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Warfare and the Will to Win

820 words

Harlingen, Texas, September 26, 2009: Another five American servicemen were killed in Afghanistan yesterday. This was the same day the White House announced our president might get around to reading the report from General Stanley McChrystal seeking thousands of new troops for that combat theater. It has now been languishing in governmental “pending” files for almost a month. At the same time, with each passing day our forces find themselves waging warfare under untenable conditions, instead of positions of strength.

If one is to search for a definition of “war”, it will be noted the term is sometimes defined as “An interaction in which two or more opposing forces have a struggle of wills.” This is a fitting explanation for what is now taking place in Afghanistan. There are opposing struggles of will...and the Taliban has far more will to emerge the victor than a large segment of the American population and their cowardly lackeys in Congress.

If we ever have enough courage to truthfully examine the actions of Americans during times of war, the case can easily be made that our failures and losses in combat can all be traced back to congressional actions, or non-actions that resulted in the American forces defeat.

Anyone who fought in Korea knows that war story well. We were inserted into combat following a period after World War II when Congress reduced our military strength and equipment to a level even lower than pre-war manning levels. Still, the war in Korea could have been brought to a successful conclusion if our forces had been given the political will, manpower and equipment needed to eliminate North Korean forces and convince China to withdraw behind its own borders.

Instead, on a worldwide stage, our politicians negotiated for weeks on the proposed shape of the table around which they would confer, then talked us into a so-called “cease-fire”. After 23,615 Americans were killed in action and another 7,600 of our brave youth died of wounds or were declared dead, we departed the battlefield battered and without a victory.

Our ill-fated war in Vietnam is perhaps the premiere example of political cowardice and mismanagement. Restrictive political regulations stopped the pursuit of the enemy. More political restrictions on everything from combat actions to attacking known safe havens and the political snake dance our Washington “leadership” undertook with corrupt South Vietnamese officials placed America in a position where we won every battle and lost the war. 40,934 American KIA, another 6,300 declared dead or lost to fatal wounds and that final scene of people screaming and hanging on to the skids as the last USA helicopter lifted off the roof of the American Embassy was the ultimate portrait of defeat...and it was painted by the anti-war crowd and Washington D. C.

Our actions in Afghanistan seem to mean we have very limited objectives. If the goal is to contain everything in its current configuration, then our restrictive proportionality of force will accomplish that objective. It will also assure there are many more American casualties.

If the objective is to have a decisive victory, our Cowardly Lions in Washington need to grow a backbone and subscribe to the philosophy of overwhelming force. From Disraeli in the 19th Century to Powell in the 20th Century the established principle has been that the use of concentrated overwhelming force is the key to victory.

During World War I Frederick W. Lanchester formulated Lancaster's Law that calculated "combat power of a military force is the square of the number of members of that unit so that the advantage a larger force has is the difference of the squares of the two forces."

In simple terms this means a two to one advantage will quadruple the firepower and inflict four times the punishment. A three to one advantage in strength will have nine times the combat effect, etc. In a final analysis, the more superiority one side has over the other, the greater damage he can inflict on the other side and the smaller the cost to himself. This was the view of Disraeli, Lanchester, Powell and most military strategists. This is also the view of this former Mud Marine and combat scribe.

From this vantage point we cannot hope to match the military expertise of a weekend warrior and rear echelon hero such as John Murtha with his paper-cut Purple Heart, or the fine tuned insight of a three month, medal winning

veteran such as John Kerry, who was so valorous in the waters off Vietnam. Nobody outside of Washington has the knowledge of those great military minds that fill the halls of Congress and the Executive Office. They know just how to come up with a winning hand. After all they have a blueprint right in front of them that dates back all the way to 1951.