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America's Longest War

...the rise or fall of the American empire

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AMERICA'S LONGEST WAR

...the rise or fall of the American empire

For the last three hours, behind the brass colonial doors of the National Security Council meeting room, were some of America's most powerful and influential people. It all started several weeks ago, when the United States' Director of the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) fell victim to cancer and quickly succumbed to the deadly disease. The President, recognizing the need to carry on the war on drugs, quickly assembled his best and brightest and reviewed a short list of candidates to replace the deceased ONDCP Director. Last week the President announced the appointment of General John Smith, U.S. Marine Corps (Retired). Today's National Security Council meeting was devoted strictly to General Smith's strategic thoughts on the war on drugs. The following are the General's remarks to the President and the council:

"Mr. President, ladies and gentlemen, I will first state that it is indeed a privilege to be appointed to this position, but I would be remiss if I did not take a moment to pause and recognize the tremendous efforts that my predecessor expended in attempting to rid our country of illegal drugs. I must also tell you that my background in the Marine Corps, spanning over 35 years, with three years combat experience in Viet Nam, as well as Operation Desert Storm, certainly frames my perspective of the world. However, even more powerful than those combat experiences are two very

personal experiences that I have had with illegal drugs, which inject a deep and profound belief in the way I approach this challenge. The first incident was during the 1970s when my Marine Corps was confronted with a drug crisis. Illegal drug use was common place on all of our bases. It was through a combination of zero tolerance, drug testing and "tough love" that today we have a drug free institution. This may be the point where America may soon be, as the Marine Corps was 25 years ago when we said enough is enough. The other incident relates to my son, who was a drug addict. His life, that is, every activity in his life, was consumed with feeding his addiction. He lived on the streets, was arrested several times and died two years ago from a drug overdose. Some of you may think that perhaps I am emotionally wrapped in the issue, but I will tell you that you need to be emotionally wrapped so that every living cell in your body possesses the passion, fervor and energy to plan and execute an approach that defeats this threat in our society today. There is nothing unique to my approach. During my combat tours, I always employed the litmus test of asking myself whether a mission planning sequence was thorough enough that I would send America's sons and daughters into harm's way knowing that I thought of every possible alternative. I feel very confident of my tactical, operational and, most importantly, my strategic skills. I will craft the drug war strategy within a holistic approach. Let me explain my initial thoughts to you.

At the very core of the strategy lies a requirement to establish the political objectives. This is your responsibility. You need to tell me what your vision of your

political objectives should look like, and then I will craft the specific strategic plan to get there. In short, what is your goal?

Despite the fact that the words "drug war" contains terminology that clearly sets the stage for the public's acceptance of a certain type of power and its association with words and phrases that were meant to elicit visions of the public combating "evil imports", "menaces to society", as "threatening our values", "undercutting our institutions", and "threatening our national security" our Nation has never really undertaken this effort in the framework of a "real" war. Looking at the war as a campaign, the use of force should not become an end in itself. War is the means to reaching the goal and the means can never be considered in isolation from its purpose. As a famous military scholar, Carl von Clausewitz, once said "war should never be thought of as something autonomous, but always as an instrument of policy."¹

Now, I realize that I can not be divorced from the process of crafting the objectives, so I will offer some recommendations when we turn to that portion of the process. But, you need to recognize that we will not be able to achieve total eradication of illegal drugs in our country since we simply do not possess the unlimited means -- personnel and treasury -- to accomplish it. Therefore, as we address the strategy, we will need to address an acceptable level of risk, that is the difference between the ends and means, toward putting our personnel into harm's way executing the strategy. We will also need to address the issue of what constitutes acceptable risk in allowing some amount of illegal drugs on our streets

¹ Eva Bertram & Kess Sharpie "The unwinnable drug war What Clausewitz would tell us," World Policy Journal, Winter 1996/97, 42

Over the last decade we have employed military force in the war, but, absent a clear political objective, the efforts lacked clear direction. I know that you will agree that the military efforts were appropriate; yet I believe that they were inadequate. The key issue is not to employ more force to shore-up a failing mission, but, first, to establish clear objectives, reevaluate military accomplishments, then adjust from there. I have asked myself that same question and determined that the use of military forces is appropriate. However, we need to better organize and coordinate the efforts in order to accomplish the objectives. It has been my personal experience that the use of force is a high-risk proposition and the military instrument alone can rarely attain lasting strategic effects.² Also, even the most perfect execution at the tactical and operational levels can not make up for fundamental flaws in political-military judgment or strategic design.³

The first paradigm that needs to be broken is the current structure of the departments participating in this effort. Quite frankly, we all need to let go of our personal agendas and band together towards this common enemy. Figuring out where the drug war went wrong demands abandoning symbolic politics and simple assertions about the need to "just fight harder."⁴ We need to fight smarter, not harder. The war on drugs has been a touchstone for funding -- a financial gravy train, as opposed to a unifying effort. In this regard, we need to return to basics. There have been too many instances of case stealing and backstabbing scenarios between agencies. The

² "Military Strategy and Operations" Core Course 5605 Syllabus, National War College 1998, ix

³ Ibid

⁴ Eva Bertram & Kess Sharpe "The unwinnable drug war: What Clausewitz would tell us," World Policy Journal, Winter 1996/97, 42

frequency of these incidents was so high that it was found comical by the drug dealers.⁵ There needs to be one central, controlling entity to guide and direct our Country's war on drugs. Agencies, such as the Department of the Treasury's Customs Service, Internal Revenue Service, Secret Service, and Financial Crimes Enforcement Network, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Department of Defense, Coast Guard, Central Intelligence Agency, National Security Agency, Department of State, and others should certainly continue their fine efforts, all focused by one central location with the resident expertise and experience to lead the effort. I recommend that my office become the single coordination point to manage and deconflict the efforts of all the agencies and, most importantly, to prevent duplication of effort.

I see some puzzled faces around the table, so let me offer this analogy. Reflect for a moment on the massive amounts of diplomatic and military efforts that were expended, just a short while ago, when Saddam Hussein refused to allow the United Nations inspectors to continue their mission. We quickly deployed and postured two carrier battle groups and numerous Air Force assets in the Persian Gulf region. We were moments away from unleashing tremendous firepower on Saddam's country if he did not acquiesce. Can you answer to yourself what the political objectives of the use of military force in that scenario would have accomplished? I'd offer that the outcome could have been akin to Armageddon with hollow political objectives. Yet, Saddam never attacked the United States or its population directly. In contrast, the drug lords of Colombia or Mexico have flooded our borders with deadly poisonous illegal drugs. I

⁵ ONDCP employee, confidential interview by authors, Washington, DC, 18 Mar 98

would go as far as calling illegal drugs chemical weapons. Yes, we are being attacked by chemical weapons. Where is the balance between the use of military force in the Persian Gulf and the lack of military force applied to the war on drugs?⁶ What kind of retaliation would our fellow Americans demand if Saddam used chemical weapons on our forward deployed forces?

Our war on drugs is certainly a more challenging war than what our Central Command CINC faced. The war on drugs is asymmetrical. Who is the enemy -- besides the drug lords? The enemy is everyone who sells drugs and everyone who looks the other way. In a sense, the enemy surrounds us, but I would say that that is a good position to be in, as no matter what direction we attack we will engage the enemy! But, of course, we need to focus on the objectives in order attack in the most effective direction, in order to get the most from our limited means, thus reducing the risks.

Central to the statement of the political objective is the level of specificity needed to add clarity to the mission. Simply stating that the supply of illegal drugs needs to be reduced is too broad. What we need to stipulate in the strategy are parameters of reduction, such as reduction of supply to a certain point that affects the price of that drug to a certain point where the average user can not afford to purchase it. Additionally, in order to monitor progress toward that objective of supply reduction, my office will establish intermediate benchmark goals and make necessary adjustments to ensure the benchmarks are achieved. What I do not want to do is return to a Viet Nam

⁶ Ralph Peters "A Revolution in Military Ethics?" Parameters, Summer 1996, 108

body count scenario, where our agencies hold up on nightly news the number of confiscated bails of marijuana, pounds of cocaine or cocoa plants. I want us to see the results directly, reflected in objective accomplishment, and that is why the crafting of political objectives is so important.

Of follow-on importance to the necessity of clear objectives is the concept of center of gravity. Again, Carl von Clausewitz states, "there is no higher and simpler law of strategy than to concentrate force on the enemy's weak link, his strategic 'center of gravity', one must keep the dominant characteristics of both belligerents in mind. Out of these characteristics a certain center of gravity develops, the hub of all power and movement, on which everything depends. That is the point against which all our energies be directed."⁷ Identifying the center of gravity in the war on drugs is a difficult, yet important, task as that is where we need to apply our resources. Is it the user, the street seller (pusher), the transporter (smuggler), the launderer (banker), the organizer (cartel), or the grower?

Of equal importance is deciding whether it is the supply end -- agriculture sites and labs -- the demand end -- our citizens -- or is it the huge profits? I would submit that both supply and demand are each centers of gravity and we need to address each separately. On the supply side, the enemy is evasive. Once one drug cartel is cut off, another one is motivated by the huge profit margins to quickly fill the void. In order to locate, close with, and defeat the supply side, we need to get as close as possible to the source of the enemy's power -- the growth site -- without the product, the enemy

⁷ Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, edited and translated by Michael Howard and Peter Paret, Princeton University Press, N J , 1976, p 700

has no power. Once we establish the political objective for the supply side, economic and diplomatic engagement, backed-up by strong and close military force will provide the means to close with the objective. But, I need your total, focused support for the employment of the means. We can not be distracted by competing events. We need to come in strong, accomplish the mission and, only when we have achieved the objectives, back off to a guard position. This is the holistic approach I referred to earlier.

There is one dominant factor that binds all the “players” in this “war” together. The “center of gravity” is the financial aspect of the drug trade: the profits -- the money involved. A closer examination of the characteristics of the drug trafficking world indicate that money is the key factor for every one of the “players”; the user spends money to purchase drugs; the seller, the transporter, the launderer, the organizer, and the grower all make money from the trade of illicit drugs. Discarding the financial aspects of the buyer, because the buyer spends instead of collecting money, the “center of gravity” on the supply side is the profit earned by the remaining “players” involved.

One of the toughest challenges we face in the “war on drugs” is that drug trafficking and money laundering have become incredibly lucrative. Experts estimate that money laundering has grown into a \$400 billion industry worldwide. This is an incredible 8 per cent of the total international trade, with \$40-\$80 billion of that in the United States drug trade alone, with much of the profits going to offshore accounts.

To put the dimension of this problem into perspective, the world's illicit drug trade is now bigger than trade in iron and steel and about the same size as that in textiles.⁸ The only way to put a stop to these crimes is to hit drug traffickers where it hurts most - their pockets. The laundering of money derived from illicit drug trafficking and other serious crimes has expanded throughout the world and now affects virtually all countries. Funds from the illicit drug trade, which are laundered through banks and other financial institutions, threaten the integrity and stability of financial systems and can even weaken governments. Some believe that as much as half of the world's wealth is held in offshore accounts. It is, therefore, our responsibility to combat money laundering in order to deny safe haven to drug criminals and their ill-gotten gains.

Seizure of drugs, even in very large amounts, often has only a limited impact on drug trafficking. The drug trade may be more vulnerable in the area of finance, since money is both the lifeblood and the sole end of illicit trafficking. Cash in small denominations, as usually received from illicit drug transactions at the street level, is bulky, difficult to hide and cumbersome to move. To address this problem and others, such as disguising and/or accounting for vast assets which have no legitimate origins, drug organizations and criminals have become experts in the art of money laundering - introducing drug cash into the legitimate financial system and moving it around until it appears "clean".

The "process" of money laundering can best be understood as having three stages—placement, layering, and integration. Placement, the initial entry of funds into

⁸ John Bruton, *Money Laundering Moves High on Political Agenda*, The Irish Times, August, 1997

the financial system, serves the purposes of relieving the holder of the physical cash and positioning the funds in the financial system for the next stage. Placement is the most vulnerable stage of the process, as the chance of discovery of the illicit origin of the money is greatest at the beginning. Layering, the next stage, describes a series of transactions designed to conceal the money's origin. At this level, money is often sent from one country to another and then broken up into a variety of investments, which are moved frequently to evade detection. In the integration stage, the funds have been fully assimilated into the legal economy, where they can be used for any purpose.

Efforts against money laundering are of critical importance in the fight against drug trafficking. If drug profits can be seized at their entry point into the financial systems, traffickers can be significantly hurt "in their wallets". After all, money is the primary objective of drug trafficking. Converting cash into other forms of money or assets is the most important step, since at this point the money may be most directly connected with the illegal source and therefore is easier to be seized. After that, numerous transactions create a complex paper trail, making identification of the illicit source of the funds difficult. Thus, the process of legitimizing huge quantities of cash proves itself very difficult and offers many opportunities for detection. As the potential for detection and apprehension increases and the profits decrease, the illicit drug trade becomes less worth the risk of pursuing. Therefore, by attacking and removing the profit from the drug trade you succeed in the destruction of the drug traffickers will to resist

This "attack" on the "center of gravity" must be conducted on a global basis and must be focused on new technologies to deal with emerging money laundering typologies. It is absolutely essential to bring together ideas and experiences regarding the phenomenon of money laundering and, then, to develop and articulate a worldwide view of the actual state of this activity, given that the drug traffickers depend upon the international financial system to launder illegal drug profits for the ultimate purpose of investing in legal enterprises. Because of the global nature of the money-laundering phenomenon, geographic borders have become increasingly irrelevant. Launderers tend to move their activity to jurisdictions where there are few or weak anti-money laundering countermeasures.

Technology and counter-technology also present a challenge to countering money laundering. Traditional money laundering techniques such as smurfing (depositing very small amounts of currency into numerous financial institutions so as not to draw undue attention to large sums of money), wire transfers, and bank drafts, continue as prominent laundering methods and there is a continuing shift from banking institutions to non-bank financial institutions to launder money. Also, the United States market for money transmission services has grown steadily, due to the global trend of rapidly increasing electronic commerce and continuing influx of immigrants who use international transfer services to send money home to relatives and friends. The detection of these illegal activities relies upon the ability and willingness of international financial institutions to develop new technologies that would enable them to track and

report suspicious transactions and increase the levels of compliance by banks and other financial institutions with anti-money laundering measures and legislation.

Let us not forget that we have the world's best technology to win this asymmetrical war. Every time a dollar is moved through a financial institution, it should be electronically monitored by the Department of the Treasury for possible connection to the illicit drug trade. Every time suspicious communications are conducted, electronic or otherwise, we should intercept and alter them. Every time something moves along our borders and does not authenticate communications, it should be engaged. When the drug traffickers employ their fluid alternate transportation routes and means, we need to be equally fluid, if not more so. In a sense, we have set up drug traffickers for success. As we have taken steps to improve our global economy by deregulating trade, we have opened more market doors for them and facilitated efficiency in their deadly trade.⁹ Every time it is determined that a foreign country is involved with illegal drug trafficking, their economic aid should be terminated. We can not rely on small skirmishes to achieve our goals; there must be a synergistic, sustained effect of numerous, coordinated efforts to win this war. In short, we need to get into the enemy's OODA (observation, orient, decision, and activity) loop and disrupt his efforts. Failure to understand the market nature of the drug trade, compounded by a failure to identify clear political objectives, ensures an interminable "limited war," one in which the means will never accomplish the objective of significantly reducing the overseas drug supply.

⁹ Laurie MacNamara "Rethinking drug policy," *Issues in Science and Technology*, Fall 1996, 91

Since this war is a global issue, hinged to almost every country's national security and economic well being, we need to also address the objectives from the perspective of an international coalition. However, regardless of our allies' position or contributions to this war, we need to be prepared to fight unilaterally. We also need to be skeptical of our allies' motives, and acknowledge that some of our neighbors are narco countries, corrupted all the way up to senior government levels. These narco countries are motivated by profit and, since the cost of growing and processing illegal drugs abroad is only a fraction of the street cost in the US, even if half the crop of cocaine was eradicated, the narco countries could still keep the prices on the street affordable and generate a tremendous income. Even if we were able to convince foreign cultivators to participate in a crop substitution program, so that they can still earn a living, the narco countries could easily throw money at the farmers and the equation will once again be in the drug traders' favor.¹⁰

As presidential candidate Bob Dole said during the 1996 presidential campaign, the increasing use of illegal drugs by our teenagers is a national disgrace.¹¹ Once the objectives are established, I intend to revisit Senator Dole's strategy, which included broadening the military's involvement in interdicting drug shipments, and using our military as rapid response units. I can not, at this point, lay out the specifics of military involvement without first solidifying the objectives with you, but I will tell you that, along with every Federal law enforcement officer, every uniformed military member takes an oath of allegiance. That oath, in part, states that the member will support and

¹⁰ Coletta Younger "The only war we've got" NACLA Report on the Americas, Sep/Oct 1997, 15

¹¹ Laurie MacNamara "Rethinking drug policy," Issues in Science and Technology, Fall 1996, 90

defend the constitution against all enemies foreign and domestic. The enemy in this war is both foreign and domestic. In order to address the issue of domestic enemy, we must explore the options within our constitution and laws that allow the use of our various national assets to engage the enemy on our soil, without invading our citizens' private rights.

The demand side must be addressed as well. The educational programs started some time ago that begin at the grass roots levels, the "Just Say No" movement, has been moderately successful. We need to look at expanding that approach as well. Additionally, we need to explore what deterrence programs are successful for other nations. I have examined some of our allies' successful crime deterrence programs and will incorporate them into my strategy. At home, we need to be cognizant of our citizens' personal rights, but we also need to find the balance between lenient laws and tough deterrence laws. There are some tough Sheriffs in this country who have established boot camp style prisons that have been relatively successful in turning first time offenders around. We will need to explore this further and, hopefully, extract the good points from each of the successful programs in order to apply them toward accomplishing the objectives.

An often-overlooked approach is informational diplomacy. Our State Department employs this very well overseas in order to persuade foreign nationals on a variety of issues. We need to look at employing this same powerful informational tool both abroad and perhaps, more importantly, right here in the US. The first place to start is with the American media, as well as through the information explosion via the Internet.

By deglamorizing illegal drug use, our young and impressionable teenagers will not be so easily swayed to partake in illegal drugs because they see adults use illegal drugs in movies and in publications. This approach needs to aggressively reverse the current tide of silent acceptance, as well as start a ground swell, grass roots movement that would cause those caught with illegal drugs to carry a heavy burden of punishment and shame. Today's role models, sports stars and Hollywood stars, need to feel the profound feeling of guilt should they be caught with illegal drugs. It is their ethical responsibility to present positive leadership to our young Americans. The moral fiber of our country is eroding and it is, in part, due to the glamorizing of illegal drugs by high profile people in our society.

Last, we must make our citizens aware of the cost of the war on drugs, in both human toll and economic losses. As an example, once the residents of Miami realized what they were losing in the war, their citizens, they were the first community in the US that became scared of the drug menace and organized itself to do something about it. Their efforts resulted in a 50% reduction in drug use. We need to foster these types of community awareness actions.¹² These avenues of attack will be studied and included in the strategy

So, I believe that designing a national strategy for a new and reinvigorated "war on drugs" is not as difficult as might have been previously thought. Virtually all of the resources and machinery already exist. All that is necessary is to reorganize and restructure our efforts to create an environment that is conducive to actually "winning"

¹² James Kitfield "Drug warrior," Government Executive, Aug 1996, 12

the war. There are several steps that the United States can take toward that goal: First, I believe that the law enforcement bureaus within the Department of the Treasury, i.e., the United States Customs Service, United States Secret Service, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms, and the Internal Revenue Service (Financial Crimes Enforcement Network should be included in this, but is not classified as a bureau) should be combined into one large law enforcement agency with four or five divisions which are the remains of the old bureaus. Historically, each of these bureaus has developed its own approaches and strategies for dealing with drug smuggling, money laundering, and other drug related criminal activities. This has essentially divided resources and created many varied and fragmented goals, objectives, and strategies. Also, since these bureaus have other, non-law enforcement related missions -- such as regulatory functions and collecting revenues -- the law enforcement functions sometimes seem to get lost within the overall bureaucracy. After all, the Department of the Treasury is nearly 200,000 strong and there are only 20,000 involved in actual law enforcement. Combining these bureaus into one large agency would put the Treasury Department on par with the Justice Department and would tend to focus law enforcement resources. Additional necessary actions would include:

Truly centralize the "drug war" under one individual. The "Drug Czar" concept was initially designed to do just that, but what has essentially been developed is an organization to review proportions of resources dedicated to the drug war by individual bureaus and to approve drug related budget requests. The Drug Czar also has discretionary funds at his disposal for distribution to various State, local, and Federal

drug task forces, but, otherwise, no real control that enables him to drive the "war machinery". As I stated earlier, your Drug Czar needs to have the latitude to craft a strategy based on your objectives, then the authority to execute the strategy. I also need the authority to coordinate the efforts of all previously mentioned departments. If this country truly wants to win the "war on drugs", then we need to fight that war more like a military action and give actual control of our national resources to a central controlling figure, much like a military CINC. We will never reach the culminating point without a synergistic effect of our joint and combined efforts.

Realistically determine what the American public actually wants and how far it is willing to go to "win the war". Just as President Bush went to great lengths to ensure that people believed that a war against Iraq was indeed a "just war", it is necessary to solidify public support for an all out campaign to significantly eradicate illicit drugs from this country. This step should also include determining just how far Congress is willing to go in the "war", since any successful campaign will ultimately require, public as well as Congressional, support

Design a truly combined or "joint" strategy to fight drugs. This strategy needs to account for and utilize all of the national resources available and allow for their efficient utilization in joint combined operations, encompassing all the available law enforcement and military resources into an effective "fighting force" devoid of parochialism and interservice rivalries.

Conduct an extensive review of all criminal and civil rules, regulations, and laws that effect the "war on drugs". This should be done to determine if any modifications

are needed in order to streamline and make the process more effective. This should not be construed to mean a diminishment of American civil rights, but should be intended only to remove those encumbrances to effective and efficient enforcement of the laws of the United States.

Actively work with the business community to enlist their support. Money laundering laws require bankers to report suspicious transactions, and provide for the freezing and confiscation of the assets of the crime. It is absolutely essential that the American and the international business community cooperate with and fully support the objectives of the "war". This cooperation should include, but not be limited to, the banking and financial community and financial institutions.

Elicit the cooperation and active participation of the international financial services community, along with the governments of all nation states, including tax havens, in dealing with the global drug problem and illegal money laundering. They should be called upon to develop new and transparent rules that put the common good above the needs of a small number of wealthy individuals. Without this support, the United States will not be able to stem the tide of drugs entering the country each year. This support should include cooperative training, consultations, and operations designed to "shrink" the world to those desiring to participate in illegal activities and make it increasingly difficult to profit from these same illegal activities.

The United States, major financial institutions, and advanced technology firms need to cooperate in the development of new technologies designed to counter illegal money laundering related to drug activities. The criminal fraternity has not been slow

in taking counter measures. Banking through the Internet creates a new opportunity for money laundering. The single European currency will encourage people to have bank accounts in other countries of the single currency area. When a bank manager does not know customers personally, money laundering is easier. Smart cards also create a new way of transporting money that will be used for money laundering.¹³

The Department of Defense, and its many assets, can and should be brought to bear in the war. We need the war on drugs as a primary focus of effort, until such point as the objectives are met or a higher national vital interest is threatened. In this regard, the Department of Justice should explore the possibilities of modifying the constitutional law involving the use of our military in counter-drug efforts on U S. soil.

Explore the possibility of mandatory urinalysis testing in all government work places and our schools, as well as all civilian establishments that are funded by federal projects, loans and grants. Also, explore the prison options mentioned earlier.

The Department of State needs to conduct a comprehensive review of our economic treaties to ensure that we are getting the best mileage from each of the treaties in order to apply pressure on the narco countries.

My final suggestion is for our national intelligence agencies -- including the Central Intelligence Agency and National Security Agency -- which have some of the most sophisticated intelligence gathering technology in the world, to review the capabilities of these technological weapons in order to bring them to bear in the war on drugs.

¹³ Bruton, *Money Laundering Moves High on Political Agenda*

These are only a few thoughts on how to employ our great strengths in order to win this war decisively. However, my main concern is with the employment of our assets, which come from each of your departments. Ladies and gentlemen, it is absolutely imperative that we do not have interagency rivalries. Please check your personal agenda at the door. We must work as a team to win this war. There is no “silver bullet” approach to victory. It will probably be the hardest challenge you will face in your life and it will take all our efforts.

I can outline some potential results from our efforts, but the primary result must be mission accomplishment. I look forward to working with you over the next several months in crafting the objectives of this war, then I will present to you a fleshed-out drug control strategy for your approval. This strategy will be focused, comprehensive and acceptable to Congress, and, most importantly, to our fellow Americans. Let there be no mistake that we are at a defining moment in our nation’s history.

What is yet to be seen is if we, as a nation, have the “will” to make an impact? “The first, supreme, the most far – reaching act of judgement that the statesman and commander have to make is to establish the kind of war on which they are embarking; neither mistaking it for, nor trying to turn it into, something that is alien to its nature.”¹⁴ This could very well be the **rise or fall of the American Empire!**”

¹⁴ Clausewitz, *On War*, p 119