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Letter to the Editor: Other Responses to '4th Generation'

Robert J. Bunker
Claremont Graduate University

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Other Responses to '4th Generation'

□ "Fourth Generation Warfare: Another Look" (MCG, Dec94) suggests how potentially defenseless our country is if confronted by organized terrorist threats. Consider a worst case scenario: Islamic fundamentalists teamed with inner-city drug terrorists, marrying the fanaticism of the former with the violence of the latter.

Could this bring down the country? Maybe. It would surely tear apart our major metropolitan areas already saturated with violence and disintegration and would likely seep to the suburbs.

In any event, I don't see an immediate role for the Military Services or a public demanding more from the Armed Forces. Low-intensity conflict describes the challenge, as the authors observe, and serious training against a "domestic" threat itself might precipitate a Constitutional crisis.

In the meantime, nothing will be done out of respect to political correctness. If the need arises, Marines and others might indeed become "rent-a-cops," but I doubt that without training or doctrine they would be very effective.

I was astounded to see this issue raised, but after the World Trade Center bombing, we should all be concerned about the next step. The pieces are in place now. It merely takes the energy of a single, charismatic fanatic to put the puzzle together. My appreciation and respect of all involved in bringing this explosive issue forward.

**LtCol Charles A. Krohn,
U.S. Army (Ret)**

□ "Fourth Generation Warfare: Another Look" (MCG, Dec94) contained some very disturbing statements that must be addressed. At one point, the authors claim, "... that the Bosnian Muslims are strategically on the offensive, beginning a new Islamic thrust toward the Danube." Anyone who could come to this conclusion while watching the daily reports of atrocities committed against the Muslim citizens of Bosnia has evidently suffered a break with reality. More worrisome still is the authors' implication that by opposing Serbian annihilation of Bosnian Muslims, America is admitting to a "cultural death wish." Since when has the propagation of atrocities in defense of one's culture been a part of the Judeo-Christian ethic? Following Lind, Schmitt, and Wilson's logic, Hitler's attack upon the Jews in defense of his view of "German culture" was wholly justified.

Rather than delineating a way for America to avoid such a Balkanization, the authors instead prophesy that we will fragment into a seditious blood bath of region versus region, minority versus minority. Lind, et al., ought instead to redefine their paradigms in order to enrich American pluralism (remember "e pluribus unum"?) rather than precipitating conflicts through self-fulfilling prophecies born out of their own misunderstandings of other cultures. For example, the "traditional Judeo-Christian culture" referred to is far more akin to Islam than Lind, et al. perhaps care to admit (all are related by their sharing of the concepts of one God (Abraham's),

accountability for one's actions, and the Golden Rule).

I hope that the attitudes displayed toward Islam and Muslims in Lind, et al.'s article will find less favor in America than Serbia (where they are already firmly entrenched). My children's future relies upon it, and upon a Marine Corps capable of seeing past "what is" to "what ought to be."

Nadir Alan El-Farra

□ The reappraisal by Lind et al. of their work 5 years after its initial publication was from my perspective a disappointment. Instead of breaking new ground, they basically reaffirmed and further supported their initial viewpoint by outlining their idea-based Fourth Generation of modern war and its linkages to Martin van Creveld's book *The Transformation of War*.

My challenge to their commentary is that Fourth Generation warfare theory, while better defining the multifaceted threats facing the United States, offers little, if anything, in the way of constructive guidance on what should be done to counter it. Without some sort of partial blueprint for the future, their theory will soon outlive its utility as a wake up call for the Armed Services.

This said, I would like to clear up one misnomer in Lind et al.'s article. The struggle we are witnessing is one between terrorist/LIC (low-intensity conflict) (i.e., non-Western) and modern warfare, not between terrorist/LIC and advanced technology warfare. Only the very early material attributes of advanced technology warfare exist at this time, as witnessed by the

fielding of cruise-missile and informational technologies.

Regardless of this fact, in the Western versus non-Western confrontation as these authors noted, we are currently at an extreme disadvantage and tend to lose. Until both American political and military perceptions change, our recent disappointing experiences in operations other than war (OOTW) will continue to be the norm and not the exception.

Dr. Robert J. Bunker

□ Two things bothered me about "Fourth Generation Warfare: Another Look." First, it appears the authors want us to go back to the bad old days when we unflinchingly propped up every regime that was pro-us and anti-them, regardless of whether the regime provided even the barest level of human rights. That policy gave us modern day Iran, and much of sub-Saharan Africa, perhaps our biggest military threats over the next generation.

Further, the authors simplistically argue that the central reason nations become balkanized is because of cultural collisions, when it is the inequities committed by one or more dominant national groups against another that set the stage for conflict.

The second problem I have with the article is the suggestion that we are heading for a balkanized Marine Corps by tolerating "multiculturalism." That's just plain wrong. To require, whether explicitly or implicitly, that our fellow Marines (or our fellow Americans) be just like us is to invite the divisiveness the authors warn of.

Reginald J. Ghiden