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Harlan K. Ullman, **Finishing Business: Ten Steps to Defeat Global Terror**, Annapolis:Naval Institute Press, 2004. 241 pp.

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Ironically enough, Step #1 is to take ‘Terror’ out of the ‘War on Terror’ and replace it with “Jihadist extremism”. So we must assume the title of this book itself is there to either act as a “powerful sound bite” as well, or tacitly acknowledge the Gordian strategic, political and perhaps cultural complexities which, despite our best efforts, still best define this conflict. Even Britain’s Home Secretary, John Reid, has stated that “To counter radicalisation as a nation we need not only to tackle the immediate dangers but put in place the concept, doctrine, laws and capabilities for a challenge we expect will last a generation,” (1 October, 2006, London Times). *Finishing Business* succeeds in offering its readers a fairly comprehensive foundation for a U.S.-based doctrine. But doctrine it remains; this work alone has undergone a dizzying succession of changes, from Ullman’s original *Unfinished Business: Afghanistan, the Middle East, and Beyond—Defusing the Dangers That Threaten America’s Security* (Citadel Press, 2002) to his Author’s Note dated March 1, 2004, and an Epilogue presumably from May. Throw in a Foreword by Newt Gingrich (who has recently published *Getting America Right: The True Conservative Values Our Nation Needs Today*) and an Afterword by former General Wesley Clarke (author of *Winning Modern Wars: Iraq, Terrorism and the American Empire*, and a leading Democrat to boot), and you have a whole host of very good ideas, desperately trying to keep up with history in the making.

Among these are Steps 4, 5, 6, and 7, calling for slight reorganizations of the relationship of Congress and the Executive branch of government. This is to cut down on short-term ‘partisan politics’, yet particularly to “mandate that the executive branch more fully disclose how it waging this war on terror...tolerating the deaths of more of its citizens in a distant war.” It also calls for the expansion of the National Defense University into a ‘National Security’ one. So while national defense is to be ever expanded and integrated at the federal, state and local levels, its control is to be further disseminated, or at least subject to ‘oversight’. This is what Ullman calls “[g]etting the balance right” of pursuing a long, major struggle while retaining our civil liberties. The risk today of losing the latter, he argues, is even greater than in the World Wars because “there will be no discrete and clear armistice on the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month or a document of unconditional surrender signed on the teak deck of a great battleship in Tokyo Harbor. Nor are there any metrics to define success and failure and victory and defeat.”

An even larger contradiction might be at work here, however. Another analysis of the War on Terror (call it what we will), *War Footing: 10 Steps America Must Take to Prevail in the War for the Free World* (also Naval Institute Press, 2006), by Frank J. Gaffney and his Center for Security Policy, likewise declares that the enemy indeed has a face, and a specific agenda to be countered. “Make no mistake about it: There are new totalitarians today. In this book we call them Islamofascists, who, together with their friends and allies, are every bit as determined as their predecessors to destroy the Free World.” By comparison these Steps are much more military, or at least much less political. Take that as you will. Step #10 includes, for example, “Recruit Academia”. More to the historical point, after all, is not the World War against the fascist, Axis Powers, but “the last great struggle against a hostile ideology with global ambitions—the Cold War...” Here too, there was no formal surrender, and the struggle lasted a generation. (And few seem to miss Soviet-Communism ever since...) The flip-side of the Cold War, moreover, was the Counter-Cultural movement of the 1960s; a response to both M.A.D. and Containment, in an era of post-colonialism. Thus:

Taxpayers, of course, are underwriting the academic industry that actively discourages American students from properly understanding, let alone contributing to, the War for the Free World. Indeed, many of the professors who benefit most from Title VI [of the 1965 Higher Education Act] funding have made no secret of their hostility toward this country’s government, its polices and, in some flagrant cases, their sympathies for our foes. And these professors routinely use their bully pulpit to preach politics.

As long as our students are imbued...with an education grounded in radical anti-Americanism, future generations will make foreign-policy decisions operating under the weight of misplaced guilt and moral ambiguity. We confront powerful forces that suffer no corresponding uncertainty about the rightness of their own cause and who are adept at exploiting the sometimes disabling divisions of a democracy.

And if American liberal academia is one thing, Europe remains another. The problem with the ‘eleventh hour’ of the original World War was not so much in its differences with the mentality of war today, but its similarities. Cue Woodrow Wilson and the Fourteen Points; an attempt to re-order the map of Europe with some very good ideas, though somewhat flying in the face of history (namely, the importance of nationalism).

The paradox at work in *Finishing Business*, therefore, is between the need to utterly destroy a dangerous ideology while undermining our ability to do so—in the fear of losing our own ideology (liberty). Yet if defining our enemy is our number one objective—clarity—then we might question the usefulness of so much armchair-criticism which only clouds the issue further. Steps 9 and 10, for example, call for the solution of the Arab-Israeli conflict as ‘essential to peace’, combined with eliminating the root causes of Islamic radicalism throughout the Third World (foreign debts, arms trades, poverty, civil strife; the list is endless.) Newt Gingrich meanwhile stresses the greatest danger is actually Pakistan; while Wesley Clarke calls on NATO (i.e., the Europeans) to take up the slack on their front—as well as pressuring Saudi Arabia to help foster anti-radical Islamic propaganda. And then of course there’s Iran, and North Korea. In fact, the more comprehensive these contemporary works are the more ludicrous they seem by

the various 'Final Note'-chapters. There is no 'final note'. The War on Terror is not even history, and therefore the wisdom of individual decisions taken at the top—on both sides of the conflict—have yet to fully reveal themselves, as Cause slowly trickles down, or 'ripples', into Effect. Someday Jihadist extremism might be just another ruined, vicious ideology humanity has finally dumped to a malodorous Pile; undoubtedly pressured into collapse from external forces—namely the War on Terror, or the 'War for the Free World'—yet somehow even more as the victim of its own internal contradictions between the needs of war and peace, every step of the way.



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