

consequences of it would still the hands of most of the terrorist-minded who think themselves agents of a political ideal.

Codevilla is right that from the beginning we have feared the consequences of living up to our own rhetorical demands. If we truly set out to "declare war" on those who shelter terrorists, let alone dispatch them, we'd be at war all over the place. Call it a world war. We needed a manageable target, and Iraq was it. It is, I think, too late to generate what would have served us so well, strategic marksmanship. Codevilla was right. He usually is. Count on it.



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ANGELO CODEVILLA'S ESSAY "WHAT War?" dissected with characteristic brilliance the problems with the Bush Administration's response to the attacks of September 11th. The good news is that, since that critique was published several months ago, President Bush and his national security team have corrected some of the policy and strategic defects identified by Codevilla. The bad news is that they have not done so across the board.

First, consider the positive steps: In the months since "What War?" was written, the President's determination to remove Saddam Hussein from power has been formally and repeatedly declared. This decision reflects an appreciation not only that it was a grievous mistake to have allowed the Iraqi despot to remain in power eleven years ago but a belief that he will become a vastly more dangerous foe for the United States and its allies if not toppled forthwith.

Preparations to effect such a change of regime appear to be proceeding, involving military movements, diplomatic consultations, and other measures. This presidential direction reflects a decided departure from the notion that Codevilla has correctly ascribed to successive American governments—namely, that regional stability can only be achieved by preserving the status quo. If President Bush has his way, at least one Arab foe will be taken out before this war is over.

Equally important are the administration's recent pronouncements to the effect that the United States is no longer going to legitimate, work with, and otherwise prop up the so-called "reformers" in the Iranian government. If the President is also serious about helping the people of Iran achieve their liberation, the status quo in the Persian Gulf could be changed beyond recognition—and very much to the advantage of U.S. interests and those of others who cherish freedom.

In the past few months, President Bush has also taken important steps to counter the Arab bait-and-switch aimed at implicating this country in what Codevilla correctly calls "their war"—the long-running and relentless campaign to destroy Israel. By declaring that numerous, systemic political and leadership changes must precede the establishment of a Palestinian state and American recognition of same, Mr. Bush has created a new opportunity to return the focus of America's war back where it belongs.

Finally, there are, in addition to the foregoing, signs that the Saudi Arabians are losing the privileged status they have enjoyed and exploited in Washington over the past few decades. To be sure, this is partly a product of American popular revulsion at: the Saudis' involvement in the September 11 attacks; their lack of cooperation in investigating this and other acts of anti-U.S. terror; their support for suicide bombers in Israel and Wahhabist-sponsored recruitment, indoctrination, and terrorism elsewhere around the globe; the excessive influence exercised by the Saudi Ambassador Prince Bandar, the array of former U.S. officials and ambassadors on his payroll and the various subversive political, media, and ostensibly theological organizations they have created in this country over the past four decades; and the House of Saud's repressive, indeed Talibanesque, application of Sharia law against women, non-believers, and U.S. service personnel. Still, the sea-change is palpable and if not reversed will prove to be of enormous strategic import.

While these and similar steps are promising correctives to several of the serious policy defects Professor Codevilla identified a few months back, they will only contribute to a genuine victory in the present war if further actions are taken without delay. These include:

- Equipping, training, funding, and otherwise empowering the Iraqi National Congress to serve as an effective opposition umbrella group in Iraq—an essential ingredient to the liberation of that country and to giving it a chance for peace and stability post-Saddam.
- Providing whatever financial, informational, and material support is needed to help the Iranian people end the theocrats' misrule in Teheran.
- Working closely with non-Wahhabist Muslims in this country and abroad to counter the effects of that sect's virulent anti-American and anti-Western pedagogy and recruitment, while cutting off Saudi support for same.
- Taking the war in appropriate ways to all of our enemies, not just al-Qaeda.
- Complementing other defensive measures at home by building and deploying at once effective protection against ballistic missile attack.

To accomplish any, let alone all, of these prerequisites for victory in the war begun on September 11, the Bush Administration must adopt one of Angelo Codevilla's most trenchant recommendations: It must change not only "longstanding foreign policy priorities and intellectual habits, [but] the people who run U.S. intelligence and diplomacy." Only by staffing the State Department and CIA with individuals who want the President to succeed in the present war—and who are willing to help him do so—is there a chance of avoiding an outcome in which, when it is over, the question will be "What victory?"



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THERE IS LITTLE OF SUBSTANCE IN Angelo Codevilla's series on the terror war with which I would quibble. He is especially on target when he criticizes the whole concept of homeland security. He is also dead right when he formulates in his first installment the four attitudes that traditionally have informed the U.S. approach to the use of force.

The problem with the series is Codevilla's failure to give any consideration to prudence in the development and implementation of policy and strategy. This failure creates an unrelenting negativism that can only end in defeatism. Codevilla's apparent inability to distinguish between the Clinton and Bush administrations when it comes to international relations and the use of force is akin to suggesting in 1861 that there was no difference between the Buchanan and Lincoln administrations.

Indeed, Codevilla puts me in mind of nothing so much as the Radical Republicans who harried Lincoln throughout the Civil War. Eschewing prudence and ignoring the political conditions that Lincoln faced, they constantly criticized him for his timidity. But had they prevailed in forcing their policies on Lincoln, the Union cause most likely would have been lost in 1862.

We praise Lincoln for his prudence in navigating the minefields of American politics during the Civil War. President Bush deserves the same consideration. In accordance with the dictates of prudence, he, like Lincoln, has skillfully modified his policy in order to adapt to changing circumstances. This is not insignificant.

In fact, only a blind man could fail to note the substantial differences between the Bush and Clinton Administrations. Bush's State of the Union speech laid out a new foreign policy. The Bush Administration now has a declared policy



of regime change and preemption. And perhaps most significantly, President Bush, having “given peace a chance” in the Middle East, now essentially has thrown the weight of the United States behind Israel. In other words, President Bush has begun to implement all the policies that Codevilla advocated in his first article, albeit not as quickly as the good professor would like.

But that’s the point. For political reasons, President Bush was not able to effect these changes immediately any more than Lincoln was able to proclaim emancipation in 1861. Such a step surely would have led to the Union’s loss of Kentucky and Missouri—and possibly even Maryland. The political cost of precipitous action to President Bush likewise would have been high.

I don’t think I need to remind Codevilla that the essence of prudence is the ability to adapt the universal principle to particular circumstances. The right policy, as Codevilla argues, is to effect regime changes in states such as Iraq and to abandon the “evenhanded” approach to the Arab-Israeli dispute. But prudence dictates when and how the policy is to be implemented, which in turn depends a great deal on the circumstances.

For instance, Codevilla decries the fact that we have not yet attacked Iraq. But he must know that current conditions, mostly having to do with weather, climate, and the “tyranny of distance,” do not favor military action for a few more months. Precipitous action in the gulf would be as risky as an Allied attempt to invade Europe would have been in 1942 or 1943.

An insistence upon rapid action also ignores the greatest military advantage the United States possesses—dominance of the world’s “commons,” *viz.*, the sea, space, and air. This advantage means that the United States does not have to strike rapidly. We can bide our time until conditions are optimal. We don’t need to risk precipitous action.

Codevilla also ignores some other points. To begin with, he seems adamant that there is a single response to terrorism. But as the Prussian “philosopher of war” Carl von Clausewitz wrote over a century and a half ago, “The first, the supreme, the most far-reaching act of judgment 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. This is the first of all strategic questions and the most comprehensive.” But it is also the most difficult because the answer ultimately depends on the interaction of the belligerents. Since both sides can adapt and change, the kind of war we will be fighting will not necessarily remain constant but will be mutable and may change as conditions change.

Finally, Codevilla seems to believe that his

proposals will assure a final victory. But surely he is familiar with what Clausewitz had to say about the finality of war: “...even the ultimate outcome of a war is not always to be regarded as final. The defeated state often considers the outcome merely as a transitory evil, for which a remedy may still be found in political conditions at some later date.”

Codevilla is fond of citing Machiavelli. Perhaps, in the political context of a democratic republic, he should think more in terms of Aristotle. The issue is not the right policy, but when it is prudent to implement it.



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ANGELO CODEVILLA’S CRITIQUE OF THE American government’s response to the attacks of September 11 is the most intellectually formidable of any I have seen. There is no disagreeing with much of what he says about the weaknesses of the CIA and the FBI; about some of the methods by which the administration has thus far been trying to make us more secure; and about the confusion that has resulted from its original misconceptions regarding the nature of the Arab regimes and the war they have been waging against Israel.

Yet in Codevilla’s own opinion, even if the CIA and the FBI were perfect, we would still remain vulnerable to terrorist assault. “There will surely be more attacks, and of increasing seriousness,” Codevilla assures us, including “suicide bombings on American streets.”

Yes; and yet, as of late July, none of this has (thank God) materialized. It is a great puzzle, and despite much strenuous lucubration I have been unable to come up with a persuasive explanation. Perhaps, then, for all the missteps our government has taken in this area, it has been doing something right. Perhaps enough terrorist “sleepers” in the United States have been arrested to frustrate their immediate designs. And perhaps the grilling of all those prisoners in Guantanamo has yielded information that has further hampered such designs.

But Codevilla not only ridicules the Bush Administration’s “homeland security” measures as ineffective; he also casts a cold eye on its conduct of the war abroad. In his judgment, the campaign in Afghanistan has taken on the wrong enemy in the wrong place for the wrong reasons and by the wrong means.

Here again, however, even granting some of his criticisms, perhaps this campaign actually has disrupted the terrorist network, and perhaps

those daisy cutters have sufficiently frightened the state sponsors of terrorism to induce second thoughts about the desirability of other operations that were in the offing. The terrorist dog that has not (yet!) barked would strongly suggest that this indeed is what has been accomplished by the pursuit of al-Qaeda and the toppling of the Taliban.

I am wholeheartedly with Codevilla when he asserts that we ought to “kill” the regimes in Iraq, Syria, and the PLO, which together “are the effective cause of global terrorism” (though I cannot fathom why he omits Iran and its satellite Lebanon from this list or, for that matter, our putative “friends” Saudi Arabia and Egypt, both of whom have incited and financed Palestinian suicide bombing). I am with him, too, when he adds that we should destroy these regimes “as quickly as possible” by capturing their leaders and then subjecting them to punishments ranging from execution to imprisonment to banishment from public life—just as we did with the Nazis.

But I part company with Codevilla entirely when he tells us that in the highly unlikely event that we were to do all this, our best course would then be to pack up and go home. So long as the successor regimes do not make war on us, he declares, it is none of our business how they govern themselves. The “kind of political reconstruction we performed in Germany and Japan” is out because “what happens in Iraq is simply not as important to us as the internal developments of Germany and Japan were.”

Yet Codevilla never explains why the character of the successor regimes in Iraq, Syria, and the Palestinian Authority would be of no great concern to the United States. In any case, I strongly disagree with his view. I would remind Codevilla of his own observation that the Middle East as it exists today was created not by Allah but by the West after the First World War. From this much else follows along with our right to get rid of a bunch of murderers and thugs who have now turned on us.

Indeed, as against Codevilla, I would argue that, having helped these criminals assume and keep power, we now also have a right and a responsibility to leave behind a better system. And by “better” I, unlike Codevilla, mean more than merely a group of regimes that will be afraid to threaten us again. I mean a system that will at least contain the potentiality for an evolution toward democracy and economic health. If necessary, we should ensure that this happens precisely the way we did in Germany and Japan: through temporary imperial control that would clear enough political space for the sprouting of indigenous alternatives.

Codevilla is convinced that even if so grand an ambition were attainable, the American peo-