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MASTER OF MILITARY STUDIES

TITLE:

Has the United States' Manifest Destiny Run Its Course?
U.S. Foreign Policy Juxtaposed Against Fourth Generation Warfare

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OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
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PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A lot of emphasis has been placed and energy exerted in the last decade on the subject of counter insurgency (COIN). Countless hours have been spent at military institutions studying the subject and billions of dollars have been spent trying to “get it right.” This energy was needed as American lives were being lost on the battlefield fighting wars on two fronts, one still being waged as this is written. However, all of this energy on COIN, in my opinion, was being spent on how the operational level needs to get it right. We (military) do share this fight with our Interagency partners and I am not down-playing their sacrifices here, however I chose this topic to bring the subject to the policy and national interest level. American foreign policy, and how it is conveyed, is who, in the world’s eye, America is. In COIN, or more importantly Fourth Generation warfare as a whole, we need directed foreign policy to counter the effects of the growing trends of inter-state and international non-state actors.

In my endeavor, I would like to thank Dr. Mark Jacobsen, Dr. Rebecca Johnson, and the professionals of Conference Group One for letting me try and weave my thesis into every seminar discussion we had.

And to my wife, LCDR Hannah Kriewaldt, and two beautiful daughters, Viktoria Grace and Ava Marie, without your support from Virginia Beach, this year would have been a vast departure from what it has turned out to be.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Title: Has the United States Manifest Destiny Run Its Course? U.S Foreign Policy Juxtaposed Against Fourth Generation Warfare

Author: Lieutenant Commander Joseph Kriewaldt, United States Navy

Thesis: The current application of including only recognized nation states in the U.S. melioristic foreign policies must change to meet the complex global environment of fourth generation warfare and the effect of non-state actors on the new manifest destiny.

Discussion: The political discourses on the subject of a “new” Manifest Destiny shaped the United States’ foreign policy and history throughout much of the twentieth century, influencing decisions about entering and not entering wars, and towards which nations the policies should be directed. The outcome of this discourse, and the shaping effects it attained, were the attributed eras of U.S. foreign policy. Global Meliorism was one such era and can be generally defined as that the world can be made a better place through human involvement and that the U.S., due to its unique nature, has the ability and the responsibility to involve itself to this end. Carl von Clausewitz theorized that war is an extension of policy. This gives warfare and those that wage it a direct link to the government that formulates its policy. For much of modern history, this holds generally true. As history has affected the foreign policies nation states use towards each other, the warfare used to enforce those policies too have been affected. Some scholars speak of generations of warfare and how these generations are linear and others speak of how the means of waging war are overlapping. To each there are valid points; however, the commonality is that the means of waging war have evolved throughout history. Not all nation-states hold the monopoly on the warfare waged within their borders, and many times that warfare is not being waged in support of those states’ policies. It is also being waged in support of a non-state actor’s objective. Many argue this as the Fourth Generation of warfare. By no means is this a new way of warfare; however, its prevalence and trans-national aspects of its belligerents in our modern day environment lend itself to focused discussion. The growing number and power of influence of today’s non-state actor groups will not subside. Intergroup and internetwork relationships need to be addressed in addition to inter-state. Only once this is understood can a policy be forged to influence the correct actions from the correct actors in the interest of the United States and her partners.

Conclusion: The current application of Global Meliorism ignores that fact that while the current counterparts of the United States are engaging in the fourth generation arena, the U.S. is driven by third generation policy history. The U.S. policy makers in a fourth generation warfare environment are acting as Meliorists to the wrong actors and thus the policies are flawed. The idea of Manifest Destiny has always been to project the influence of the exceptional nature of the American system. This has been true in each era of its foreign policy only being realized in differing ways. However, when juxtaposed with the non-state actors of fourth generation warfare and the lack of directed application of policy to influence the destiny upon them, then the destiny has run its course and has met the end of its sphere of eminence.

In the context of the limited bargaining war, Western states are also constrained by their ability to engage in and persevere through what could be prolonged bargaining processes. It is often difficult either to accept or to admit openly that some fourth-generation opponents are legitimate bargaining partners... In meeting the challenge of fourth-generation warfare, it is crucial to understand how military force fits into a broader portfolio of means designed to persuade and persevere as much as to destroy. Meeting that challenge requires a radical rethink of what war is... If fourth generation war is principally a bargaining game, policymakers might have to adjust the language... If there is no realistic prospect of defeating contemporary Islamic militancy by force, the only alternative to an endless containment conflict may be to design a vast bargaining game: the use of force would be an element in the game..."¹

Introduction

The United States is a relatively young nation. However, in its relative short history it has applied its principles through its foreign policies in a variety of means with one common thread—that the United States is the shining example, the chosen, for which all should strive to equal.

In the beginning of its history, the foreign policy was that pertaining to the expansion westward, the Manifest Destiny to occupy, and the challenges of dealing with the encroachment by European powers on the Americas. After the Westward expansion and the fulfillment of the local Manifest Destiny, the United States sought its rightful place in the international arena and a New Manifest Destiny was on the horizon. Differing schools of thought emerged on if and how this idea of a new international manifest destiny should be realized. The political discourses on this subject shaped the United States' foreign policy and history throughout much of the twentieth century, influencing decisions about entering and not entering wars, and towards which nations the policies should be directed. The outcome of this discourse, and the shaping effects it attained, were the attributed eras of U.S. foreign policy. Global Meliorism was one such era and can be generally defined as that the world can be made a better place through human

involvement and that the U.S., due to its unique nature, has the ability and the responsibility to involve itself to this end.

Carl von Clausewitz theorized that war is an extension of policy. This gives warfare and those that wage it a direct link to the government that formulates its policy. For much of modern history, this holds generally true.

As history has affected the foreign policies nation states use towards each other, the warfare used to enforce those policies too have been affected. Some scholars speak of generations of warfare and how these generations are linear and others speak of how the means of waging war are overlapping. To each there are valid points; however, the commonality is that the means of waging war have evolved throughout history.

To this point, we are now squarely in an era, that when applied to the Clausewitzian theories, would be categorized as non-trinitarian. Not all nation-states hold the monopoly on the warfare waged within their borders, and many times that warfare is not being waged in support of those states' policies. It is also being waged in support of a non-state actor's objective. Many argue this as the Fourth Generation of warfare. By no means is this a new way of warfare; however, its prevalence and trans-national aspects of its belligerents in our modern day environment lend itself to focused discussion. The growing number and power of influence of today's non-state actor groups will not subside. Therefore, the current application of including only recognized nation states in the United States melioristic foreign policies must change to meet the complex global environment of fourth generation warfare and the effect of non-state actors on the new manifest destiny.

Manifest Destiny

Albert Weinberg defines Manifest Destiny as “in essence the doctrine that one nation has a preeminent social worth, a distinctively lofty mission, and consequently, unique rights in the application of moral principles...a firmly established article of the national creed.”² Prior to the Civil War era of the United States, westward expansionism was at the forefront of social movements in North America. The idea of “Manifest Destiny” fueled this expansion. Americans commonly thought that it was the God-given destiny of the country to expand from shore to shore of the North American continent and that this destiny was manifested from an idea that Americans were naturally selected for this expansion. Americans looked west and had expanded to the western shore by the start of the Civil War. Following the Civil War and as a result of the reconstruction efforts, the Manifest Destiny idea grew. The advances in technology, industry and commerce pushed the United States to look beyond its own shores in “a surge of national feeling that became known as the new manifest destiny”.³ Many termed this as a cosmic tendency as Secretary of State John Hay stated “no man, no party, can fight with any chance of final success against a cosmic tendency; no cleverness, no popularity avails against the spirit of the age.”⁴ It was this acceptance that fueled the proponents of expansionism to seek to push U.S. economic power around the world. The United States needed to procure resources to fuel its rapid growth and sought other markets for its manufactured goods. However, this interest was not felt nationally, whether due to political differences or from fault lines still inherent from the Civil War, there were strong objectors to the U.S international movement. However, the hard economic strains that were upon the U.S. at this time outweighed personal feelings about expansionism and led companies to the international market. Many influential leaders at the time also asserted that if the United States did not expand along the international front then

Africa, Asia, and the Pacific would be conceded to European powers.⁵ Expansionist Senator Henry Cabot Lodge of Massachusetts declared in 1895 that “the great nations are rapidly absorbing for their future expansion and their present defense all the waste places of the earth. It is a movement which makes for the civilization and advancement of the race. As one of the great nations of the world, the United States must not fall out of the line of march”.⁶ Economics were not the only driver, however.

A growing idea of the time was the American’s and the United States’ system of self-governance was exceptional. The United States not only needed to export its material goods, but also now needed to export its democracy and humanitarianism. Merchants and missionaries became de-facto statesmen and began pushing American exceptionalism to the world. At home, growing dissention between Democrats and Republicans caused the U.S government to delay in formulating a concrete international relations plan or foreign policy. However, the government promoted economic expansion through various trade laws and tariff acts.⁷

It was during this time that the ideas of Captain Alfred T. Mahan, and naval sea superiority, began gaining traction. Mahan asserted that a large, ocean-going and mobile navy, vice a purely coastal defense force, was needed to secure the international sea lanes to protect merchants and further national growth. He also called for overseas coaling stations to support this larger trans-oceanic navy.⁸

Many think that in the United States, in the 1890s, territory annexation interest had given way to an “informal empire” ideal in which one sought to gain political economic influence rather than formal political control over a territory. At this time, the U.S had no official interest in the gain of overseas colonial land; it only sought to use this influence to further its economic power.

With the catalysts of economic growth, idealism, and the need to secure assets and protect interests, the United States was entering into an imperial policy age.

The Cuban Insurrection

Spain and Cuba had been involved in the “Ten Year’s War since the 1870’s. Spain held dominance over Cuba, but with the end of the war in 1878, Spain promised reform and abolished slavery in the region. The United States witnessed the end to this conflict and sought to promote Cuban independence and economic growth. The United States set forth a policy to allow Cuban sugar to enter the U.S. tariff-free. However, with economic and political struggles at home, this policy shifted and virtually stopped the import of sugar. It is said that this was the catalyst for the renewed Cuban insurrection of 1895.⁹ Cuban insurgents sought to make the island ungovernable for the Spanish and force United States intervention.

At this same time, “yellow journalism” began to make its mark on the international stage. “Yellow journalism” newspaper writers and publishers began to use dramatic drawings and captions to incite the public and build circulation. The Spanish in Cuba used internment camps to attempt to hold down the insurgency and U.S. journalist made sure the public was aware of these atrocities. This galvanized U.S. public opinion against the Spanish and the public urged the administration for action. However, Washington was against forced intervention and sought to put political pressure on Madrid in an attempt to quell the violence. Many believed that the full annexation of Cuba by Spain would be in direct violation of the Monroe Doctrine and called for swift action. Washington delayed and a new presidency began in 1897. President McKinley won the popular vote on a platform of expansion but against Cuban annexation.¹⁰ The McKinley administration also attempted diplomacy with Spain but to no avail and eventually sent the

battleship *Maine* to Havana Harbor as a show of force. While in the harbor, the *Maine* was sunk and the sinking blamed on the Spanish. The United States declared war on Spain on April 19, 1898. The United States won this war and acquired Cuba, Puerto Rico, Guam, and the Phillipine Islands.¹¹

Delegates from the United States' Department of State, four of five being expansionists, traveled to Paris and met with Spanish diplomats in September of 1899. Their mission was clear and that was the independence of Cuba and the control of Puerto Rico, Guam, and the Philippine Islands. The U.S asserted that each area's inhabitants would have religious freedoms but their "civil rights and political status"¹² would be determined by the U.S Congress, thus establishing the United States as extending outside its continental boundaries and further expanding its new manifest destiny. In landmark U.S Supreme Court Insular cases, the court determined the constitutionality of territory acquisition stating that while the United States could incorporate territory and institute the type of government it felt was best suited, that U.S. citizenship did not necessarily follow the flag.¹³

The precedents set here laid the ground work for the foreign policy to come. To further the U.S. influence now meant increased diplomatic efforts in other arenas outside the continental U.S. and the use of force to back it up.

U.S. Foreign Policy Evolution in the 19th and 20th Centuries

Modern United States foreign policy, as argued by Walter McDougal, in *Promised Land, Crusader State*, can be categorized into four distinct eras being Progressive Imperialism, Wilsonianism or Liberal Internationalism, Containment, and Global Meliorism.¹⁴

Progressive Imperialism can be traced back to the late 1800s. The technological advances, population growth, immigration, and entrepreneurship all stimulated the U.S. economy and business was booming. Urban areas sprawled and big American construction awed its foreign spectators. As the influx of immigrants populated the urban areas, farmers and ranchers settled more and more land, swallowing the frontier by 1890. As Walter McDougal writes, “manufacturers, financiers, and politicians spoke of the need for foreign outlets for American goods and energies, tempting historians in turn to interpret the imperial thrust of 1898 as a buoyant or anxious search for new frontiers.”¹⁵ In fact it was a search for new frontiers, but new frontiers for the sale and purchase of trade items to further stimulate the new American growth. However, with the increase in international trade came the need for protecting those assets and the U.S. Navy grew exponentially during this Progressive Imperialist era. During this era, European powers were also surging and were actively annexing Africa and Asia in the 1800s and 1890s. Germany and Japan challenged Britain’s sea superiority in their areas of interest, and European engineering made travel and Imperialism much more accessible than in the past.¹⁶ This era was basically a rush to the international market and the protection of each nation’s trading partners and territories. In the United States, for many, there was a feeling of inevitable non-isolationism. As Mahan stated, “I am an imperialist, simply because I am not isolationist.”¹⁷ It was this thinking that pushed President Roosevelt, in 1904, to declare his Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine and announced the role of the United States as the America(s) police power.¹⁸ The Roosevelt Corollary gave ample room for interpretation on what constituted the need for policing power and what American actions in Latin American internal affairs would be. American foreign policy was now at the brink of a new era.

American intervention in this era and its actions were thought to stand between anarchy and order.¹⁹ Diplomacy was kept to heads of state and warfare was generally fought with the conventional armies. This was the system and it worked.

Wilsonianism or Liberal Internationalism is a marked change from President Washington's warning of entangling alliances'; however, it is a natural progression from its predecessor. As the world's superpowers began increasing trade, global ties and global conflicts were inevitable. Prior to the United States entering World War I in 1917, President Woodrow Wilson stated,

we are participants, whether we would or not, in the life of the world. The interests of all nations are our own as well. We are partners with the rest and...the United States is willing to become a partner in any feasible association of nations formed in order to realize these objects and make them safe against violation.²⁰

The United States soon entered the war with the premise of making the world safe for democracy and bringing about a balance of power without secret alliances. By the end of the war Wilson was advocating a "general association" of nations and European self-determination. With the armistice of 1921, a League of Nations was formed; however the United States did not become a part of it due to concerns on its authority over U.S. Foreign policy and the inflexibility on treaty terms. Many blame this partisan view and lack of flexibility for the isolationist attitude that led the United States until the Second World War.²¹ While some schools of thought place the next era of Independent Isolationism on the stage with the rest, the period between the first and second world wars saw the United States as the greatest economic power and its policies followed much of the same line as the former Liberal Internationalism. Therefore this paper will make no distinction between the two forms of Progressive Internationalism.

The policy of Containment was just that, a policy to contain the threat and reach of Communism—namely the former Soviet Union. George Kennan argued that,

Soviet pressure against the free institutions of the western world is something that can be contained by the adroit and vigilant application of counter-force at a series of constantly shifting geographical and political points, corresponding to the shifts and maneuvers of Soviet policy but which cannot be charmed or talked out of existence.²²

This idea became the underlying motive for the foreign policies from the late 1940s through the mid-1990s. It was instrumental in formulating the Truman Doctrine, the Marshall Plan, and the Four Point Plan.²³ What all of these plans had in common were their pledges of U.S. support and their economic reconstruction efforts to ensure regrowth was stimulated under the western capitalist model thereby containing and isolating the communist influence from Western Europe, under the Marshall plan, and the ‘third’ world under the Four point plan. However, this era was not just about economic aid. Many thought military alliance isolation was the means to the end and this gave rise to the creation of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO), and the Central Treaty Organization (CENTO).²⁴ All were in response to the rise of the communist influence and all were an attempt to show solidarity against it should it act upon its threat of force. For the United States, this was a marked turn in its history. NATO was the first peacetime alliance the country ever entered into. This essentially forced the U.S. into action and put the treaty organization before its policies, the very obstacle that caused its non-participant status in the League of Nations just thirty years prior. However, with the dawn of the nuclear age, the problem became more complex and direct action against the Soviet Union and vice versa meant mutual destruction. Both powers recognized this and over the course of several decades employed various tactics of indirect pressure. For the U.S., this meant giving aid, both military and economic, to nations in conflict with communist regimes.

Glenn Hastedt, in *American Foreign Policy: Past, Present, Future*, argues that:

in practicing containment, the United States has vacillated between two approaches...on symmetrical response...when and where they occur and with force proportionate...and an asymmetrical response...response in a place other than where it occurred with a level it feels necessary.²⁵

During this containment period, the Reagan administration adopted an asymmetric threat response strategy. In response to threats from the Soviet Union the U.S. threatened to attack other areas outside of the Soviet Union in Libya, Vietnam, and Asiatic Russia.²⁶ In fact, according to Reagan's Secretary of Defense Weinberger, "our deterrent capability in the Persian Gulf is linked with our ability and willingness to shift or widen the war to other areas."²⁷ An example of a symmetrical response in support of containment in this era is Vietnam. The U.S. viewed the events in Vietnam as the start of a possible "domino effect" and applied force proportionate to the threat where it occurred. However, the decisions surrounding Vietnam made lasting impressions on U.S. foreign policy and application of military force.

The Legacy of Vietnam

The "Vietnam Syndrome"—a condition among post-Vietnam policy makers stemming from the foreign policy crises and the resulting military conflict of the Vietnam War.²⁸ Driven by the dissension and failure of the U.S. involvement in the Vietnam War from 1961-1975, policy makers were reluctant to formulate any response, anywhere, against anyone without showing just cause and without ensuring the American public a sure and swift end state. This worked well for policy makers and U.S. President's post-Vietnam. This allowed policy makers to assert that the United States was exceptional in that it would only involve itself when the cause was just, the definition of meliorism, and when the military commitment would be short term. In short, the U.S. was correct for intervening and would absolutely win quickly. The United States would

not occupy foreign lands and did “not seek the conquest and subjugation of foreign nations.”²⁹

This idea of American exceptionalism came to a head with the end of the Cold War and the fall of the Soviet Union. Then President Ronald Reagan, in an attempt to reverse the weak international view of his predecessor, Jimmy Carter, employed an aggressive synthesis of exceptionalist rhetoric and containment directed toward the Soviet Union. The United States conducted a massive buildup of its armed forces and foreign policy brokers used this to advertise a willing capability for the use of force to contain the Soviet Union and the spread of communism. The Soviet Union eventually collapsed from the arms race that defined the Cold War and the U.S. foreign policy of this era. However, with the Vietnam syndrome still at play, the collapse of the Soviet Union left a void for directed U.S. foreign policy. For nearly five decades, U.S. foreign policy was driven, in one manner or another, by containment. It was now undefined.

9/11/2001-Present

“The gravest danger to freedom lies at the crossroads of radicalism and technology. When the spread of chemical and biological and nuclear weapons, along with ballistic missile technology—when that occurs, even weak states and small groups could attain a catastrophic power to strike great nations. Our enemies have declared this very intention, and have been caught seeking these terrible weapons. They want the capability to blackmail us, or to harm us, or to harm our friends—and we will oppose them with all our power.”

President G. W. Bush
West Point, New York
June 1, 2002

Above we see that President Bush and his staff recognized the dramatic shift in nature of the brazen attacks on American soil. He stated that America will oppose them with all its power. One can assume he meant all of its military power. However, this paper will assume that the full

power portrayed here is that of America's full Diplomatic, Informational, Military, and Economic (DIME) potential.

In the National Security Strategy of 2002 President Bush speaks to a notion of creating a world safe for democracy. This conjures up notions more of International Liberalism than that of Meliorism. It may be that he knew that the U.S. had already intervened in Afghanistan and the label did not matter at this point, or it may be that this strategy was one that was beyond benevolent Meliorism due to the unique nature of the Afghanistan problem.

In a world that is safe, people will be able to make their own lives better. We will defend the peace by fighting terrorists and tyrants. We will preserve the peace by building good relations among the great powers. We will extend the peace by encouraging free and open societies on every continent, President Bush stated.³⁰

President Bush went on to recognize the fact that the face and method of the threat and adversary had changed, saying "Today, that task has changed dramatically. Enemies in the past needed great armies and great industrial capabilities to endanger America. Now, shadowy networks of individuals can bring great chaos and suffering to our shores for less than it costs to purchase a single tank."³¹ However when he spoke of how we will defeat this threat in the future, he speaks about bringing to bear the full arsenal of the United States, in which diplomacy towards these shadowy networks of individuals is not listed as an option in the quiver. He states, "To defeat this threat we must make use of every tool in our arsenal—military power, better homeland defenses, law enforcement, intelligence, and vigorous efforts to cut off terrorist financing."³²

In the 2006 National Security Strategy, the policy shifts back once again to Meliorism with the statement that "we seek to shape the world, not merely be shaped by it."³³

The 2010 National Security Strategy put forth by President Barack Obama had surprisingly similar undertones as that of the previous two strategies; however, the 2010 strategy was more

akin to the shining example on the hill. President Obama stated, “Our strategy starts by recognizing that our strength and influence abroad begins with the steps we take at home.”³⁴

However, he does also recognize the security problem at hand and that America cannot afford to just be that shining example. He states “The threats to our people, our homeland, and our interests, have shifted dramatically in the last 20 years...in addition to facing enemies on traditional battlefields, the United States must now be prepared for asymmetric threats...”³⁵

The aspect that all of these National Security Strategies written over eight to ten years by two different Presidents from two different political parties have in common is that they all see that the United States is faced with a new problem set. This new problem set is a network of non-state actors waging their war globally and effectively. What these strategies also share is that this new problem is not traditional. With a “traditional” actor, there may be a lead up of diplomatic action prior to the onset of a conflict. With this new problem set and the recognition that this is a global phenomenon with real consequences, there is a striking lack of a directed diplomatic plan to deal with the current non-state actors or the known groups that have not yet placed themselves on the battlefield.

The Link

What one can conclude is that sometimes policy drives warfare, as in the Expansionist Era and to a certain extent in the “Just War” Meliorism Era and sometimes policy is driven by warfare, as in the case following the attacks on American soil on September 11, 2001. The preceding sections were developed to show just that. The United States did not enter wars or conflicts for entry’s sake, but did so for the reasons of the era. The following will now look at the link to how

warfare has been conducted and how the United States now finds itself with applications that do not fit with the current state of affairs.

The Generations of Warfare

William Lind explains that the First Generation of warfare began with the end of the Thirty Years War and the Peace of Westphalia 1648.³⁶ It was at this time that nation states began to use warfare as an extension of their policy and the state held the monopoly on warfare as a means to an end rather than the Army involving itself in warfare simply for conquest, thus creating a battlefield and military culture of order. Nation States held discourse with Nation States. There was an accepted inviolability of states' internal affairs. This generation marked the creation of the rules of armed conflict and witnessed the distinction between combatants and non-combatants. However, as Lind goes on to explain, this orderly battlefield construct began to break down in the middle of the 19th century and states began to struggle with how to overcome this obstacle to victory.³⁷ Thus, the second and then third generations evolved.

Second Generation warfare is characterized, mostly, by that of the artillery paving the way for the infantry. While on the political front, the nation state still holds the monopoly, the warfare tactics are different. Third Generation warfare is characterized by revolutions in the internal combustion engine, the railroad, and maneuver warfare, seeking the enemy's physical weaknesses in their lines and capitalizing in time and space, however, again the state holds the monopoly on the use of the military actions.

Fourth Generation warfare is a dramatic shift from its predecessors. While in the first three generations, states had the monopoly on the actions, policies, and end to the use of the military as a projection of foreign policy, fourth generation warfare is characterized by non-state actors

involving themselves in and sometimes instigating the conflict. These actors range from guerilla bands to trans-national religious inspired groups without defined borders, command and control, uniforms, or adherence to laws of armed conflict as codified following Westphalia 1648. This poses a number of issues for the military and statesmen alike. This inherently is creating problems for foreign policy makers in dealing with the fourth generation of warfare and, in particular, how it is affecting the idea of the United States' manifest destiny to influence these actors. Policy against fourth generation actors has been largely reactionary and has been driven by the waging of the warfare rather than using the warfare as an extension of the policy.

Thomas X. Hammes, in *Global Insurgency and the Future of Armed Conflict*, defines the aspects of fourth generation warfare in terms of the strategic, political, operational techniques, and tactical considerations.

In fourth generation warfare, a belligerent who is fighting using fourth generation means has the strategic advantage. His aim is not to seek out and destroy the enemy's army, although he may attack only for strategic messaging implications. His aim is to bend the will of the other belligerents into changing their political and military aims. In the case of Afghanistan, it is the aim of the Taliban to oust the sitting Afghan Government, as well as to evict the United States Government. In this case, there are not two belligerents, but three, or more, that must be considered. However, one could argue that two of the three belligerents are fighting and conducting policy reform with the third generation in mind while the third belligerent is living and fighting squarely within the fourth generation. The war, then, is not being waged on the same battlefield nor fought in the same political arena. Hammes also argues that fourth generation warfare actors use weapons that are manufactured from materials from within the society in which they waging war.³⁸ This obviously gives the fourth generation actor a

worldwide strategic advantage as he can wage war wherever he feels the impact is needed and does not need to exhaust time and resources establishes large supply chains and stockpiles. This allows him to focus solely on his offensive message and means.³⁹

Politically, fourth generation warfare non-state actors are becoming more and more organized. They are successful in exploiting the globalized world to meet their communication needs and seek to use established international organizations as force enablers and sometimes multipliers as they are also a tremendous source of recruiting.⁴⁰ These non-state actors are talented in fundraising and, for example, both the IRA and Al Qaeda have received funds from international charitable organizations.⁴¹ Inherent in their definition is that transnational non-state actor organizations span across many nations. They do not hold allegiance to one state over the other and at many times their stated allegiance will change on a whim. When it comes to waging war, a nation state will usually enter a war for a specific reason or cause and will either stay until that cause is met or will accept defeat and withdraw. In contrast, non-state actors' involvement in conflict depends on the needs of the moment and they will usually side with whoever will meet that need. It is not uncommon for a non-state actor to change alliances mid-conflict without repercussions.⁴² It is this aspect of the non-state actor that the United States must recognize and seek to infiltrate. The United States must seek to understand the underlying political objectives and the means by which the non-state actor is meeting those objectives. What transnational organizations are facilitating the economic and political successes of the modern non-state actor? What other influences do these organizations have? What influences them? These are all questions that must be asked and answered when formulating a modern foreign policy in the fourth generation world.

Critics of fourth generation warfare theory like Antulio J. Echevarria II, in *Fourth Generation War and Other Myths*, surmise that “at this point, globalization seems to aid the non-state actor more than the state, but states still play a central role in the support or defeat of terrorist groups or insurgencies.”⁴³ States do play a major role in the support or defeat of terrorist groups, insurgencies, state funded groups, and other fourth generation warfare actors. Echevarria’s critique is sound; however, it still supports this paper’s idea that it is the decision by the state to either defeat or support these groups and that the application of the United States’ foreign policy must change to deal with states that harbor fourth generation actors while still maintaining a positive influence of democratic foreign policy in this complex global environment.

Yet another critic of fourth generation warfare theory, Michael Evans, contends the theory does not hold due to the fact that the new world security environment will not allow fourth generation to stand on its own. Evans states, “what we have witnessed over the past fifteen years is the bifurcation of the contemporary international security system – that is, a split has occurred between a traditional twentieth-century state-centered paradigm and new twenty-first-century sub-state and trans-state strata.”⁴⁴ This is to say that warfare has not followed a linear progression from the first to the fourth generations and we are now, in fact, in a world where there exists the modern and post-modern environment simultaneously. This critique offers that, due to this relationship within the security environment, different generations, conventional and unconventional, and regular and irregular warfare are happening simultaneously on the battlefield.

This paper will not argue Evan’s point. In fact, the recent conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan provide ample evidence to support this argument. However, using Evans’ argument above, it proves to be even more crucial that the U.S foreign policy makers fully understand this complex

security environment. Intergroup and internetwork relationships need to be addressed in addition to inter-state. Only once this is understood can a policy be forged to influence the correct actions from the correct actors in the interest of the United States and her partners.

The attacks on U.S soil on September 11, 2001 sparked a decade long conflict. The U.S response into Afghanistan to root out the Al Qaeda leadership and ultimately the Taliban was supposed to be swift and just. For over ten years, the U.S. policy makers and the military have been grappling this complex issue of insurgencies and fourth generation warfare. Is it going well? To answer that, one must look at the foreign policies driving the action and their linkage to the current era. If one believes, as discussed before, that the U.S. is in an era of Global Meliorism and that it is this foreign policy concept that is driving the conflict, then why has it taken so long to protract a stable democracy onto the people of Afghanistan? Is a “good enough” democracy good enough? If one is a Wilsonian, then yes. A Wilsonian would seek to foster the conditions for safe and secure assembly no matter what the outcome of that democratic process was. Global Meliorism, on the other hand, assumes that the American model is universally valid and the world must not just be safe for democracy but must be democratic for the less fortunate to thrive as Americans have done.

The Current State of Affairs of U.S. Influence

In 1982 the U.S. enjoyed diplomatic relations with 150 states. However, this also poses problems as exemplified by the Law of the Sea Conference of 1982.⁴⁵ The U.S, due to the large number of participants, insisted on a weighted voting system for the laws of the treaty so that its terms could not be vetoed by a group of smaller states. However, the international community of representatives at the conference did not agree and the U.S. ultimately did not sign the treaty.

This example is given to show the power that the influence of a group of states can have when numbers are in favor. Now the growth of states has, post-Soviet collapse, for all intents and purposes, stagnated; however, statistically the growth of non-state actors as a significant force in the international political arena has been exponential and some attribute this to these same states as not being able to provide for the demands its populous places on them.⁴⁶ So, given the Law of the Sea Conference example above and the ability of the masses to win the influence war, it follows that the non-state actors are beginning and will continue to be major influencers in the international community. Non-state actors are non-sovereign entities that exercise significant economic, political, or social power and influence at a national, and in some cases international, level.⁴⁷ Soft power, in the form of public diplomacy, has an indispensable role in this arena then. As James Forest and Frank Honkus state, “how do we counter a security threat that stems from within countries we consider friends? This is one of the more daunting challenges of countering terrorism today, and involves less state-to-state diplomacy and more public diplomacy.”⁴⁸ According to the United States Information Agency Report and the 9/11 Commission, Public Diplomacy is defined as “an activity that involves the promotion of a state’s interests, culture, and policies to the general public of foreign nations in the hopes of generating understanding, and perhaps sympathy, toward that state’s policy and actions.”⁴⁹ So if one looks at the general public of a foreign nation as a group of non-state actors and then further categorized those into groups of sub-actors, policy makers would begin to be able to formulate targeted foreign policy for desired effects. In fact, according to a 2005 Princeton Project on National Security report, “the goal of American public diplomacy is to understand, inform, and influence foreign publics in promotion of U.S. national interests and to broaden dialogue between Americans and U.S. institutions and their counterparts abroad.”⁵⁰ If this is the stated goal, the key here then is to

broaden the definition of the institution and their counterpart. As stated previously, non-state actors are growing exponentially and many attribute this to the globalized international community. The United States is not immune to this growth, and in fact, leads in the rise of many influential non-state groups in the form of corporations and IGOs and NGOs due to its position in the global economy. The definition of U.S. institutions needs to include these groups and thus, inherently, their counterparts would include foreign non-state actors. This lays the framework for a networked public diplomacy approach. This would, in turn, provide the basis for a revised strategic communication approach. A 2004 Defense Science Board report stated that strategic communication:

requires a sophisticated method that maps perceptions and influence networks,...employs relevant channels, leverages new strategic and tactical dynamics...will build on factors that motivate human behavior. It will adapt techniques of skillful political campaigning. It will search out credible messengers and create message authority...and assumes decades of sustained effort.⁵¹

With strategic communication being the means by which a foreign policy is conveyed, it follows then that to be relevant in a fourth generation battlespace, one must seek these new avenues of influence. This avenue is the network of the non-state actor. With the creation of the U.S. National Strategy for Public Diplomacy and Strategic Communication the U.S. now has an overarching messaging authority; however, it is now time to direct that messaging by defining the audiences and articulating the end states.⁵²

Conclusion

“to successfully confront the future...requires that U.S foreign policy be rooted in a firm understanding of the past. The past must be explored both for the answers it gives and for the questions it leads us to ask of the future...the identity of the participants in the policy process, the way they interact, and the instruments available to them combine to further refine the shape of U.S. foreign policy. For the first time in over four decades the content and direction of U.S. foreign policy is truly open for debate and reshaping.”⁵³

The current application of Global Meliorism ignores the fact that while the current counterparts of the United States are engaging in the fourth generation arena, the U.S. is driven by third generation policy history. The nations in which some of these non-state actors inhabit no longer have the monopoly on the warfare being conducted and it is no longer an extension of that states' policy. The U.S. policy makers in a fourth generation warfare environment are acting as Meliorists to the wrong actors and thus the policies are flawed. Furthermore, is Meliorism the correct fundamental policy to be projecting or should the U.S. give way to history and fall to Wilsonianism (Liberal Internationalism), Containment, or Isolationism. Logic, in this case, would prove that no nation, if it wishes to remain a nation can be isolationist in this modern age. Furthermore, the Manifest Destiny of the United States seems as if it has run its course and that it must now hope to contain the disruptions of non-state actors through a changed foreign policy to Liberal International Containment rather than the obscure "benevolent" Meliorism. The idea of Manifest Destiny has always been to project the influence of the exceptional nature of the American system. This has been true in each era of its foreign policies only being realized in differing ways. However, when juxtaposed with the non-state actors of fourth generation warfare and the lack of directed application of policy to influence the destiny upon them, then the destiny has run its course and has met the end of its sphere of eminence.

Endnotes

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- ¹¹ Howard Jones, *Crucible of Power: A History of American Foreign Relations From 1897* (Wilmington, DE:Scholarly Resources Inc.,2001), 19.
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- ¹³ Howard Jones, *Crucible of Power: A History of American Foreign Relations From 1897* (Wilmington, DE:Scholarly Resources Inc.,2001), 20.
- ¹⁴ Walter A. McDougal, *Promised Land, Crusader State: The American Encounter with the World Since1776* (New York:Houghton Mifflin Company, 1997), 10.
- ¹⁵ Walter A. McDougal, *Promised Land, Crusader State: The American Encounter with the World Since1776* (New York:Houghton Mifflin Company, 1997), 103.
- ¹⁶ Walter A. McDougal, *Promised Land, Crusader State: The American Encounter with the World Since1776* (New York:Houghton Mifflin Company, 1997), 104. European Engineering redesigned the earth's political geography through the Suez Canal (1869), the British Trans-Indian Railroad (1870), and Russian Trans-Siberian Railway (1904), while steamships, telegraphs, Quinine, machine guns, and other technology made imperialism cheap and easy.
- ¹⁷ Walter A. McDougal, *Promised Land, Crusader State: The American Encounter with the World Since1776* (New York:Houghton Mifflin Company, 1997), 104.
- ¹⁸ Walter A. McDougal, *Promised Land, Crusader State: The American Encounter with the World Since1776* (New York:Houghton Mifflin Company, 1997), 115. "We would interfere with them only as a last resort, and then only if it became evident that their inability to do justice at home or abroad had violated the rights of the United States or had invited foreign aggression to the detriment of the entire body of American nations."
- ¹⁹ Glenn P. Hastedt, *American Foreign Policy: Past, Present, Future*, 4th Ed (New Jersey:Prentice Hall, Inc., 2000), 402.

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- ³⁴ President, Paper, National Security Strategy, The White House (May, 2010), 3.
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- ³⁶ William S. Lind, *The Four Generations of Modern War*, William Lind Archives, Lew Rockwell, <http://www.lewrockwell.com/lind/lind26.html> (accessed November 29, 2011).
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- ³⁸ Thomas X. Hammes, "War evolves into the fourth generation," *Global Insurgency and the Future of Armed Conflict*, ed. Terry Terriff, Aaron Karp and Regina Karp (New York:Routledge Global Security, 2008), 36.
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