

Mobilizing for a Long War

by John Hibbs¹

The purpose of this commentary is to offer a Ten Point Plan which promotes increasing access to education in settings where classroom underpinnings are pluralism, human rights and the rule of law. The Plan is meant to be adopted as part of a campaign in support of the war on terrorism. Mainly, it's for private citizens who wish to reduce the conditions that foster terrorism; for the leaders of membership groups involved in health, education and job training; for those in the business of English language instruction; and for the education cum technology community.

Personally, I strongly hold the position that the path to a safer, saner world runs through the classroom, not the carrier. The Institute I work for hosts an event called Global Learn Day — “The Earth Day of Education.”² Its mission is to increase access to education by showcasing exceptional activities which enhance enterprise through knowledge acquisition. One part of the Ten Point Plan is to seek wider support of Global Learn Day³. Therefore this disclaimer.

I'm Terrified

I'm terrified we're going to lose the war on terrorism.

I'm terrified for the same reasons I was terrified about Vietnam. Not until we shipped home 50,000 body bags and shattered millions of lives did we come to understand that Vietnam was about

colonialism and nationalism, not the Cold War. By misunderstanding that battlespace⁴ we used weapons which were not only ineffective militarily, but speeded enemy recruitment, encouraged Hanoi to endure, and split the country at home. Some argue we have never completely recovered.

Such mistakes are not new. In the 30's the French spent

themselves broke with the Maginot Line then lulled themselves into the belief all was safe. Before Hitler's crash into Poland and his Belgium end-run, few understood the power of a speedy tank. Bye bye fixed defenses.



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⁴ Battlespace is a reasonably new word common within today's Pentagon...and a good one. It helps to guide planners into remembering that the battle, or the war, takes place on a “field” (battlespace) much, much larger than “just” where there is actual fighting. In today's media hungry world billions of television viewers can be taken instantly to the battleground.

The lethality that small planes could inflict on large ships wasn't apparent until Midway. After that, bye bye battleship.

The point is that in every war there are important lessons not the least of which is that weapons used successfully in the last war may not be worth a lick in the next one. For the war in which we are now involved I submit the chief lesson is that those who believe that armed force, alone, will win this war are terribly misguided. Equally incorrect are those who say that armed force is not sometimes appropriate. Our spear must be intelligent, flexible and multi-pronged. No matter how sharp is any single prong, that prong, alone, won't get the job done.

However, which ever way we turn there's still a damn good chance someday American hospitals and American cemeteries will be full of victims of terrorists. No, let me correct that. The sad truth is that no matter which direction is taken by those allied with pluralism, rule of law and human rights, any country, anywhere, could have their hospitals and their cemeteries filled with victims of demented criminals who wish to return the planet to 4th century barbarism.

Left or right, hawk or dove, profit maker or altruist, Christian, Jew, Moslem, Buddhist or atheist, all those who seek a safer, saner world are in the same boat.

Thinking Different

If ever there was a war where an advertising tag line was worth contemplation, it is Apple's — "Think different". The war on terrorism is complex and hugely multidimensional. In this one, battleships don't count a nickel; Maginot Line defenses, like the missile shield, won't keep dirty bombs from blowing up San Francisco — or Santiago. While a Triton sub can track a raft at a ten thousand yards, it's useless for finding Osama bin Laden; and of little help even if we want to blow up Baghdad, Pyongyang or Teheran.



Lessons for today, drawn from the past

There are some wonderful lessons on what we did right in WWII. Here's the best one — brilliant mobilization.

Largely, we won WWII because we mobilized all our resources with startling efficiency. America's leadership

called for sacrifices and the entire population responded. Then we cemented alliances worldwide, including the Soviets — and the rest is history.

From 1935 to 1945 the Americans went from the depths of the depression to an economic powerhouse almost unimaginable. We built a military from rag tag to the most powerful on earth. When it was all over we then gave

sufficiently to the Germans and the Japanese so they could rebuild in a way where both countries adopted an economic and political model based on enterprise, pluralism, human rights, rule of law. And the rest is also history.

Of course we were lucky too. We had two big oceans to protect us. Plus Hitler made some crucial mistakes not the least of which was his failure to use Jewish scientists for A-bomb delivery. The mandatory new lesson — not yet fully understood much less adopted worldwide — is that organized brainpower outflanks organized firepower.

In the 21st century innovation, knowledge sharing, community development and hyperlinks are the essential ingredients. These are salted everywhere within my Ten Point Plan.

The very good news is we know what works — and what doesn't.

What works is societal application of the fundamentals: pluralism; human rights; rule of law; merit based advancement. What works is

motivated leadership within societies willing to make hard choices from the bad ways of the past to the good ways of the future. From the **outside** what works is a combination of gradualism, diplomacy, economic and military assistance, and help in the formation of moderate governance. And patience.⁵ In bucket loads.

From the **inside** what works is modern leadership, updated training and patience. Also in bucket loads.

All this is assisted by mobilization and recruiting drives no less urgent than that of WWII. No country should be left behind.

The Power of the Internet

What's brand new? What's new — and what's unbelievably terrific — is the Internet. One of the killer applications of the Net is that Web

based technology makes it possible to easily and affordably coordinate the activities of very large groups with very few people. The other killer application is distance education.⁶ Both go to the heart of this Ten Point Plan.



⁵ I encourage Stewart Brand's *The Clock of the Long Now*. In a nano second world, it's nearly impossible to think even in terms of decades, which in this war, we must. But if Mr. Brand can make a case for a clock that will last ten thousand years, surely we can make a case for a ten year strategy based on proliferating pluralism, human rights and rule of law.

⁶ John Chambers, Chief Executive Officer, CISCO, repeatedly states — the “killer application” of the Internet is education.

Without the Internet, we really would be up Stink Creek. With it, our chances improve — by about a 500 million times.⁷

Nope, none of this guarantees the end of terrorism; not even of the home grown variety, ala Oklahoma City. But a close view of the world's landscape confirms what we all know.

Societies which have adopted American fundamental cornerstones are far less likely to have terrorists than closed ones run from the top.

And nope, we will never capture every terrorist.

But we stand a good chance at wiping out their networks if we improve the economic landscape where most of them reside. That landscape must be shaped by the common denominators of pluralism, human rights, the rule of law and merit-based-advancement.

These are the seeds that must be sown to win the war on terror. From their roots come healthy societies which accept the promise of tomorrow and discard the fantasy of the past.

How will we know when we are on the right track? One way will be when Al Jazeera begins to broadcast programs which explain why Ben Franklin's portrait is printed on one hundred dollar bills. Over there they know as well as we do that money talks and b.s. walks.

If enterprise, commerce, rising pay checks, and rising school attendance are not worked into the equation, you can also color this war lost.

Yes, this plan depends on plenty of altruism. But its bottom line is the agenda of those who we must seriously enlist — the profit makers. They are the ones with engines which can lift all boats. They know better than most that education and

purchasing power are tied together like bride and groom. Without one there cannot be another.

Now to the plan.



⁷ 500 million is approximately the number now on line. Only a tiny fraction are the Very Bad Guys.

Here's the Plan, in thumbnails⁸.

1. Mobilize Our Teachers

There are more than 3,000,000 teachers in America. Drawing from the lessons of two world wars, we should mobilize them in a way where they understand they are an exceptionally important element in a war we can't avoid and must win. We need them because they know the value of bright minds and how to illuminate dark shadows. They know that the driver to wealth creation is education; that failure is not an option. Reinforcing this message is a million times more important than warnings to kids about duct tape or what color is the alert issued from Washington. Their contribution is crucial because from their pool we can recruit both the leadership and the front line volunteers needed to make other parts of this Plan work. We can reach these teachers affordably, by email; and those we "deputize" can work from home. The first step is to point them to a web sites where their kids can experience the joy of being part of something bigger than themselves. The next step is to enlist them in contests to build web sites where what is lit up are the bright lights of education.

2. Mobilize Madison Avenue

Education is big business and the kingpins of Madison Avenue have clients who know that educated people make the best customers. We need to induce those kingpins to create campaigns which they can sell to clients — ones where education is the main theme but money is the bottom line.



For starters, let's point them to the WWII recruiting posters like Uncle Sam pointing his finger and says: "I want you!"⁹ The centerpiece of their craftsmanship will be that this war has to be won in classrooms of a kind that make for good customers. These slicksters know how to promote effectively, both at home and abroad. And they know how to make a buck doing it.

The Ad Council is a good place to start.¹⁰

⁸ "Such a strategy will not cure the region's political problems. Nor will it substitute for security policy in the campaign against terrorist groups. But history gives little reason to be confident that either a politics-only approach to Middle East peacemaking, or a military-only approach to terrorism, can succeed." Charlene Barshefsky. U.S. Trade Representative, Clinton Administration. www.nytimes.com/2003/02/22/opinion/22BARS.html

⁹ 64.95.118.51/images/opti/d7/10/63505650080-11125-1-151-resized200.jpg

¹⁰ www.adcouncil.org/

3. Mobilize Membership Groups

Whether it's AARP or the National Rifle Association, The Peace Corps or Planned Parenthood, every single "high minded" membership group should be recruited to help fight this war. Part of the Plan is to make it easy to tie fundraising, education and the agenda of the participating group in one easy-to-use package. If we do it right, as we can with the new technology tools, hundreds of membership groups will come on board. Through them we can reach millions. If we keep our headlights focused on promoting pluralism, human rights and rule of law through the vehicle of the classroom, here and abroad, who will not support the effort?

4. Mobilize the Department of Commerce — and the SBA

Technology has now made education the fastest growing export product in the country — as every university in America is well aware. We need to seek those inside the business world who can work imaginatively to help universities export their institution, professors their classes, trainers their expertise. All of the tools are in place. What is needed is modest funding and strong leadership. That can be found by way of membership groups

with whom we ally and the corporations with whom those groups have close contact. These are the people who know how to operate the machinery of the SBA. That agency has funds earmarked to support exports of intellectual property. We should start with presidents of trading companies, the World Trade Association, and AARP — from whom we can tap the energies and brain power of retired executives. In this part of the Plan the battle cry is exports, opportunity and commerce.



5. Mobilize the Technology Vendors

Nobody has a larger commercial stake in all of this than those who are directly involved in technology. A good example is distance

education, which underpins much of this Plan.¹¹ Thousands of vendors have a direct interest in more servers, more bandwidth use, greater software application. The mobilization itself is best undertaken using the tools provided by the technology community. It is also keenly in their interest to ensure that military purchases go heavier to software and smart hardware, than to subs, stealths and big tanks. It matters little if they are selling technology for application in the foxhole or factory, classroom or living room. All of them have

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a huge stake in winning this war. They will help us if our appeal is friendly to their bottom line.

6. Mobilize The English Language Network

The world's network is glued by English ... which makes English language instruction in hot demand. Proof? More than 400,000 Americans work abroad teaching English. What's crucial about this is that inside those ESL classrooms are the Movers and Shakers of the next generation. Equally important, those (foreign) students are sure-handed guides to the leadership of their community. When you visit Shanghai or Singapore or Santiago or São Paulo and you want to meet the mayor or port manager or big factory owner or telephone provider, take a few bucks, grab an ESL teacher and the introductions come easy.

Implementing this part of the Plan calls for imaginative models which tie Madison Avenue, public and investor relations, the import-export community, ESL instructors in a common cause. Hard stuff. But the leadership exists if we our call is urgent and our appeal compelling. As it is.

7. Mobilize an Education Corps — we call them Champions¹³

Spring boarding from Point Six, and borrowing heavily from the Peace Corps, “we” should form The Education Corps.¹⁴ For less than the cost of one tank this Corps could be seeded sufficiently to put 50,000 Education Corps members abroad within two years. Within five years that Corps could have a million

persons working overseas. After the initial seeding, this can be accomplished without one more dime from the government.

Note this also. The value of the Education Corps is double barreled. While abroad Corps members can teach English, “sell” pluralism, human rights and the rule of law. They can help recruit foreign students to enroll in distance education programs and full degree programs. They can help man radio stations, be

involved in public relations and provide export assistance. With these experiences, and others, they will gain the skills and international contacts that employers pay high wages to attract.



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¹² Volunteers and affordable leaders in each of these areas can be found through intelligent data mining of those who visit the CandlePower site.

¹³ www.bfranklin.edu/champions

¹⁴ www.bfranklin.edu

Plus, they will have a lifetime experience of a transcendent kind. All of this is invaluable if in the years ahead we are to stay at the leading edge of innovation — where export business and overseas contacts are crucial.

8. Help Light Up Global Learn Day

Let's all promote Global Learn Day, "the Earth Day of Education". Its mission is to improve access to education by showcasing exceptional activities in 24 time zones. Participation is easy with attendance available by desktop or in twelve global cities. This event is augmented 365 days a year by the Global Learning Orchestra which "performs all year, but performs best" on Global Learn Day. Think of Global Learn Day like Earth Day ... and just as important.

9. Mobilize Community Radio

There are more than 85,000 community radio stations, worldwide. About one-third of them have English language programs. Almost half have in their charter the requirement to broadcast "educational" programs. Already the Voice of

America carries English language instruction to 5,000,000 Chinese listeners. Health and training messages are broadcast daily, worldwide, to millions from the BBC, CBC, Dutch Radio, Radio Australia, One World, Interworld and within the ARMARC network. We should mobilize an effort which ties broadcasts which have practical tips to improve daily living with underpinnings which promote pluralism, human

rights and the rule of law. American college radio is a good place to find the leadership for this activity. It's also part of the work that can be undertaken by members of the Education Corps.

10. Mobilize Hollywood

Nobody has more "reach" than those who work in Hollywood. Not Mandela or Havel, Blair, Clinton or Bush. Screen stars love being celebrities and they will love the opportunity to

serve in what is almost certainly the toughest war America ever fought. This is their chance to enlist. We need to deputize them, give them a script and let them do their thing. They already have a very big stage.



¹⁵ A good example is found here: www.radionetwork.dk/radioprofil.htm.

Summary

In summary, we are concerned that what the government is doing is inadequate, even counter-productive. What we don't need is a Maginot Line defense fixated on a strategy of containment, capture, incarceration, brute force, occupation, and homeland defense. All defensive. If this were football, their play book would have pages full of more tackle drills and interception methodology. Not much about the forward pass or the run. And nothing at all about getting the maximum from the crowd.

If that's the strategy — and I think it is — we could lose this war.

I say we won't win this war by tackling quicker. We won't win it by the occasional interception of a terrorist at the border. Nor will we win it by regime changes that don't have our shared convictions throughout the realm.

And we sure as heck won't win it from 35,000 feet.

We will win it if we think as creatively as Franklin, George Marshall and those who invented the

Internet. As in WWII, we have to recruit like crazy and then execute teamwork practices using all the new tools. The difference is this time those we enlist will carry text books and laptops; their battleground will be the classroom. When they

come home their largest satisfaction will come internally, not from a Victory Parade. Their leadership will come from thousands who serve "behind the lines", most of them coming from membership groups involved in the Plan. From top to bottom, all share the passionate conviction that wealth creation and long term sustainability comes from agreement in what Ben Franklin said long ago: "*An investment in knowledge always makes the best return.*"

Together the drum they beat will be this one: The path to a safer, saner world runs through classrooms

where pluralism, human rights and rule of law are the cornerstones. It's a message we should beat like a drum in every city and every hamlet in the world. It's our Call to Arms against fanatic barbarism. Not with bombs or bullets, but with the urgent ring of the Liberty Bell, 21st Century style.

With that message, and what's at stake, who would not want to enlist?

