealt with periodically, especially when it threatens the stability of Islamic nations predisposed to U.S. interests. These nations will be more prone to cultural “purification” movements, such as that espoused by Osama Bin Laden for Saudi Arabia, which of late has included both anti-government and anti-American violence. Perceived successes or nobility in the cause may spawn similar initiatives

in other areas of the Islamic World.

Attempts to neutralize these initiatives will take different forms within the nations where they emerge. For the most part, their containment will be carried out less through persecution and more through molding public opinion as to the futility of religious extremism in meeting the economic needs or maintaining the social order of society. Political leaders and societal elites—to include the intelligentsia—either will attempt to suppress or to co-opt radically politicized religious movements to the extent where their impact will be contained locally.

This kind of political and social pressure will coincide with, or be reinforced by, local security and law enforcement measures. Nevertheless, host-nation governments may not necessarily control religiously inspired movements from operating globally, thus providing de-facto sanctuary. Saudi Arabia serves as a current example where internal political schisms hinder its security forces from reigning in extremist groups’ lethal and non-lethal terrorist activities directed abroad.

### **The U.S. and Future Middle East Threats**

The U.S. will continue to have the predominant geopolitical influence in the Middle East region in the future. This will be on account of its continued interest in access to Middle East oil to sustain both its domestic needs as well as the global economy, and on account of its commitment to Israel’s security and seeing through its effort to build a stable democracy in Iraq. These regional interests will become strategic centers of gravity for the U.S. in maintaining its global power. The world in general, and the Middle East in particular, will have begun to base their relationships with the U.S. on its ability to maintain both its historical role and future commitment to these issues, as they will see the U.S. as holding

in balance the global economy and international security.

In maintaining its role and fulfilling its commitment, the U.S. yet again will have to deal with the Arab-Israeli conflict being the core challenge to its overall national security strategy. If the U.S. fails to bring about a permanent resolution to the Arab-Israeli conflict that includes Palestinian statehood, it will exacerbate terrorist threats not only regionally in Israel and Iraq, but also domestically in the American homeland. Bringing the Peace Process to a satisfactory close would have the benefit of removing the historical *Causus Belli* for most Middle Eastern-based extremist groups who would perpetrate these threats.

The Arab and Muslim Worlds perceive Israel and Iraq as interrelated interests for the U.S. Its involvement in Iraq will continue to be viewed primarily as the U.S. preserving Israel's existence, and secondarily as the U.S. superimposing secular Western culture on the Muslim World. This perception will continue to be a source of cultural alienation and regional friction which underpins terrorism directed against the U.S. at home and abroad. The threat especially will be acute against the U.S. presence in Iraq. The U.S. military footprint there will continue to be significant and will serve as an inviting target for those who believe its presence is a cause of political, economic, and social harm.

Should Iraq emerge a stable democracy, it probably still will rely on the U.S. for security guarantees—if not for internal stability, then for protection against external threats such as conventional and asymmetric ones emanating from Iran. Those in the Arab and Muslim World who believe their societies are being degraded by Western influences or believe their individual lot is diminished by Western presence and exploitation will be ripe for recruitment into extremist groups. These groups will find the U.S. military forces in Iraq an easier and more lucrative target upon which to vent their frustrations than the civil-

ian population in the U.S. homeland. U.S. forces in Iraq will be easier targets in that geographically they are in the vicinity of where most of these groups form and operate. Moreover, attacking U.S. military targets in the region, as symbols of U.S. cultural encroachment, will have a greater impact as it will be viewed as driving out unwelcome outsiders. Such attacks will pay off internationally as well in that soldiers and, in some cases, their in-country military contractor support structure are more acceptable targets than are innocent civilians.

If Iraq's transition to democracy becomes protracted, it could become a strategic liability especially regarding terrorism directed toward U.S. forces. Iraq potentially may become a "strategic Dien Bien Phu" for the U.S. While the U.S. intended Iraq to become a new strategic base from which to preempt would-be terrorists and transform their state sponsors/supporters, it instead has drawn into it those whom the U.S. intended to deter from attacking its homeland. Thus, while democracy may internally stabilize Iraqi society, extremists who affiliate themselves with regional jihadist networks may consider driving the U.S. from Iraq a more noble task than inflicting harm on innocent Americans at home.

Increasing the incentive for disaffected Arabs and Muslims to attack Americans in Iraq would be the perceived lack of a just settlement for the Palestinians in the Middle East Peace Process (MEPP). The continuing escalation of violence between the Israelis and the Palestinians is having a spillover effect in Iraq. Arabs from other nations show their solidarity with the Palestinians by fighting a perceived co-belligerent with Israel in the conflict. There is no evidence that this would not be the case throughout the next decade should the status quo remain static.

While a protracted resolution to the Peace Process and democracy building in Iraq are logically-deduced challenges, the prospect of interstate and intrastate conflicts as a result of socio-economic inequities seems incongruous by virtue

of the region's oil wealth. However, with the perception that equal distribution of wealth is the panacea to satiating domestic contentment, friction is inevitable. Perceived inequities in wealth distribution will be its cause.

This friction will be acute in an infant Palestinian state, Egypt, Jordan, and the Arabian Peninsula. The Palestinian case is obvious. Should they have a new state, Palestinians will experience economic growing pains by virtue of a high population density and the lack of investment incentives. Currently, Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank receive their economic sustenance from expatriate remittances from abroad and migrant labor opportunities in Israel. After achieving statehood the latter opportunities will diminish, the expectation being that meaningful employment will be available within the new state. In addition, Israeli domestic labor politics, not to mention security concerns, will demand it.

The Palestinian's expectations will be high and, thus, they will be disillusioned if either wealthy Palestinians abroad or other oil-rich Arab nations fail to invest in or provide economic aid to their young state. In this event, the Palestinians would have two choices: turn inward and seek socio-economic justice through Islamist movements, such as the current day Hamas, or pursue an external guardian.

The likeliest course of action would be turning inward toward an Islamist movement not only for socio-economic redress, but also to counter corrupt and ineffective internal political leadership. Doing so could cause further regional instability in the future. One scenario would be Palestine's alienation from other regional states or the global system as a whole. A Palestinian state probably would be viewed as an extremist society by virtue of its government being a theocracy having little value or utility to the world system. If backed into such a corner, as it were, such a state may turn to terrorism to achieve its aims. Inevitably, this course of action

would impel the Israelis to deter any would-be threats to it through renewed incursions or occupations.

In the other course of action, a regional hegemon could emerge whose legitimacy would be built upon assuming a mantle as the Palestinians' guardian. In order to do so, this hegemon will have to achieve either strategic superiority to or parity with Israel as well as develop the ability to intimidate the U.S. Both capabilities would have to be achieved through asymmetric means in that attaining parity with the U.S. and Israel in conventional forces would be formidable. Hence, pursuit of WMD capabilities and supporting terrorism by proxy would be more likely courses of action.

Saddam Hussein's Iraq was suspected of moving toward this kind of strategy last year, but since then evidence has revealed its objectives were limited to regime maintenance. On the other hand, Iran fits this pattern currently. It is carrying out a strategy of encouraging and assisting terrorist groups such as Hizballah in Lebanon and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad organization in Israel all the while pursuing a more capable, ergo more lethal, WMD capability than had Iraq. It likely will remain upon this course if its only impediments continue to be current IAEA inspections and a restive younger generation demanding political liberalization.

Egypt, Jordan, and the Arabian Peninsula are less ostentatious threats of any sort, but potential future challenges nevertheless. These areas will face socio-economic challenges of a different kind. Theirs will involve internal security and stability.

Egypt and Jordan suffer from stratified societies where wealth is either concentrated in the hands of a few (Egypt) or in the hands of a predominant ethnic group (Jordan). Egypt has had a latent insurgency in the south and festering urban discontent over the lack of economic oppor-

tunity. This insurgency has fed off the economic inequities caused by government elites who have retained the nation's wealth. Moreover, it has found ideological strength in radical political Islam.

Both Jordan's economic backbone and economic liability is its Palestinian community that numbers close to 70 percent of its population. This group largely represents the wealth holders and the welfare recipients. Thus, the indigenous Jordanian population has expectations that Palestinian statehood will enable its own prosperity.

Indigenous Jordanians believe they will be able to run the nation's businesses and alleviate its budgetary and infrastructure strains with a Palestinian exodus. These expectations may be unrealistic in that a majority of those in the Palestinian community may remain in Jordan where they have prospered financially or have received generous welfare. Unrealized, these expectations could result in future internal instability of a key U.S. ally in the region.

Even though oil-rich, the Arabian Peninsula also may suffer internal challenges in that wealth is not distributed evenly now and will be less so when oil supplies become more depleted. Grievances resulting from such inequities also may find their outlet in politicized Islam that threatens regimes and U.S. presence in the region. An unresolved MEPP and unresolved instability in Iraq also will fuel these grievances.

These kinds of challenges have been manifested in Saudi Arabia recently by anti-government oppositionists who increasingly are being recruited by terrorist groups or jihadist networks. The motivations of these oppositionists include frustration with worsening economic opportunities apparent in the GDP of Saudi Ara-

bia's young adult population being only a third of that of its parents' generation. Motivations also



**Iranian Shihab-3 Missile**

include disgust with the corruption of the Saud Dynasty and its association with U.S. political, military, economic and, by default, cultural influence in the region. Inflaming this frustration and disgust is the U.S. occupation of Iraq and the recent abuses by U.S. forces of Iraqi detainees. Hence, an unresolved situation in both the MEPP and the stabilization of Iraq is likely to fertilize recruitment of anti-government oppositionists, such as those in Saudi Arabia, into terrorist or extremist groups which could challenge U.S. regional interests in

the future.

### **Strategic Choices for the U.S.**

In the event that a just Middle East peace and a stable democracy in Iraq are not achieved, U.S. interests will become an object of hostility at home and abroad. The U.S. could face both asymmetric WMD threats and terrorist attacks domestically and/or against its presence regionally. These threats would necessitate both a homeland defense capability and the ability to preemptively strike or intervene in the region to protect American citizens. However, preemption only will have credibility either when a verifiably clear and present danger exists, or when a cluster of regional states believes its security is threatened. If these conditions are met, it is likely that regional states will either invite or at least cooperate with U.S. military interventions as was the case in the Gulf War. The former case likely will come with the condition that an intervention be under the auspices of the U.N. or other coalition arrangement.

Homeland defense vis-a-vis Middle East-based threats will require a reorientation of the



U.S. Armed Forces. Rather than being solely designed around power projection, military forces also will need to fulfill security requirements at home. These security requirements, to be satisfied, need more than the current evolving intelligence collection, coordination, evaluations, alert declarations, and notifications functions of the Department of Homeland Security. The operational dimension that appears to be missing exists in the Department of Defense (DoD) through a statutory, albeit neglected, mandate to train for and carry out domestic security operations—a capability overlooked in the structural changes made to address homeland security in the wake of the 9/11 attacks.

Lead responsibility for homeland security—which includes countering domestic terrorism—had belonged to the DoD since its formation in 1947 and belonged to the War Department before then. Despite domestic security being within the scope of the DoD's constitutional mandate, there currently seems to be no appreciable institutional emphasis and corresponding readiness. Its role in domestic security appears to have atrophied into a secondary and, in some cases, a tertiary concern. Elevating its priority may become imperative. Doing so would require the U.S. Army Forces Command (FORSCOM) to reprioritize its missions and roles from primarily a force provider for power projection to becoming a “domestic theater command” for Reserve Component (RC) land forces under the overall combatant command of the U.S. Northern Command (NORTHCOM). This re-orientation also may require the National Guard to reassume its traditional domestic missions and roles at the expense of its current function of reinforcing Active Component (AC) forces' overseas expeditions.



**Symbol of Palestinian Islamic Jihad**

Historically, FORSCOM and its long past predecessor, the Continental Army Command (CONARC), was responsible for carrying out the DoD mission of homeland security. In 1973 FORSCOM inherited this role from the CONARC which involved homeland defense through preparation, and command and control, of Continental U.S. Armies (CONUSA). CONUSAs not only oversaw the training of RC forces, but

also acted as their controlling headquarters in domestic operations as necessary. In the future, reinforcing border security, protecting domestic infrastructure and government facilities, and responding to civil crises may become equally as critical as FORSCOM's current priority of providing ready forces for contingencies abroad.

More consistent in homeland defense has been the North American Air Defense Command (NORAD) in its mission and role of protecting U.S. air space. However, NORAD needs better synergy with civilian aviation should Middle East-based terrorists attempt a repeat of the 9/11 attacks. Additionally, it ought to begin a transition in becoming the executive agent for the National Missile Defense program. While WMD delivery means of terrorist groups or states more than likely will be asymmetric, ballistic missile delivery capabilities also will be in the realm of possibility. Iran could be capable of intercontinental ballistic missile reach to at least Europe if its program is left unchecked.

The U.S. also will need to explore critically how a smaller, more technologically-oriented conventional military capability can easily transition to and effectively carry out long-term occupations. Although a large-scale war is possible if a regional hegemon with a formidable conventional capability emerges, its likelihood is less probable. As stated earlier, an emerging

hegemon probably would resort to more unconventional means. The U.S. military will need to develop forces of expeditionary and interventionist nature to counter these means. However, while these forces will need to be light, agile, and potent enough to carry out this role, they still will need the capability to occupy and stabilize an invaded nation should an operation of the magnitude of Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) be a future requirement. It has been argued that the Marine Corps already owns the expeditionary role; but, doctrinally and force package-wise, occupying and stabilizing an invaded country over a mid- or long-term would overburden them in terms of current strength, organization, and capabilities.

The former Army Chief of Staff, General Eric Shinseki, stated the need to develop mobile strike force packages which can be quickly deployed and yet lethal against most opponents. This concept he envisioned was the Army's proposal to the greater transformation program of the U.S. military. STRYKER brigades were to be able to fulfill the roles envisioned for the Army's transformation. Nevertheless, legacy capabilities such as those within Army airborne, Marine expeditionary, and joint special operations forces would still be in demand especially when threats involve smaller, more dispersed entities such as terrorist cells and sanctuaries in remote, rugged, or built-up areas.

On the other hand, there will be situations that demand larger, heavier forces that not only are able to quickly deploy by air and sea, but also are fluid enough to transition from conventional combat to the stabilization and support tasks of an occupation. Joint operational doctrine as outlined in Joint Pub 3.0, then, will remain relevant. But it will require both a political will and a military commitment to organize, train, and employ a force sizable and agile enough to carry it out. This will be critical especially should the U.S. consider invasions along the lines of

Iraq in other Middle Eastern countries.

## **U.S. Military Doctrine and Capabilities for Middle East Commitments**

So far, the Army's current course of transformation builds upon the concepts contained in its field manuals FM-1 (The Army) and FM-3.0 (Operations) through its modular structure of "Brigade Combat Team Units of Action" that enable commitment of quickly deployable and lethal forces to trouble spots. This move has been accelerated in part to provide more troops for occupation duties in Iraq and Afghanistan without having to increase the Army's size. These kinds of units will be agile enough to strike at elusive terrorist groups operating in those areas currently and elsewhere in the Middle East in the future. The goal is to transform the Army to this structure completely in the next few years. However, due to a lack of light infantry and engineers, this structure appears not to have the capability to carry out the constabulary duties and reconstruction activities involved with nation building. These capabilities along with military police are among the most essential elements necessary to carry out an occupation which could likely occur in another country in the region in the not-too-distant future.

In this regard, the strategic lesson of Iraq has not been the validation of Army FM-1's "Decisive Action" as a military doctrine in quickly defeating battlefield opponents. Rather, it has been the absence of *operational consolidation* as a conceptual precondition within Joint Pub 3.0's guidance for defining end states and for what constitutes conflict termination. In other words, audaciously executed military operations rarely, if ever, intimidate a civilian population into submission. Hence, a powerful force able to defeat any conventional adversary must be agile enough to quickly phase into pacifying the population to which it belongs, or from which it re-

ceives support or sustenance. Joint doctrine calls for this capability under the concepts of postwar Stability and Support Operations, but the joint community has yet to institutionally embrace its criticality in attaining "Decisive Victory" emphasized in Army FM-1.

Consider the implications of this disparity using the current trends of anti-government activity against Arab regimes in the region. These threats could evolve over the next decade into open challenges against U.S.-friendly governments. The most harmful scenario impacting U.S. interests would be the fall of a friendly government whereby extremists emerge as the new leadership. Among the threats to U.S. and global security could be interrupted oil supplies and sympathy and support for regional and international terrorist groups. While the U.S. military could quickly seize the affected country and remove such leadership, rooting out pockets of dispersed resistance and pacifying the population would demand applying relevant forces, capabilities, and doctrine.

As the primary broker of a lasting Middle East peace agreement, the U.S. may need to consider employing its military instrument of power to support diplomatic ends in a similar pacification environment. Within the scope of a peace agreement, securing Israeli-Palestinian borders and the political status of Jerusalem through a peacekeeping mission might be required. An arrangement along the lines of the Multinational Force and Observers (MFO) mission in the Sinai may need consideration.

As an alternative, Jerusalem could be

placed under the protection of some sort of international constabulary mission under the auspices of the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO). To ensure confidence in maintaining overall security and stability between Israel and Palestine, a U.N. Chapter Six peacekeeping mission such as the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) on the Golan Heights could be placed along the agreed-to borders. Essentially, if military transformation does not implement changes to acquire capabilities that match doctrine mentioned above then the U.S. may have to resort to its allies or the international community for assistance in peace operations.

## Conclusion

In maintaining its position as the world's sole superpower, the U.S. likely will face a multitude of esoteric and unconventional challenges rather than a quantifiable monolithic threat from a



U.S. Army soldiers remain alert in the courtyard as other members of their unit search a house during Operation Grizzly Forced Entry on 21 August 2004.

peer competitor. As explained above, being the hub for the global political economy will place demands and expectations on it from the international community to facilitate their prosperity and even their protection. If such is the case, the U.S. surely will remain engaged in the Middle East to sustain its own domestic as well as the global

economy.

In one case, should the U.S. exercise its global leadership and power in achieving a comprehensive Middle East peace, threats to the U.S. homeland would be reduced significantly in that the ideological winds which sustain terrorist

groups or rogue states would have less impetus to hold the U.S. responsible for the region's perceived ills. Its collateral effect would be a more stable Iraq as Arab and Muslim nations would have incentive to assist the U.S. by clamping down on would-be Muslim extremists and extremist groups. A price, on the other hand, would include assuring Israel's internal security concerns while protecting the Palestinians from Israeli incursions. The cost of doing so might have to include commitment of U.S. forces to tasks requiring doctrine and capabilities yet to be grasped.

In the final analysis, U.S. global power will encounter threats at home in addition to those in the Middle East especially if there is no further resolution to the Arab-Israeli conflict or the probable continuing instability in Iraq. As outlined above, this will leave the U.S. two courses of action in developing and employing the appropriate kind of military capabilities to properly address these threats. One is of an expeditionary nature with sufficient strength to face a conventional regional hegemon while the other is constabulary in nature, e.g., to maintain a delicate peace between Israel and Palestine, and to ultimately pacify a politically unstable Iraq.

Both capabilities will be necessary to prevent, subdue, or defeat the most likely threats able to undermine U.S. global interests in the future—threats that will continue to reside in the Middle East.

## End Notes

<sup>1</sup> Brian Michael Jenkins. "Redefining the Enemy: The World Has Changed, But Our Mindset Has Not," *Rand Review* (Rand Corp, Spring 2004), p. 19. See also George J. Gilboy's "The Myth Behind China's Miracle," *Foreign Affairs*, (New York: Council on Foreign Relations, Vol. 83, No. 4, July/August 2004).

<sup>2</sup> Jenkins, p. 21; Graham E. Fuller and Ian O. Lesser. *A Sense of Siege: The Geopolitics of Islam and the West*, (Rand Corporation: Greater Middle East Studies Center, 1995), pp. 1 & 84.

<sup>3</sup> Oliver Roy. "Changing Patterns among Radical

Islamic Movements," *The Brown Journal of World Affairs*, (Providence, RI: Brown University, 1999), pp. 109-111.

<sup>4</sup> See Michael Doran's "The Saudi Paradox," *Foreign Affairs*, (New York: Council on Foreign Relations, Vol. 83, No.1, January/February 2004), pp. 35-39.

<sup>5</sup> Doran, "Saudi Paradox," pp. 42-44.

<sup>6</sup> See Ahmed Hashim's "Iraq's Chaos, Why the Insurgency Won't Go Away," *Boston Review* (Cambridge: Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Vol. 29, No. 5, October/November 2004).

<sup>7</sup> The Gaza Strip has the highest per capita birth rate in the world.

<sup>8</sup> Russell F. Weigley, *History of the United States Army*, (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc., 1967), pp. 528-529.

<sup>9</sup> See Anthony Cordesman's "Four Wars and Counting: Rethinking the Strategic Meaning of the Iraq War," (Washington D.C.: Center for Strategic and International Studies, December 1, 2003), p. 6.

<sup>10</sup> Cordesman, "Four Wars and Counting," p. 8.

## Author Bio

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# ***General Murtaji: Lessons From Egyptian Operational Failures During the 1967 Six-Day War***

## ***By LCDR Youssef H. Aboul-Enein, MSC, USN***

### **Introduction**

As the United States military becomes more engaged in the Middle East, it becomes imperative that books by Arab military thinkers be translated and analyzed. Not only does it enable American military planners to understand Arab allies, but also provides an understanding of military works in Arabic available to adversaries as well.

The 1967 Six-Day War is worthy of careful study from many vantage points. There is the brilliant tactical air campaign designed as an Israeli aerial blitzkrieg that achieved air supremacy on several fronts. There is also the land campaign that combined various aspects of ground warfare, from urban street fighting against Jordan's Arab Legion in Jerusalem to the engagement of a retreating Egyptian army in the Sinai. But especially noteworthy are the numerous critiques of the Egyptian military by its own senior officers that arose following the 1967 war.

In 1976, General Abdal Muhsin Murtaji, an officer since 1937 and the commander of the Sinai front in 1967, wrote a bold, scathing indictment of the Egyptian military in his book *Al-Fariq Murtaji Yarwi Al-Haqiqa* (General Murtaji Narrates the Truth) (1). His criticism stands out from the others for his scathing indictment of the pre-1967 War Egyptian upper military leadership of which he was part. Cited in Michael Oren's definitive book on the 1967 War, *Six Days of War*. Murtaji's book discusses failures in training, adequate field exercises, equipping of forces and military coordination with other Arab states. This review essay will delve into Murtaji's book and contrast his thoughts on the strategy and tactics of the

1967 War with the opinions other senior Egyptian military leaders.

### **Who Was General Murtaji?**

General Murtaji's military career spanned three decades, beginning with his graduation from Cairo's Military Academy in 1937. His career was divided among infantry commands from the platoon to the divisional level. To prepare himself for such a diverse career, his broad education included earning a Masters in Military Sciences at the newly formed Egyptian Command and Staff College in 1948, obtaining a diploma in statistical methods in 1953, and attending the Russian Frunze Military Academy in 1957. Current senior Egyptian officers remember Murtaji as one of the Commanders in Chief of Egyptian forces in Yemen (1963), Political-Military Advisor to Egyptian forces in Yemen from 1965 to 1967, and finally Commander of the Sinai Front in 1967 in a stint that ended just weeks shy of the Six-Day War.

### **Views of the Pre-1967 Egyptian Military**

Murtaji's book *Al-Fariq Murtaji Yarwi Al-Haqiqa* begins with a description of the underdeveloped, British-controlled 1936 Egyptian military. Weapons at this time were poor and substandard compared to those of other European powers, training abysmal, and military thinking nonexistent. The Egyptian armed forces were reduced to serving as a police force in Egypt and the Sudan. The only positive development was the creation of a Military Staff College in 1942 to provide competently trained Egyptian officers. Murtaji writes that this was the first time many

Egyptian officers were introduced to a serious study of strategy, tactics, the military classics and battlefield planning, describing it as a *nahda* (renaissance) in military thought. Murtaji himself attended the college in 1948.

In 1955, Egyptian leader Gamal Abdul-Nasser concluded a massive arms agreement with the Soviets, dubbed the Czech Arms Deal, to attempt to strengthen its weapons holdings. Murtaji writes of this deal's substantial doctrinal impact on Egyptian armed forces, but Soviet advisors consistently said it would take seven years for Egyptian formations to adapt to this new weaponry.

### **Discussion on Egyptian Command, Training and Logistics**

One of the major failures of the Six-Day War from an infantry perspective was that the Egyptians did not pay adequate attention to the cultivation of field commanders at the battalion and lower levels. Prior to 1967, there was an attitude of "who does less, risks less." He blames this on several factors:

- An internal security apparatus that stifled military creativity and viewed military innovation as suspect. As a result, only those who proved loyal and not necessarily militarily competent rose to the top. Murtaji writes of a failed military culture where the ghosts of conspiracy and counter-revolution hung in the air.

- The Chief of General Staff was assigned as a compromise candidate between the political and military leaders, which Murtaji feels only reinforced the convention of promoting leaders who did not take risks.

- A debate over whether Egypt should preempt an Israeli first strike pervaded the Egyptian army before the war but was ignored by Armed Forces Commander-in-Chief Field Marshal Amer, who neglected to recognize the impracticality of

going to war with 55,000 crack troops mired in Yemen.

- In the air force, Egyptian senior air planners like General Madkour Abu-al-Aez fiercely attempted to persuade the Egyptian General Staff to learn from the 1956 Suez Crisis by investing heavily in air defense before infantry formations. Murtaji was in the middle of a debate over whether or not to allocate scarce resources between anti-air or strike fighter-bomber capability.

- The arrival of Soviet equipment sparked a rivalry between the two tiers of Egyptian officers with one tier advocating Soviet military methods of combined doctrine and an older generation of officers trained in British schools who espoused an older World War II style of fighting.

- Soviet advisors also cautioned that it would take seven years to fully adapt Egyptian formations to their new hardware. However, this was time Nasser did not have, as events were moving fast in the Arab Nationalistic heyday of the 1960s. The failed union with Syria and the debacle in Yemen forced Nasser to find an outlet for his failures, which he found through the 1967 war.

### **Equipment, Training and Intelligence**

Murtaji begins this section of his book condemning the Egyptian practice of displaying the latest Soviet military hardware in parades to the public, which made concealing capabilities impossible. He also writes that the Egyptians failed to fully utilize the bulk of their military hardware, that military planners before 1967 did not use their equipment to the limit, pushing its technical envelope like the Israelis and other Western armies did. Perhaps his most damning indictment isolates the 1966-1967 military training year as the worst in Egyptian modern history due to defense budget cuts and complete obsession with events in Yemen, where Egypt was fighting a difficult proxy war against Saudi Arabia, Jordan and

Israel using Yemeni royalist tribesmen against Egyptian backed pro-Republicans.

field commander and direct control over their decisions.

The Sinai deployment cycle that Murtaji found when he assumed command of that sector in May 1967 consisted of 23 days in the field with seven days off in a 30-day training cycle. This was not adequate for extensive field exercises and testing of new equipment under desert conditions. While there were simply not enough training days, the army adjusted to this deployment cycle, making leaders reluctant to change it. Another problem Murtaji identified was that Egyptian infantry and armor units in the Sinai did not venture far from their defensive positions to orient themselves to the terrain. Murtaji also noted the shortened in-class training for officers and NCOs and the declining quality of newly trained military leaders. Field Marshal Amer, Commander-in-Chief of the Egyptian Armed Forces and member of the Revolutionary Command Council that overthrew the monarchy in 1952, made several fatal decisions:

- In mid-1966, Amer re-assigned most Flag level commanders to other units, forcing field commanders to learn and establish connectivity with new units. His only effective decision was promoting the civilian defense ministry official charged with overseeing public relations, Shams Badran, to War Minister. This move left Field Marshal Amer to focus on military matters, while Badran looked after fiscal, administrative and managerial issues.

- Egypt had not conducted major divisional/corps level field exercises since 1954.

- In another glaring error, Amer objected when President Nasser placed command of all air, land and sea forces in the Sinai under a field commander. Nasser wanted to make the service chiefs support a field commander, while Amer was concerned about the seniority of the

- The Egyptian-Syrian Mutual Defense Pact was merely symbolic. General Mohammed Fawzy, the Chief of General Staff, did not plan for war on two fronts but concentrated mainly on Egyptian defense and the guerilla war in Yemen.

- Field Marshal Amer's strategic thinking seemed rooted in small-scale operations, such as attacking Israeli logistical convoys with roving units of light infantry. The notion that Amer simply could not think at corps command level surfaced in the thinking of many Egyptian generals.

### **The Mythical Israeli Divisions on the Syrian Border**

Field Marshal Viscount Bernard Montgomery of Alamein fame visited Egypt on May 12 to commemorate the twenty-fifth year of his victory against Rommel. That same day, the Soviet Defense Attaché in Beirut informed Egyptian military intelligence of Israeli troop concentrations amassing along Syria's border. This mobilization contradicted the Israeli Prime Minister's public statement that Israel did not intend a preemptive strike on Syria at this juncture. A chain of events ensued and climaxed on June 5<sup>th</sup>, 1967.

Two days after the gala with Field Marshal Montgomery, Armed Forces Commander-in-Chief Field Marshal Amer convened his war council. Present were his Chief of Staff Fawzy, the Service Chiefs, Chief of Operations and Chief of the Department of Military Intelligence. The meeting opened with a confirmation of the Soviet report of Israeli divisions massing on the Syrian border, with Syrian and Soviet sources predicting an attack anytime between the 17<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> of May. They discussed this troop movement possibly serving as a diversion, with

a main attack slated for Egypt. The war council decided to raise the alert level of the Egyptian military, pull units immediately back from Yemen, and to send Mohammed Fawzy to Syria to coordinate two fronts and to verify the Soviet reports. He was also to affirm Egypt's commitment to enter any war in which Israel attacked Syria first.

### **General Riad at the Jordanian Front**

General Riad, considered the father of Egypt's modern air defense systems, was sent to Jordan in late 1966 to lead the Unified Arab Command, in part to divert his criticisms of the state of the Egyptian military. Riad was also widely known for a radio message (the Ajloun Cable) he sent from Jordan to Cairo warning of a massive Israeli aerial attack that never actually reached the Egyptian General Command due to a prevalence of errors in processing and decoding. As events brewed in Egypt, he later advised King Hussein to cover shortages of ground forces in the Jordanian front that encompassed Jerusalem and the West Bank by asking Syria to provide five of its fifteen divisions to Jordan. However, the Syrians sent only a single division, and to the village of Suwaileh, only 60 KM inside Jordanian territory from the Jordanian-Syrian border.

Murtaji is bitter about Syria's inaction and continues his story by narrating the successful Israeli aerial attack that decimated 85-90 percent of the Egyptian Air Force. After Jordan and Egypt persisted with their request, Syria started intercepting returning Israeli jet fighters, attacking them as they attempted to land, and also started bombing Israeli airfields as fighters were refueled and rearmed. Murtaji writes that Syria squandered a golden opportunity to equalize the playing field in regards to Israeli air dominance during the 1967 War, offering excuse after excuse for not launching their MiGs.

### **The Anatomy of Egypt's Plan Qahir (Conqueror)**

According to Murtaji, the plan for defense

of the Sinai, given the code name "Al-Qahir," was finalized on May 14, 1967. A carefully scripted and detailed plan, Qahir largely centered on control of the elevated hills and dry valleys that bisected the Sinai from the northeast to the southwest. It aimed to deny Israeli ground units the ability to penetrate three strategic passes through the Suez Canal. Although Murtaji cannot discuss details of the plan due to its classification, Murtaji does offer general criticisms, including:

- No thought was given to air or sea dominance.

- The plan was developed by army generals and predicated on a first strike by Israeli armor and infantry as the opening gambit.

- The Egyptian Air Force would respond to an Israeli first strike on the ground by crippling Israel's Air Force. Murtaji notes Israeli Air Chief of Staff Mordechai Hod's comment that only a dozen jets remained to protect Israeli airspace, leaving the bulk to conduct the strike in two waves. Murtaji feels that the bulk of Israel's jet fighters-bombers engaged in Egypt, would have offered a rare chance for Syria to engage in an unopposed strike against Israeli urban targets. He adding that returning Israeli aircraft would have been low on fuel and ordnance without its usual effectiveness against Syrian MiG fighters.

- The Navy would shift its effort from the Mediterranean to the Red Sea, blockading the Gulf of Aqaba, completely ignoring the support role it should have provided to the Sinai commander.

- Navy and air forces did not support ground units in the Sinai, either logistically or with naval gunfire support, but acted independently in a series of operations.

- The logistical plan was abysmal, leaving communications gear, self-propelled artillery and towed artillery piled up on the western side of the



Suez Canal.

- The flow of forces into the Sinai was uncontrolled, with battalions missing operations officers, engineering officers, and in one case even a commanding officer. In addition, the 130,000 troops pouring into the Sinai had little understanding of the Qahir plan.

- When Field Marshal Amer tasked his fighters to plan for strikes on Israeli military and industrial targets, wing commanders were perplexed as they had not trained and were ill prepared for an offensive strike against Israeli targets. His inattention to training, air time, and aerial exercises would later haunt him.

Michael Oren's 2002 book on the Six Day War describes Qahir as a Soviet plan devised in 1966 that centered on three defensive lines running north to south across the Sinai. The first was Rafah to Abu Ageila and was to be lightly defended, serving as a ruse to lure Israelis into a frontal assault. Advancing Israelis would enter the desert with their supply line extended and face a more robust second line, which featured a triangular kill zone with the fortifications of Al-Arish, Jabal Libni and Bir Hassana at its vertices. The Third Line, located in the Giddi and Mitla passes, would reinforce the second line and continue the offense. to reinforce the third line and protect the Suez Canal (2). Michael Oren and Murtaji found many problems with Qahir:

#### *Murtaji's Criticism of the Tactical Aspects of Qahir:*

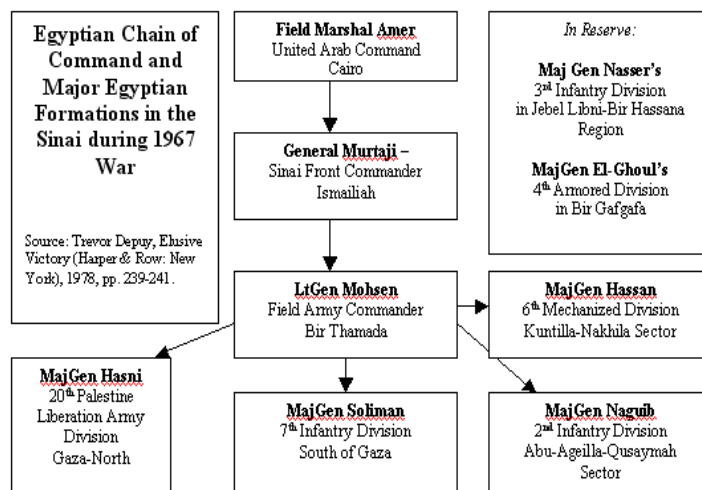
- The 1<sup>st</sup> Defensive consisted of three independent pockets that lacked coordination and could not reinforce one another.
- Military engineers did not prepare the defensive lines, completing only 20 percent of the required fortifications and shelters in the three defensive lines.
- Officers did not adequately convey to their soldiers the importance of the passes (Gidi,

Mitla and Al-Khatmiya Passes) as the last line of defense towards the Suez Canal.

- Amer's dispatching of commando units to Sharm-El-Shaykh would antagonize Israel into conducting a first strike and waste the rapid reaction abilities of commandos.

#### *Oren's criticisms (3):*

- Qahir's infrastructure had not been completed.
- Qahir could not result in success with so many Egyptian troops in Yemen.
- Lack of funds to finance Qahir as written was a chief complaint of senior officers.
- Amer not only insisted on a defensive plan; he also insisted on three offensive plans known as Operations *Sahim* (Arrow), *Fahd* (Leopard) and *Al-Asad* (Lion) that the Egyptian Army was not trained to execute or were briefed on.
- Commanders were not familiar enough



with their duties under Plan Qahir due to constant rotation. Murtaji himself would be assigned to command the Sinai front on May 15, 1967, only two weeks before the start of hostilities.

A discussion on the above diagram is in order. It would take under a day for Amer to regain his composure from the shock of the initial Israeli air attack of June 5<sup>th</sup>, 1967. When he landed at Cairo International airport a fire was blazing through the military section of Cairo. After recovering from the shock, he began sending messages directly to division commanders, bypassing General's Murtaji and Mohsen in the command hierarchy (4). Add to this the following short biographies of some of the generals in the diagram to give a sense of chain of command and the ability of Egyptian field commanders in the 1967 War.

- Major General Hasni was Governor-General of the Gaza Strip, commanding mainly Palestinian irregulars reinforced by Egyptian artillery and 50 Sherman tanks.

- Major General Soliman was yanked out of the infantry school where he served as commandant and he brought with him officers from the school. Since they had never worked together and had no real experience serving on military staffs, they had little chance to develop as a team.

- Major General Naguib's main qualification was his history of carousing with Field Marshal Amer.

- Major General Nasser was another favorite of Amer's, albeit with no experience at divisional command (5).

### **Murtaji Rationalizes Israel's Selection of June 5<sup>th</sup> as D-Day**

Murtaji disputes the claim that Israel selected H-Hour at 0830 on 5 June, as senior Egyptian officers would be on their way to work. He believes several factors drove Israeli intelligence to select that day:

- Field Marshal Amer was to travel that morning to inspect the Sinai front and lay the groundwork for coordination between field com-

manders. Amer made his plans to go to the Sinai known to the Egyptian General Staff two days before going and he made no effort to conceal his movements.

- Iraqi forces were arriving in Syria during this time, and a collection of Algerian, Sudanese and Libyan air and land forces were scheduled to arrive in Egypt during that week.

- In Yemen, regular Egyptian forces were being transferred to the Sinai front.

- That week the combined Jordanian-Egyptian command center would come online.

- The Soviet arms shipment agreed to on May 26<sup>th</sup> began arriving in Egypt.

### **The Withdrawal Order**

Murtaji writes that in the Sinai's Mitla and Gidi Passes, Egyptians lost ninety percent of their armor and military vehicles to Israeli jet fighter sorties. This and other similar routs of the Egyptian military by the Israelis led to Field Marshal Amer's controversial order to withdraw of June 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup>. Amer's rationale rested in Egypt's need to regroup to mount a defense of Egypt proper using the Suez Canal as a water barrier; Murtaji questioned Amer's judgment soon after the 1967 war.

Another issue was a rift between Egyptian political figures and the military that manifested itself in souring relations between Field Marshal Amer and Egyptian President Nasser. The president had appointed several key officers, including Mohammed Fawzy to Chief of General Staff who were not beholden to Amer. In retaliation, Amer merged the Chief of General Staff into a new Supreme Armed Forces Command, cutting many able commanders off from field command (6).

### **Other Egyptian Military Leaders Comment**

While Murtaji's audacious book critiquing the

Egyptian military found concurrence among some, several other senior Egyptian commanders disagreed with his criticisms. For example, Chief of Staff General Mohammed Fawzy and many other generals disagree with Murtaji blaming the 1967 debacle on Egyptian forces being engaged in the Yemen War. Including the opinions of other prominent Egyptian commanders can prove useful in a comprehensive review of the Egyptian military's practices during the 1967 war. Below are the insights of four other high-ranking Egyptian military officers, gathered from interviews in the Egyptian press.

**Chief of General Staff Mohammed Fawzy:**

Even if one were to focus solely on Egyptian sources in studying the Arab-Israeli conflict you will find slightly different reasons for failure and success. General Mohammed Fawzy was Egyptian Chief of the General Staff during the 1967 War and he gave an interview on the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the war to Al-Ahram newspaper. Here are a few of his observations that disagree with General Murtaji's:

as indicated by Murtaji, but was ratified in 1966 and Egypt had at least one year to conduct maneuvers and train forces in the details of the plan. The idea for Al-Qahir came as a result of the 1964 Arab Summit to contain Israel from expanding into more Arab territory.

- The Yemen War is often blamed as the reason Egypt did so poorly, Fawzy offers an interesting and more detailed account of the Yemen debacle and how it relates to the 1967 War. He argues that Egyptian senior leaders had lost its strategic focus from Israel to Yemen and that Egypt had enough forces to conduct the Yemen War and defend the Sinai. The problem was not the Yemen War but lack of training in modern combined arms warfare. The Yemen War, Fawzy believes, is just a convenient scapegoat for incompetent military commanders like Amer and the shift in strategic focus from Israel to Yemen.

- Nasser's discord with Amer spilled over into the senior military leadership when they disagreed over UN forces in the Sinai. Amer was being pressured by his inner-circle and other Arab military leaders that Egypt could not lend its

- Plan Al-Qahir was not completed in 1967

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might to the Palestinian question because it uses the UN force as an excuse not to fight. Amer proposed to Nasser the escalation of conflict by closing the Strait of Tiran. Nasser was reluctant at first but then did not counter his Commander-in-Chief, the Egyptian president was aware that Egypt did not have the basic resources to implement the Al-Qahir plan but remained silent leaving military matters to Amer.

- Fawzy also says that the closing of the Tiran Strait and movement of forces to Sharm-al-Shaykh placed a drain on military formations designated for Al-Qahir (7).

Murtaji and Fawzy concur that the order to retreat from the Sinai was so disorderly and that the majority of Egyptian casualties took place at the narrow mountain passes.

***Air Vice Marshal Abdel-Hamid El-Dighidi:***

Also interviewed in Al-Ahram in 1997, on the thirtieth anniversary was Vice Marshal El-Dighidi Commander-in-Chief of the Air Force makes the following points in his discussions:

- Like Murtaji he believes the 1956 Suez War should have been the first lesson learned and of which the armed forces should have built its strategy. The 1956 War, included many of the same tactics employed by Israel in the 1967 War with improvements. The lessons were completely lost to the Egyptian high command.

- He is also critical of Amer visiting the Sinai on June 5<sup>th</sup>, which led to many field commanders not being at their post when Israel launched the offensive on June 5<sup>th</sup>. Most were at the Bir Thamada Airport waiting for Amer's plane to arrive.

- The infamous Ajloun Message, in which General Riad in Jordan attempted to warn Egyptian headquarters 30 minutes before the attack is mentioned by El-Dighidi as a major failure.

- El-Dighidi gives a scathing criticism of the inefficiency and ignorance of Egyptian senior leaders before 1967. He specifically states that high-ranking personnel were not qualified to manage a battle of such magnitude and exempts only three generals from this searing criticism, General Riad, General Ismail Ali and General El-Gamassy.

- Egyptian military intelligence was spying on me, not for me (8).

**Insights of Post-1967 Defense Minister Amin Hewedy:**

Perhaps the best interview in the Al-Ahram series commemorating the thirtieth anniversary of the Six-Day War comes from the only person in Egypt's political history that has occupied the position of Minister of Defense and Director of Egypt's General Intelligence. He was appointed by Nasser after the 1967 debacle and was instrumental in orchestrating Amer's reluctant resignation from the armed forces. He makes the following points that particularly emphasize the lack of civil oversight of the military:

- Prior to 1967 the armed forces were accountable to no one and not monitored by any authority, be it parliament, the council of ministers, the press. It was the personal fiefdom of Field Marshal Amer.

- There was confusion over the political post of Defense Minister that prepares all aspects of the nation one of which is the military for war and the Chief of General Staff which deals with military readiness.

- Amer was lacking in experience and occupied several positions including supreme military commander, chairman of Aswan High Dam Authority, the Public Transportation Authority, and Chairman of Liquidation of Feudalism (a monopoly busting entity) this took away from attending to the military. His high-ranking crony's like Murtaji were appointed secretaries of sporting clubs and had retained their posts since 1952.

- Amer appointed General Murtaji as Ground Forces Commander to rival Chief of Staff Fawzy who was a Nasser appointee.

- The chief of the Air force and Navy responsible for the military failures of 1956 were retained and performed even worse in 1967.

- Plans like Al-Qahir was designed not with 1956 Suez War in mind but as if the army was fighting the first Israeli war in 1948.

- Al-Qahir was a plan that showed a distribution of forces and did not mean anything to field commanders in the Sinai. They knew where to be but did not know what to do or why they were assigned this sector.

- The last major divisional level exercise was *Intisaar* (Victorious) held in 1954.

- It took 45 minutes for Egyptian aircrews to ready fighter jets, and five minutes for Israeli crews to do the same. This gave the Israelis a nine to one sortie advantage.

- The Yemen War was an excuse for lack of training and discipline.

- Nasser was completely detached from military affairs by 1967 (9).

**Colonel Afifi and the Tactical View of 1967:** Thus far, the operational and strategic failures are discussed. General Youssef Afifi was commander of the 12<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade in the 1967 War. His book *Heroes of the 19<sup>th</sup> Brigade* gives the best tactical level view of the 1973 War, but begins by recounting his experience in the 1967 War. He writes that he was given orders to move his brigade to Sinai by May 18<sup>th</sup>, positioning his unit between Kuntilla and El-Arish in a sector called Kilometer 161. He was frustrated being told that this was only a military demonstration for the Israelis and no military objective was specified. He felt his command placed him in an embarrassing situation by not giving him or his men

any clear objectives or plan. They dug defensive trenches to whittle away the time while recognizing that his higher command had no plan. Reserve units began arriving out of uniform and without weapons, water or re-supply. His own unit's effectiveness would be degraded as he took the decision to share what he had with these ill-equipped reserve units. His only orders were to remain and act as a defensive shield against retreating units for Qusaymah. He would execute the order as units withdrew from the Sinai and to the western bank of the Suez Canal.

Afifi writes of being appalled at the pell-mell disorganization of units retreating from the Sinai. The uncoordinated withdrawal caused unnecessary loss of equipment and lives. He took charge of his unit and out of 900 troops under his command lost only seventeen. This is an indicator of the importance of leadership in the field. He would return and express his anger at having reconnoitered Sharm-el-Shaykh and Ras Nasrani in the Sinai only to have another unit with no experience in the topography take charge of enforcing the Tiran Strait blockade (10).

## Conclusion

General Murtaji impact on the outcome of the 1967 War was negligible, yet his most important contribution has been the slim volume that offers searing lessons in what can happen when training is neglected, when nepotism is rampant in an army, and the effects of bypassing the chain of command from the top to bottom. The book also is a lesson in the difficulties of coordinating an attack across several countries. In this case, Egypt, Jordan and Syria could not effectively coordinate an offensive together and although both Syria and Egypt coordinated the opening assault on Israel in 1973, they could not maintain the level of cooperation needed as the battle ensued.

Egyptian officers in preparation for the 1973 War painfully learned many of Murtaji's lessons. For his part, Murtaji spent some time imprisoned in the Cairo Citadel and was implicated in Field Marshal Amer's attempt to keep his posi-

tion after the 1967 War. Amer would turn against Nasser and would commit suicide with many of his political appointees facing court-martial.

As the United States involves itself in conflict in the Middle East, books by Arab military thinkers become more important and must be studied like those of the military thinkers of the former Soviet Union during the cold war.

*Author's Note: The author wishes to acknowledge Mr. Matthew Harsha-Strong, a junior at Yale University studying "Ethics, Politics, and Economics," for editing and providing valuable insight into this essay. He also wishes to thank the Pentagon and Georgetown University Libraries for making General Murtaji's book available for study.*

*Editor's Note: LCDR Aboul-Enein writes on Middle East military affairs for several Defense Department Publications. He is a Navy Medical Service Corps officer and Middle East Foreign Area Officer currently assigned as Director for North Africa and Egypt at the Office of the Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs in the Pentagon. Translation of excerpts of General Murtaji's book and other Arabic sources represent LCDR Aboul-Enein's understanding of the material, any errors in translation are his.*

### Notes

(1). Murtaji, Abdal-Muhsin. *Al-Fariq Murtaji Yarwi Al-Haqaiq (General Murtaji Reveals the Truth)*, (Al-Watan Al Arabi Printers: Cairo, Egypt, 1976).

(2). Oren, Michael B. *Six Days of War: June 1967 and the Making of the Modern Middle East*, (Oxford University Press: New York, 2002); pp. 65-66.

(3). Ibid.

(4). Depuy, Trevor. *Elusive Victory, The Arab-Israeli Wars, 1947-1974* (Harper & Row: New York), 1978, pp. 266-267.

(5). Ibid, pp. 241-243.

(6). General Mohamed Fawzi interview entitled, "The Three Year War," in Al-Ahram Weekly On-Line; 5-11 June 1997, Issue No. 328 Supplement. Accessed on 18 May 2004 at , Cairo, Egypt. Published on the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 1967 War.

(7). Ibid.

(8). Air Vice Marshal Abdel-Hamid El-Dighidi interview entitled "A Lesson We Should Have Learned," in Al-Ahram Weekly On-Line; 5-11 June 1997, Issue No. 328 Supplement. Accessed on 18 May 2004 at , Cairo, Egypt. Published on the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 1967 War.

(9). Minister Amin Hewedy interview entitled "Picking up the Pieces," in Al-Ahram Weekly On-Line; 5-11 June 1997, Issue No. 328 Supplement. Accessed on 18 May 2004 at , Cairo, Egypt. Published on the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 1967 War.

(10). Afifi, Youssef. *Abtal Firqah Tisaatasher, Muqaatulun Fawq Al-Aada / Heroes of the 19th Brigade, Extraordinary Warriors* (Dar Al-Safwa Publishers: Cairo, Egypt, 1990). pp. 39-46.

*i* . The date of publication is significant because most writing on the Arab-Israeli conflict by Egyptian generals and scholars did not appear until after the mid-eighties.

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# **Research Note: Chinese Media Coverage of Nepal's Insurgency**

**By 2LT Zachary Harrison, USA, USMA**

The purpose of this article is to provide a summary of China's Chinese-language media coverage and especially regional coverage of the war in Nepal as accessible through on-line web sites. Given the proximity to Tibet, the reports of Nepalese insurgents using Tibetan territory for training, and the potential for the war to further destabilize an already volatile region, one might think that Chinese media organizations in the provinces near Nepal would be paying close attention to what is happening in Nepal. They may be, but if they are they are not publishing that news on their web sites that are accessible to global internet users who read Chinese. In the past six months the regional media in western China has provided very little on-line coverage of Nepal's civil war. Some of the most notable events to occur in Nepal between the Maoists and the Nepalese government have either gone unreported or have been lightly touched. Analysis, furthermore, is even harder to find than reporting.

To survey China's regional on-line press reporting of Nepal I searched for articles on five key events: the assassination of a mayor (January 18, 2004: Gopal Giri), Operation Kalikot (February 17, 2004: 60 Maoists killed), the Battle of Bhojpur (March 3, 2004: 29 security personnel, 10 Maoist killed), the Battle of Benni (March 22, 2004: death of 30 security personnel, 40 Maoist, 15 civilians; Royal Nepalese Army reported 500 Maoist killed), and heavy combat that resulted in two police and 41 other deaths (April 8, 2004). I found just two reports on these events on regional Chinese web sites: one was on the Chengdu Television site. Chengdu is in Sichuan Province east of Tibet and that site carried a report on the March 3 incident. The *Chengdu Daily* reported on the April 8 fighting. Neither

*The Sichuan Daily*, the *Nanhai Daily*, nor a major Tibetan site mention these events.<sup>1</sup>

There is reporting on Nepal in China mainstream government-controlled media, but it is essentially factual and never touches sensitive issues such as the potential for spillover into Tibet. Chinese Ambassador to Nepal Sun Heping has called the Maoists' challenge in media interviews and has repeated the Chinese stance that the Maoist insurgency is an internal matter and that Nepal has the full capacity and wisdom to solve its own problem. Sun also refers to the U.S. and India as friendly countries whose actions do not violate Sino-Nepali relations.

China says little in its media about its foreign assistance to Nepal which other sources say has even included the sale of non-lethal military hardware such as high frequency radios. Beijing-based media does criticize the Nepalese Maoists use of Mao's name, but they do not explain what is un-Maoist about the Maoists. The PRC media has taken the U.S. to task for military assistance which Chinese analysts claim is intended to gain a foothold on China's periphery.

Despite the generally bland reporting on Nepal, there was one recent anachronistic piece wherein the author apparently thinks that the Nepalese Maoists are in vogue. The article is unique in its candidness and praise for the revolutionary zeal of the Maoists against the feudal monarchy.<sup>2</sup> The most likely explanation for its content is that the article's author is completely unaware of official PRC policy towards Nepal's conflict. It is unusual that it has remained on one of China's most popular sites for over a month.

(Continued on page 26)



## AFRICAN REVIEWS



Reviewed by: Major Joe Haydon

Counterinsurgency in Africa: The Portuguese Way of War, 1961-1974.

Author: John P. Cann  
Greenwood Press  
Westport, Connecticut, London, 1997

Counterinsurgency in Africa is tightly written book that explores the little known but fascinating military campaign fought by Portugal to keep her African colonies. Mr. John Cann's book is logical, well-organized and covers all of the main features of the "Portuguese Way of War". He shows the genesis and motivations for the Portuguese approach, how it was integrated together and then provides illuminating comparisons with the British and French approach to similar problems. However, Mr. Cann's book cannot be considered a definitive account of the struggle. The book does not delve deeply into the political aspects of the war nor does it contain much material from the insurgent viewpoint. He focuses primarily on the military side of the struggle from the Portuguese viewpoint. This approach allows for a very focused book but only at the cost of a larger, more comprehensive understanding of the war. Mr. Cann tantalizes the reader with many interesting facts and details that unfortunately are only covered topically. However, the book provides an outstanding introduction to this period of African colonial history and a good starting point for further research and investigation.

Portugal was one of the first modern European powers to arrive in Africa and one of the last to leave. Despite extremely limited resources and small odds of success she fought a

generally successful military campaign for thirteen years across the conflicting human, political, and geographical landscape of Angola, Guinea, and Mozambique.

In order to appreciate the magnitude of the Portuguese effort Mr. Cann examines the extreme challenges Portugal faced in her war in Africa. The Portugal colonies in Africa were far from the Fatherland, far from each other, and in the case of Angola and Mozambique, enormous in size. The colonies were also not well developed economically and Portugal herself was one of the poorer countries in Europe. Portugal's effectiveness in facing these logistical and operational challenges rather than succumbing to their difficulty and enormity are salutary and instructive for any nation with limited means facing a Counter Insurgency (COIN) campaign.

One of the biggest challenges facing Portugal was the requirement to drastically change and reorient her military. Portugal, as a member of NATO, had organized her military largely along US lines. While this was adequate for conventional warfare in Europe, it was poorly suited to fighting a large-scale unconventional war in Africa. The shift in focus from conventional to unconventional warfare was only accomplished because the Portuguese had the prescience to start working on a comprehensive counter-insurgency doctrine before the main fight for her colonies actually began. This doctrine drew heavily on French, American, and particularly British experiences. These ideas were of course augmented with a large store of homegrown knowledge of how to fight a war in Africa. Portuguese doctrine evolved dramatically as the war dragged on but the presence of a body of cohesive and historically validated doctrine allowed the Portuguese military to respond much more effectively and quicker than they might have otherwise.

This comprehensive examination of what was required to successfully fight and win the war extended down into the operational and tactical



levels. The majority of Portuguese army units, whatever their official designation, effectively operated as light infantry in the theater of operations. This gave the Portuguese the ability to effectively deploy the bulk of their strength in a wide variety of geographical areas. As Mr. Cann puts it, the Portuguese changed their army to fit the war rather than trying to change the war to fit its army. This willingness to break with tradition and the conventional mindset was exemplified by such changes as converting armored and mechanized cavalry units back into their original horse mounted roles and the development of innovative helicopter tactics. The Portuguese also made excellent use of native troops who had an intimate knowledge of the terrain, local situation, and language. These troops were not second class in any sense but were fully incorporated into and supported by the Portuguese war effort. Despite having a conservative military tradition, Portugal was able to radically transform its organization, tactics and logistical structure to meet the demands of a three-front unconventional warfare. This transformation did not happen overnight but the fact that it took place at all is remarkable. One only has to look at the US effort in Vietnam for a vivid contrast. Mr. Cann does an excellent and entertaining job of illuminating the changes that took place and how they affected the war effort.

Mr. Cann's section on intelligence operations is particularly interesting and useful. While good intelligence is important in any military operation, it is absolutely critical in a COIN environment. How to obtain timely, comprehensive intelligence is a problem that has bedeviled COIN operations since time immemorial. Mr. Cann discusses how the Portuguese were able to set up and maintain a highly effective intelligence network while at the same time avoiding many of the excesses that plagued the French effort in Algeria.

While the use of torture as an intelligence tool was seen as ineffective and contrary to the

policy of trying to win the "hearts and minds" of the population, Mr. Cann glosses over Portuguese excesses and atrocities against the civilian population, especially in the early part of the war. While the Portuguese effort benefited greatly from the use of special units of native troops, the main source of tactical and operational intelligence was the local soldier on the ground. In-theater training emphasized and drove home the idea that each individual soldier was an intelligence gatherer. This dovetailed well with the extensive use of light infantry as it meant that the troops all had extensive, intimate contact with the local population and thus were able to note and react to any changes in the situation. Unfortunately, Mr. Cann only devotes a section of the book to the topic of intelligence operations. This is a subject that is worthy of much more discussion and detail.

As in most COIN campaigns, the military aspect, while important, is secondary or operates in support of social operations. Mr. Cann does not neglect this critical aspect of the campaign and leads the reader on an informative discussion of the Portuguese effort. Indeed, the Portuguese expended only 10-20% of their effort on purely military operations while over 80% was expended on political, economic, and social reform. These efforts ranged from a reasonably successful effort to establish "Aldeamentos" or protected villages to the use of military personnel to establish and man schools, hospitals, and veterinary centers. Portuguese engineers also built hundreds of miles of new roads and dozens of airstrips to support both the military effort and social reforms. Mr. Cann makes it very clear that the Portuguese realized that while the war could be lost militarily, it could only be won by winning over the population. This realization drove much of the Portuguese strategy. As a result, the Portuguese made a conscious decision to use the minimal amount of military force required and to actively involve the local population in the war effort. Many counterinsurgency campaigns around the world could benefit from such a sensible structuring of priorities.

Mr. Cann's assessment is that the Portuguese "achieved outright military victory in Angola, a credible stalemate in Guinea, and with additional resources and spirited leadership, could have regained control of northern Mozambique." Many commentators, historians, and analysts have taken a much more critical view than Mr. Cann of the overall degree of Portuguese military successes. However, it can be safely said that the Portuguese military was generally successful in some theaters in creating the environment for a favorable political settlement. Despite these successes, in the end internal politics forced Portugal to abandon her effort to maintain her African colonies. Though Mr. Cann does not focus on Portuguese internal politics, it reinforces the point about most COIN campaigns being ultimately political. The Portuguese "won" the fight militarily but their gains were for naught as the Portuguese political establishment could not capitalize on these successes. For the FAO, this book provides interesting insights into Portugal's doomed campaign to maintain her colonies and an understanding of its impact on Lusophone Africa. Mr. Cann's book is also invaluable as a historical case study of how a weak economic and military power can still fight a highly effective counterinsurgency campaign even in the face of nearly insurmountable difficulties and challenges.

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One other point to note about China's media coverage of Nepal is that the media carefully follows the government and does not call the Maoists terrorists.<sup>3</sup> Through five months of research I have not found a single article published in China that refers to the Maoist insurgents as terrorists. The Chinese press address them as "anti-government armed forces," "anti-government guerrillas," and sometimes as "reactionary forces." Even in describing Maoist

tactics, only "guerrilla tactics" is used; never "terrorist tactics."

1 Chinese regional newspaper web sites typically do not have search engines. Using the assumption that the PRC would prefer internet users to read national media sites, one has to manually look through all the articles posted each day on a Chinese media web site.

2 [http://bbs.people.com.cn/bbs/ReadFile?](http://bbs.people.com.cn/bbs/ReadFile?whichfile=333&typeid=96)

whichfile=333&typeid=96, accessed April and May 2004.

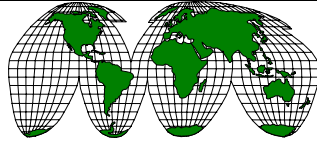
3 The U.S., Nepalese, and Indian governments have all designated them as terrorists.

**Biographical Note:** 2LT Zachary Harrison graduated from the United States Military Academy on May 29, 2004 and was commissioned into the Engineer branch. An operations research major, Lieutenant Harrison wrote this essay for an advanced individual studies course in Chinese. Most of the course was spent finding and translating Chinese articles on the Nepalese insurgency. At the end of the semester 2LT Harrison used his web searching and Chinese skills to conduct the survey of regional reporting. 2LT Harrison's first assignment is Fort Riley and he hopes to eventually serve as a China FAO.



**Soldiers from the 1st Cavalry Division prepare to enter and clear a building during fighting in Fallujah, Iraq. (US Army Photo)**

## Quarterly Column

**MIDDLE EAST  
REVIEWS**

By LCDR Youssef Aboul-Enein, MSC, USN

**Readings on Islamic and Middle East Affairs:  
Proposals, Solutions and Discussions**

The United States Military should be very concerned with the reform and change the Middle East will undergo as they face tough social, political and theological issues. As such it is imperative that we keep current with the latest thinking on the Middle East and Islam, this review essay will look at a series of monographs and books that will bring readers quickly into the latest discussions on Islam and Civil Democracy, Hindu-Muslim sectarian violence, and a host of other issues. The RAND National Security Research Division has produced 72-page monograph entitled ***Civil Democratic Islam: Partners, Resources and Strategies*** (RAND, Santa Monica, California: 2003) written by Cheryl Benard. She attempts to classify the different Muslims competing in answering the questions that deals with a failure to thrive and a loss of connection to the global mainstream. The book divides the Muslim debate into four classifications, fundamentalist, traditionalist, modernist and secularist. The fundamentalist abjectly refuses democratization, and wishes to regress into their interpretation of Islam based on the seventh century. The traditionalist makes an uneasy peace with the tide of globalization and unlike the fundamentalist understands the limitations of taking on global systems. The modernist seeks to find human rights, democracy and representative governance in Islamic texts and precedence. Finally, the secularists seek to divorce religion from the state and view social justice as more important than democracy. The last two are the weakest in terms of funding and support. They do not possess the backing of the Saudis that the fundamentalist Wahabis enjoy or those Shiite Usuli followers who perpetuate Iran

in its current theocratic form of government. She argues that Islamic moderates and liberals need funding and protection; their ideas must also flood the streets as efficiently as the Islamic fundamentalist has flooded Islamic mosques with counter-productive theological booklets. It is the debate within Islam that Al-Qaeda and Islamic militants most fear.

The University of Washington Press produced a slim volume entitled, ***Islamist Mobilization in Turkey: A Study in Vernacular Politics*** (University of Washington Press, Seattle: 2002) by Associate Professor of Anthropology Jenny White. This book is not only of interest to watchers of Turkey but also those following Muslim discussions on secularism, democracy and civil society. Turkey is a dynamic nation ideologically in the Muslim world as Kemalists, Socialists and Islamists politically battle for votes and elections on the local and national level. The author has spent months with Turkish families who live in the Umraniye slums around Istanbul to explore the reasons for their support of the Islamist Welfare Party. The book also demonstrates the differences within Islamic political movements, unlike the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood, the Turkish Welfare Party holds as its ideal the ancient glories of the Ottomans using the nostalgia of empire and Islam to induce poor voters aside from the traditional handouts and vote buying that goes on between all Turkish political parties. In the Arab world, Islamist political parties do not entirely distance themselves from militant wings, but the Welfare Party distances themselves from the violent Turkish Hizbullah. The book also describes Turkish concepts that allow for a robust Islamist grassroots political movement, they include *himaye*, a system where problems are solved through connections rather than rule of law. This is combined with *inece* a system of pooling resources money and votes all of which

are designed to build a loyal constituency. The Welfare Party distances themselves from Hizbullah and many Turks refer to them as "Sharia Fascists," who attempted to kill Aziz Nesin who translated the Salman Rushdie novel, *Satanic Verses*, burning down a hotel. Hizbullah also attacks the Turkish Nakshabandi Sufi order, an important part of Turkish social life. The book contains fascinating statistics such as 41 percent of Welfare Party voters identified themselves as laicist (those committed to separating religion from state affairs). Although over 40 percent of Turks pray regularly, three-fourths of the population are committed to separating religion from the state. Turks have also engaged in a fascinating debate on the meaning of Sharia, as personal conduct, code of Islamic law, or the simple yearning for just governance. Dr. White also traces the decline of the Turkish left (communists and socialists) and how the Islamists snapped up their votes through clever messages of a just economic order, and defending the working class in the late eighties and early nineties. The Kemalists, represented by Attaturk's Republican People's Party and democrats slept through this opportunity to attract the left to the advantage of the Islamists who burst onto the political scene in 1994 with major electoral wins. I highly recommend this short book to those wanting to understand the complexities and variety of Islamist political movements.

In 2004, the U.S. Army War College Strategic Studies Institute monograph series has two thought-provoking booklets on Iraq. The first by Dr. Elizabeth Wishnick entitled ***Strategic Consequences of the Iraq War: U.S. Security Interests in Central Asia*** published in May 2004 looks into the impact the Iraq War has had in bolstering the recruitment and the local political platform of Islamic militants in Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan and Tajikistan. She argues that activities in Iraq could make U.S. basing in Central Asia more difficult for these governments to sustain in the face of public criticism made worse by Islamic militants like Hizb-u-Tahrir and the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) that use violence to un-

dermine U.S. allies in the region. The booklet does not offer real solutions to the problem but does cause one to ponder means of managing the message of Iraqi liberation in the Islamic Republics of Central Asia.

The second booklet by Jeffrey Record and W. Andrew Terrill looks at comparisons between Vietnam and the current war in Iraq. The monograph entitled ***Iraq and Vietnam: Differences, Similarities and Insights*** published by the U.S. Army War College in May 2004, settles this question once and for all, looking at the historical and mission comparisons of both. Overall they conclude that the two conflicts cannot be considered equal or comparable in terms of leadership, goals and even an analysis of U.S. casualties per day. This book is for all those wanting to get ahead of this argument and postulate real comparisons between the two that simply do not add up.

The final book featured is Paul R. Bass seminal work on Hindu-Muslim sectarian violence on the Indian subcontinent. Entitled ***The Production of Hindu-Muslim Violence in Contemporary India*** (University of Washington Press, Seattle: 2003), it is a scholarly look into the Hindu and Muslim fundamentalist movements that have caused mass scale rioting and mayhem. Readers will learn that India's riots have evolved into organized events involving looters, killers and thugs, what may seem chaotic actually does have a type of organization and purpose for those perpetrating the violence. Chapters discuss the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), the party that recently lost elections to the Indian National Congress Party. The core of Hindu nationalism from where the BJP radiates from the older Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) established in 1925. The author offers a scathing indictment that India's leaders after Nehru have been complacent of Hindu-Muslim violence, with a few using it to political advantage. Chapters also look into the soul of Muslim nationalism in India, the Aligarh Muslim University and the certain families that have a theological monopoly in this Islamic

bastion of Northern India. This book is not for the novice on Indian affairs, and it is recommended one read a little on India and Pakistan before delving into Paul Bass' book.

***Muhammad at Mecca*** by W. Montgomery Watt. Oxford at the Clarendon Press, London, 1965. 192 pages. Review by Major Randy Koehlmoos, US Army, a South Asia FAO stationed at USCENTCOM, MacDill AFB, Florida.

Though the publishing date of 1965 may initially dismiss this work to the back shelves of university libraries, current events further highlight the need to reevaluate Islam in a classical context prior to formulating and making judgment. Juxtaposed with the common Oriental view that Operation Enduring Freedom is merely the so-called Christian powers fighting a continuing war against Islam under the auspices of combating terrorism is the far too common Occidental perception that Muslims in exploding rental cars have replaced the Red Horde as the enemy of the civilized world. Both views are inane as OEF is not the fifth crusade and true Islam seeks peace and submission to the will of *Al-lah* in stark contrast with destruction of the West and reinstating the Caliphate.

W. Montgomery Watt is an esteemed Orientalist and leading authority on Islam who wrote *Muhammad at Mecca* in response to his perceived need for a new look at the life of the Prophet Muhammad set in a fuller historical context. Watt states that part of this need arose from the broader desire of twentieth century historians to see historical events in relation to the economic, social, and political background prevalent at that particular time. The author also asserts that the special feature of this biography of Muhammad is thus not that it combs available sources more minutely than others have done previously, but that it pays fuller attention to material factors, and attempts to answer many questions that have hardly been raised in the past. Together with Watt's other book *Muhammad at Medina*, these two volumes constitute a compre-

hensive history of the life of Muhammad.

Watt declares in the introduction that this work is first and foremost written for the historian. He warns though that inherently a human inclination of 'tendential shaping' exists by early historians to make allowances for distortions, or even to make ideology more acceptable within the shadow of other religions such as Christianity or Judaism. Though many of the bibliographic sources Watt used for this work are based on earlier primary sources, written documents beyond the Holy Qur'an detailing the Prophet's life prior to about 150 years after his death do not exist. Watt addresses the need to examine the appeal of Islam to its followers based on economic and political factors, and not just pure religious principles. The Qur'an contains traditional historical evidence of Meccan times, but to expect the Qur'an to be a socially historical document highlighting the economic, social, and political aspects of daily life is beyond the intention of its design.

In general Watt accepts traditional accounts as true and rejects anecdotes only when discounted by internal contradictions. Though a risky approach, information available prior to the *hijrah* to Medina is limited and to quote Watt, 'shadowy.' This situation may seem fertile ground for time and skepticism to cloud the legacy, but similarly it could actually be more factual; some historians view verbal transmissions as a more accurate and authentic portrayal than their written counterparts (a view also used with reference to the Veda's). By keeping stories oral, no scribe can be accused of misprints, and no mispronunciations are allowed during its retelling; likewise one can focus on the story itself instead of the author's reputation.

Though Watt is very capable of religious criticism (see also his *Muslim-Christian Encounters; Perceptions and Misperceptions*, Routledge, 1991), he remains neutral on sensitive religious questions at issue between Christianity and Islam

in this particular work. He attempts to present Christian readers with historical material that must be taken into account before forming theological judgements and many times shows the similarity and historical connections between the three religions of the book--Christianity, Islam, and Judaism. To avoid alienating the attentions of the Christian readers he is attempting to influence with the issue of divinity within the Qur'an, Watt writes from the perspective of 'the Qur'an says' and not 'God says' or 'Muhammad says.'

Contemporaneously for the Muslim reader Watt avoids issues that would reject any of the fundamental doctrines of Islam, so long as his scrutinizing remains faithful to the standards of Western historical scholarship. Though this statement is problematic with those who denounce Western ideologies as being the only acceptable standard, Watt rightly states that a rift between Western scholarship and Islamic faith is avoidable. Watt does note Western hesitance to accept nine year old Ali (Mohammed's son in-law) as possessing the mental maturity to actually accept the practice of Islam on his own merit and to therefore be considered the first male Muslim, which elevates Western scholarship above that of the followers of Ali (the entire Shia community).

*Mohammad at Mecca* follows a chronological progression, and initially draws attention to the features of the Arabian background (the district surrounding Mecca) that are most important for a proper understanding of Muhammad's early career and achievements. Mecca developed as a trading and financial center at the crossroad of the caravan routes, and this setting impacted the Qur'an as it first appeared; not in the atmosphere of the secluded desert but in that of high finance in the shadow of Jewish and Christian influences. Watt attributes problems within Mecca as arising out of change from a nomadic existence based on physical struggle within the harsh desert to a sedentary capitalist economy, without an accompanying change in community attitudes.

Mohammad was a statesman from the beginning, and Watt details Meccan politics and its impact on the personal views of the Prophet. The legacy of this is the message of solidarity and the community of Islam (the *ummah*) surpassing clan, tribal, and nationalistic lines.

Being an orphan at a young age dominated Muhammad's early life, and Watt brings to light those stories and accounts of the young Prophet's life that both appeal to and repulse secular historians. He notes that those in the latter category are theological characters that chronologically are found to quiver under scrutiny, but still pass profound and valuable messages and hold significance for Muslims. Watt brings attention to contradictions in perceived facts about Muhammad's visions, and attributes some of the disparity to the problems inherent with the interpretation of language. Watt even goes as far as to make recommendations to adjust certain meanings to remain both Islamically orthodox and within the realm of historical probability, to such a degree that he as a Western historian has confidence in the statements.

Watt brings to light the fact that the primary message in the Qur'an can be confused by differences in Western importance on bare facts verses significance, and on Eastern importance that shows little difference. Arab society at the time did not define things in terms of right and wrong but as honorable and dishonorable. Concerns still exist in regard to proper chronology and contradictions as ideas and directives change throughout the text of the Qur'an, giving concern as to which is the final directive. Watt tries to remain neutral in explanations of events and performs what he calls 'creative irruption' to take a middle ground between chance and divine intervention. He concludes by examination that the Qur'an attributes the troubles at that time in Mecca as primarily religious with essentially religious remedies despite their economic, social, and moral undercurrents.



Watt discusses that the early days of Islam were far from opposition. He examines this from the point of 'How did opposition manifest itself and what were the main motives behind it?' In his attempt at discussion of the satanic verses and their motives and explanations, other possibilities arise such as Muhammad reacting to public opinion or pressure from other groups. He concludes that existence of Angels does not violate the Islamic tenant of monotheism, and this fact is again related to the similar beliefs in the sister religions of Christianity and Judaism. Watt determines that the Qur'an tends to confirm the accounts derived from traditional historical material, and that the principle opposition to Muhammad's claim to be a Prophet was to the political implications of him becoming the new ruler as opposed to resistance to a new religion.

The final chapter of the book discusses the deterioration in Muhammad's position in Mecca and the *hijrah* to Medina. At this point Islam is considered to be historically complete, but most of its institutions were still in a very rudimentary state. Again, Watt addresses the point that nomadic ethics and outlook were well suited to desert conditions but proved unsatisfactory for settled communities.

This work is most relevant for those persons desiring advanced study of the grossly misperceived religion of Islam, which the Western world erroneously blames for the mainly historical, economic, and social problems of the Muslim world. Watt's work supports historical in contrast to religious scholarship in the hope of overcoming contemporary *jahiliyya* (state of ignorance). Ancient prejudice coupled with the contemporary media-induced Islamic stereotype of Islam as a violent foreign religion perpetuates the misperception of political and religious Islam as a 21<sup>st</sup> century threat when in fact W. Montgomery Watt shows that Islam has many parallels with Christianity and Judaism and is not a medieval enemy lurking in the darkness.

***Islam and Democracy: The Failure of Dialog in Algeria*** by Frederick Volpi. Pluto Press, Sterling, Virginia. 137 pages, 2003.

Frederick Volpi lectures on International Relations at the University of Bristol. This book is a product of his doctoral dissertation and offers a fresh perspective on the historical evolution of the Algerian civil war. For those studying Islamic militancy, the events of Algeria's experiment in democratization from 1988 to 1992 are significant. What began as a bread riot evolved into popular discontent and a return to Islam as a solution to complex economic problems.

The 1988 October Riots, saw the most visible demonstrations against the ruling National Liberation Front (FLN). Readers will learn how Islamists saw a chance of using the mob to insert Islamic slogans while at the same time appealing to President Chadli Benjadid to declare Islamic law instead of martial law. The government opted for the latter and Islamic political activists like Sheikh Shanoun and Ali Benhadj used the violent crackdown by the Algerian authorities of protestors, giving the events an Islamic radical explanation. They accused the FLN of being unjust and used the Islamic militant interpretation of Bin Taymiyyah, declaring the ruling party apostates.

To calm tensions President Benjadid declared a program of democratization. Readers will learn how the legalization of religious-based political parties worried leaders from Morocco to the Persian Gulf. Despite jailing Islamist candidates and leaders, the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) won a majority of municipal elections, getting 55 percent of the vote nationwide in 1990. This was an indication of how Algerians had become frustrated with the ruling party, and in 1991 expressed their anger in the ballot box by giving the FIS 188 out of 430 seats in parliament. Algeria was on the road to becoming the first democratically elected Islamic Republic and many worried that once in power they would impose a totalitarian theocratic regime. The FIS simply did not articulate their goals and left many fearing the worst.

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# ARMY NOTES

**COL Peter Brigham, Chief,  
Strategic Leadership Division**



It is a privilege for me to address the members of the FAOA and any current, former, and, perhaps, future FAOs who have access to this medium. Following a great six-and-a-half month TDY out of the building, I have returned to the FAO Proponent Office and am looking forward to moving our functional area forward as the Army continues to transform. This transformation touches FAOs at all levels, and I am confident the changes will benefit FAOs in many positive ways.

FAOs today are getting more attention and recognition for their contributions world-wide. Just recently, the National Security Advisor's staff requested assignment of a China FAO. We continue to support increasing demands for FAOs engaged in the War on Terror. Not surprisingly, the need for 48G and 48D is at an all time high. CENTCOM FAO requirements are filled at 170% of authorizations, and most joint commands are filled to above 100%. This demonstrates that we continue to support the Army's main effort at whatever level is needed (within capabilities), while simultaneously underscoring the pressing need to convert or establish more FAO positions across the force. This requirements determination process remains a key priority for the FAO Proponent.

The CFD board has been a contentious issue for the past few years. We at the Proponent recognize the turbulence and uncertainty this has caused, and we have been working diligently to ameliorate the effects of the CFD process. G-1 had previously made a number of changes that have helped us to better forecast the number of officers, by branch, to access and enter into training. However, it is clear that this new approach offers little recourse to the year groups approaching their respective 10-year mark. Additionally, it is clear that more fundamental changes are

called for. This issue has garnered the attention of senior officers within the G3 and at HRC. As a result of our continuous efforts with G-1 and HRC, we are very close to initiating an entirely new process which will ensure that those who begin FAO training are guaranteed career field designation as a FAO. Officers who are either in training or are expected to begin training (YG 95-97) will undergo what the G1 officially calls an "Early Career Field Accessions Board" in November to determine those officers who will continue FAO training and those who will return to their basic branch. We recognize that many officers will be disappointed; however, doing this now gives all officers the opportunity to plan their futures much earlier than they would have if we had waited for the conventional CFD board at the 10-year mark. Those officers who are selected to remain in the program will automatically CFD into FA 48 when the subsequent Army CFD board meets. Largely because YG 95 and YG96 are relatively small and the requirements for the branches and other functional areas are relatively high, the overall numbers for these year groups promises to be even lower than the most recent CFD boards. However, we anticipate higher numbers in the following year groups.

As you all are aware, the Army is undergoing an unprecedented transformation. The Chief of Staff of the Army (CSA) has given very specific guidance regarding a myriad of issues that will have far-reaching effects for our Army for many years to come. Modularization is underway, with a number of proposed structural changes that directly impact on FAOs.

At the UEy level (formerly corps/echelons above corps) notable increases for FA 48 billets have been proposed. This new structure within



the UEy not only promises to greatly assist the commander and battle staff to plan and conduct operations, it offers the organic capability to push LNOs down to the UEx level, as required. At this juncture, these proposals are still under review but look very promising.

I would also like to encourage you to examine the FAO discussion forum on AKO. This medium provides us an opportunity to informally discuss any issue of interest to FAOs world-wide. If you don't see an issue of interest, feel free to create a discussion topic. You can access the forum after you login to AKO by clicking on the forum tab. You can then scroll down the list of forums until you see one entitled "FAO Bulletin Board." If it does not appear on the first page, simply click on the arrow pointing to the right and review each page until you find it. All forums appear on the pages in the order of the latest posting.

Lastly, please feel free to contact me or any of the personnel on the POC page regarding these or any other issues of relevance to the FAO Program.

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*(Continued from page 31)*

The book summarizes the comments of Algerian Independence leader Mohammed Boudiaf, describing the FIS as organized and offering the electorate slogans that appealed to their religiosity. This was entirely absent from the ruling FLN, no mission, no offers of a new doctrine, just an assumption that they would maintain power forever.

One chapter is devoted to the anatomy of the 1992 coup d'etat that nullified the FIS victory and gradually imposed a military dictatorship in Algeria. After the election, President Benjadid announced his resignation in January 1992 and a Haut Conseil de Securite' (HCS) was created.

The HCS was composed of seven men, with three being involved in the uniformed services. The HCS halted the electoral process and suspended the second round of parliamentary elections, citing a constitutional technicality. That same month the HCS morphed into the new Haut Conseil d' Etat (HCE) and its composition is quite revealing as to the power structures in Algerian politics. The leaders of the HCE was Independence hero Mohammed Boudiaf, the other four members were, A. Haroun, Human Rights Minister; A. Kafi, President of the Independence War Veterans Association; T. Haddam, Imam of the Paris Mosque and General Khalid Nezzar, the Defense Minister. This brought together the military, Islamic, and nationalist forces into a governing triumvirate.

The FIS, seeing their victory usurped by these organizations, resorted to violence and the HCE declared a state of emergency. The violence by Islamic militants was all that was needed for Algerian generals to justify the takeover of the country. The ruling elite would be maintained by the military. Volpi's book is an important look into how Arab democratization can be managed in the future. This experiment in a more representative style government in the region introduces the risk of religious-based parties winning. This has happened in Turkey last year with the election of Prime Minister Abdullah Gul and is poised to occur in Morocco. What will check and balance an Islamist party allowed to form a government must be answered to avoid a lapse into a totalitarian theocracy in the Arab world.

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## USMC FAO Notes

**LtCol John May, International Affairs Officer  
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The assignment process looms large for the International Affairs Officer Program (IAOP) during this quarter; close coordination between PLU and MMOA remains the critical element in ensuring that the IAOP population is effectively utilized. Due to operational tempo and competing requirements, only 6 RAOs will graduate from NPS and be available for assignments in FY05; an additional 9 study-track FAOs will be completing operational tours and be due for a utilization tour. Augmented by an additional 14 IAOS designated through the experience-track selection process, this pool of qualified officers will be sufficient to meet the requirements that have been identified to manpower.

Marine commands committed to OIF continue to exploit the capabilities of Arabic speaking, MidEast FAOs. There are ten FAOs in direct support of tactical units deployed to Iraq—including the two most recent graduates of DLI, Majors Karega and Logue, whose ICT was preempted by the demands of the force—and another three assigned to units preparing to join in subsequent phases of the operation. The integration of these FAOs down to the battalion level reinforces the value of a FAO's unique skills as a combat enabler.

All FAOs selected in FY01 completed ICT during FY04 and most have returned to billets supporting the operating forces in their primary occupational specialties. Those who completed training and were designated "full mission capable" were: Capt Avila/ French/ ICT in Senegal/ Sub-Saharan Africa; Major Ercolano/Japanese/ ICT in Osaka/ East Asia; Major Finney/Spanish and Portuguese/ICT in Brazil/Latin America; Major Lucius/Bhasa/ICT in Jakarta/East Asia; Capt McLaughlin/Serbo-Croatian/ICT in Zagreb/ East-

ern Europe; Capt Rizner/ Vietnamese/ICT in Hanoi/ East Asia; Major Rosser/ Korean/ ICT in Seoul/East Asia; Major Sbragia/ Chinese/ICT in Beijing/China; and Major Thurman/Russian/ICT in Moscow/FSU.

FY02-selected FAOs completed language training during this reporting period and began ICT at the following sites: Capt Cherry in Japan, Major Connolly in China, Major Freeman in Turkey, Major Knapp in Republic of Philippines, Major Middleton in Korea, Major Reas in Thailand, and Major Smith in Moscow.

As always, the International Issues Branch (PLU), PP&O, HQMC welcomes comments and suggestions regarding the administration of the IAOP. Please see the FAO Proponent Page in this Journal for POC information.



Marines with 3rd Platoon, Company I, 3rd Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment, provided security outside of a house in the heart of Fallujah, Iraq, after a firefight broke out Dec. 10. (USMC Photo)

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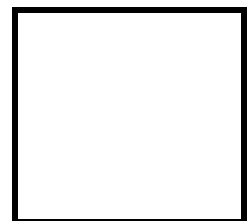
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