Dogs of war

B Y Z A R R A R K H U H R O | 1/6/2020

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| NOTHING gets America as excited as the prospect of going to war in a distant land.  Largely insulated as they are from the consequences of their actions (war is a spectator sport, to be cheered on much like a televised football match), it is with a horrified fascination that one watches them go through the same old rituals once again, like trained priests at the bloodstained altar of the gods of war and greed.  Nothing is more predictable than the tools and rhetoric employed in that march to war either, and what we are seeing now in the American body politic is a warped repeat of what we saw in 2003, with the blind, bleating march to war with Iraq; the same war that led to the circumstances that eventually led to the assassination of Iranian Quds force commander Qassim Soleimani. If history repeats itself Erst as tragedy and then as farce, then this is a farce being repeated so many times that an entire new word will have to be admitted for the sheer shameful dishonesty of it all.  The Republicans will now launch coordinated campaigns aided by friendly media andcorporateintereststopaintconnictasa moral good, and to label all those opposing it as either naïve or as enemies. On cue there will be calls to support the troops, mom and apple pie all of which will be eagerly lapped up by a population bred and raised on a daily diet (hello, Homeland) of propaganda so insidiously effective that it deserves a Nobel prize of its own.  As part of that, the process of the dehumanisation of the to-be victims of conflict will also pick up pace, while minor threats will be magnified into existential ones, and where threats do not exist they will be created.  The war cries are so spellbinding that even those sections of the American media that routinely shout that not a single word that comes from the Trump administration is to be believed are busy trotting out the same analysts and analysis that justified going to war in Iraq.  With a few exceptions, the leading (and presumably woke) lights of the Democratic Party also seem to be more annoyed by the legalities and decorum surrounding the attack on Soleimani than by the actual consequences of the attack. Actually, that`s not true, they are certainly concerned that American troops will be inconvenienced by having to travel to distant lands, meet new and interesting people and then murder them because, in that process, they may undergo trauma and possibly stub a toe or two.  Indeed, as comedian Frankie Boyle said, not only will America invade your countryand 1(ill your people, but they`ll come back in a few years to make a movie about how killing your people made them sad. They`re the real victims here, you know.  But if the rituals of America are predictable and rehearsed, war is anything but.  Contingency plans are the hallmark of any effective strategy, and for a country that goes to war as often and with as much enthusiasm as the United States, preparing for future wars is par for the course. And so, in 2002, the United States conducted a simulation of what a war with Iran would look like. With the `blue team` representing America and the `red team` acting as an analogue for Iran, Blue was to secure a shipping lane, which approximated the Strait of Hormuz, and then land on Red soil. Red`s job was to hold back the blue navy and prevent an invasion.  Dubbed the `millennium challenge`, this $250 million exercise was meant to be largely a walkover for the `Blue Team` American forces, riding high on shock and awe and multimillion-dollar weapons sys-tems. What could puny `Red Team` Iran field that could match up to the world`s most formidable military machine? However, Van Riper, the Marine Corps lieutenant general in `charge` of the Iranian forces had a different idea.  Instead of reacting the way the USforces, loaded with data and computer projections, expected him to, he opted for an asymmetric approach by deploying small, civilian-size speedboats packed with explosives (under cover of a missile barrage) and attacking the Blue forces before they reached their position offshore. To everyone`s shock, he thus managed to sink or cripple nearly the entire attacking fleet. But, the Pentagon didn`t like him not adhering to the `rules` of the exercise and simply renoated allthe `sunk`ships.  The point is that not even the best battle plan can survive first contact with the enemy, and while a conventional war is still unlikely, anyone who says that they can with certainty predict what is to come is either a genius or a liar. But this shouldn`t worry the Americans much, as the pawns dying on this chessboard won`t be their own.  The writer is a journalist.  Twitter: @zarrarkhuhro |  |