Executive Summary of the conclusion of Violent *Politics: A History of Insurgency, Terrorism & Guerrilla Warfare from the American Revolution to Iraq.* By William R. Polk, to be published on September 15, 2007 by HarperCollins. This summary was prepared at the request of both Democratic and Republican members of Congress on July 4, 2007.

Fighting insurgencies is enormously expensive in both lives and treasure. In Iraq, nearly 3,500 American servicemen and women have lost their lives and at least 25,000 have been wounded of whom half will never fully recover and many will spend the rest of their lives in hospitals. About one in five soldiers who served in Iraq has been "at least partly disabled." More than one in three of the 500,000 Marines and soldiers sent there over the past four years needed mental health treatment. Neurologists predict that hundreds of thousands more – at least one in each three soldiers who have engaged in combat for four months or longer – will suffer blindness, deafness and/or mental impairment from concussions. Many others will possibly develop cancer and/or will conceive children who will be born with severe defects because of exposure to the depleted uranium used in artillery shells and bombs. Crassly put, the walking wounded will not only be unable fully to contribute to American society but will be a burden on it.

The monetary costs are great and rising. Current costs are running at more than $7.1 billion a month --$10 million an hour – and are rising more than 20% a year. The *direct* costs of the war are expected to rise shortly to at least $700 billion. But this outlay is only the tip of the iceberg. According to Nobel Prize Laureate economist Joseph Stiglitz and former Assistant Secretary of Commerce Linda Bilmes, the *real* cost to America, as it would be figured by standard accounting methods, is between one and two *trillion* dollars.

What have these costs bought? No well-informed observer believes that the war in Iraq is approaching success by any definition. As the historical record makes clear, any increase in numbers is less likely to overawe the natives than to provide more targets. In fact, the Iraqi insurgency appears to be gaining rather than losing power. Even the most protected area in Iraq, the "Green Zone," is under almost constant attack and the insurgency is now self-financing. Is there "light at the end of the tunnel?" No. The new senior American commander, General Odierno, believes that, under President Bush's new strategy, the war will last for years.

Is there some new magic formula for success? Generals David Petraeus and James Amos argue that there is. They have laid out a counterinsurgency doctrine. (December 2006 *Counterinsurgency Field Manual*). But it is not new. When tried in Vietnam, it did not work. As Petraeus and Amos admit, the key element in insurgency is political: "each side aims to get the people to accept its governance or authority as legitimate." Is this a feasible objective for foreigners? One searches the historical record in vain for an example of success. The foreign occupying force, by definition, is alien. Vietnam showed that even when the aliens (us) had a numerous and established local ally (the South Vietnamese

government) that ally was more apt to be alienated by its association with the foreign military force than that force was to be "Vietnamized" by their native ally. In sum, *the single absolutely necessary ingredient in counterinsurgency is extremely unlikely ever to be available to foreigners*.

Can we not, therefore, "Iraqize" the war? We tried in Vietnam to "Vietnamize" that war by empowering the South Vietnam Government. But there, and elsewhere, natives always see such action as facades behind which foreigners stay – as the British did in Iraq. So the foreign-supported governments are not supported and have little power. We saw this in Vietnam and are already seeing it in Iraq and Afghanistan. No insurgency has been defeated in this way for at least the last century. In fact, trying this ploy in Vietnam, and gradually withdrawing over four years, cost an additional 21,000 American lives.

What about "the war on terror" beyond Iraq? Little public attention is paid to Afghanistan or – so far – to Somalia and the Philippines. Another campaign is in the advanced positioning stage against Iran. Others are being discussed for various parts of Africa and at least one for Latin America. The men who designed the current Bush administration foreign policy, the neoconservatives, have called the combination of these campaigns "the long war" and have predicted – indeed proposed – that they will last half a century. Going down this path will result in thousands of American dead and tens of thousands crippled, will severely strain American democratic institutions at home and further erode America's reputation abroad. The monetary costs have been estimated at 15 *trillion* dollars.

Is this just a nightmare? In the spring of 2006, before he left office, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld approved three plans to fight the "long war" beyond Iraq and Afghanistan. One, the "Special Operations Command (SOC)," is now composed of 53,000 men and operates on a budget in 2007 of $8 billion. It has already dispatched teams of Special Forces to some 20 American embassies in Latin America, Africa and the Middle East. These teams operate separately from the embassies and are not subject to control by the senior civilian American representatives, the ambassadors, as they engage in covert warfare not only against groups regarded as terrorist but even against states. Although these SOC teams could bring America into war with any number of countries, they are treated by the Bush administration as not subject to Congressional oversight or decision.

So what if we get out of Iraq" Will this not be seen as a major defeat and so encourage our enemies? The answer depends in large part on how intelligent we are and how carefully we act. Consider three possible courses of action: 1) *staying the course* (as we did in Vietnam for four additional years) did not give us victory but humiliation when we were finally forced out; 2) *precipitate withdrawal without compensatory action* will not *create* chaos but will leave behind in Iraq the existing chaos. That is to be avoided to the degree still possible; and (3) *getting out on an orderly schedule* sufficiently rapidly to convince

the Iraqis that they must pick up the pieces and *with a carefully constructed program* that will help them to do so. (This is what former Senator George McGovern and I laid out in detail, with cost estimates, timetable and evaluation of success in *Out of Iraq: A Practical Plan for Withdrawal Now,* published by Simon & Schuster at the end of 2006.) This is *still the only available plan that addresses how to do it.*

What happens if we do not get out of Iraq? Quite simply, the war will continue. Casualties will mount. As Generals Robert G. Gard and John H. Johns summarized, "What is worse than soldiers dying in vain is even more soldiers dying in vain." Vast amounts of money will be wasted. And sooner or later, probably in the next election, the American public will revolt against the Congress it has elected. Then we are apt to be forced to "cut and run" as in Vietnam.

What happens to our "war on terror if we get out of Iraq? The Bush administration's current plan, the March 6, 2006 U.S. National Security Policy, is virtually a declaration of war against any state we believe could rival us. This is not just rhetoric: it is made up of operational plans, dedicated military personnel, operating from nearly 400 existing foreign bases with pre-positioned weapons and sustained by an already allocated budget. In the face of what they see, many countries that are not our enemies and which do not favor terrorism, have come to fear us. Only those who think they can deter us feel safe.. Thus, the policy promotes acquisition of weapons of mass destruction, preparation for anti-American guerrilla warfare and, where feasible, terrorism and does so precisely among those about which we are most worried. Getting out of Iraq soon and constructively could be the first step in recapturing the respect and cooperation America has traditionally enjoyed. It is a step long overdue and for the national interest should be taken soon.

Advance comments on *Violent Politics:*

"There will be few more important books for the next president of the United States to read than William Polk's *Violent Politics* -- a brilliant comparative analysis by an experienced American scholar-diplomat of insurgent movements over three centuries. The conclusion of Polk's study is devastating, and can affect the politics of 2008."
John Brademas, President Emeritus, New York University, former member for twenty-two years of the U.S. House of Representatives

"Dr. Polk's book is a vivid illustration of how, time after time, major military powers have failed in their objectives because they became viewed as occupiers."
Congressman John Murtha (D-Pa) is chairman of the House Appropriations Defense Subcommittee,

"This wise history-grounded book analyzes a dozen guerrilla wars from the American Revolution to Iraq, and in a brilliant conclusion, Dr. Polk lays out the enormous human and financial costs of trying to impose a foreign solution on people who do not want to be controlled by outsiders. A must-read for all thinking Americans."

Former Senator George S. McGovern

"Based on impressive research and decades of professional experience, Dr. Polk compares a dozen or more insurgencies of the past two centuries. He concludes that they share a universal characteristic--opposition to foreign rulers…Polk's book is full of arresting analogies and adroit comparisons, ranging over several continents, as occupiers confront terrorists."
Thomas L. Hughes, Former Assistant Secretary of State for Intelligence and Research, President Emeritus of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace

"William Polk's masterful and succinct history of eleven insurgent wars is the best available antidote to the U.S. counterinsurgency strategy in Iraq that de-couples war and politics. Polk re-couples them through the prism of historical experience."
William E. Odom, Lieutenant General, USA, Retired

"This is a 'must-read' for all U.S. policy-makers, the media, and the general public, if we are to get American foreign policy back on track and prevent the misnamed 'Global War on Terror' from destroying what defines us affirmatively, as Americans, in the global community."
Congresswoman Lynn Woolsey (D-Ca), is a member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee.

"William Polk, in a sweeping insightful review of the history of insurgencies (back to the American Revolution), explains why and how those who come to be seen as occupiers and oppressors invariably fail."
Dr. Landrum Bolling, former president of the Lilly Foundation, Director-at-Large, Mercy Corps.

"Absolutely superb."
John V. Whitbeck, Noted international lawyer and author.

"William Polk's book is particularly relevant for Americans today to better understand the reactions of foreign nations to American foreign policy initiatives."
John Gunther Dean, former Regional Director in Vietnam of CORDS and US ambassador to the Khmer Republic, Denmark, Lebanon, Thailand, and India.

"With an extensive global look at the history of insurgency – and its tactics of terrorism and guerrilla warfare –
Violent Politics provokes informed dialogue and a re-evaluation *of* American policy toward extremist threats. A critical read."
Congressman Walter Jones (R-NC) is a member of the House Armed Services Committee.